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BEING BAPTIST AND BEING CZECH: A SPECIFIC IDENTITY IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: In Romania, the Baptist denomination includes, according to the 2002 census, about 130,000 believers, subsequent to the Pentecostal denomination. Areas having a large number of followers are Banat and some parts of Transylvania; besides these, there can be added large urban areas such as Bucharest, Timișoara, Constanța, Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, and Arad. In terms of ethnicity, Romanians represent the majority, followed by the Hungarians (Hungarian Baptist Convention). One of the smallest minorities in Romania, that is the Czechs, also provides a number of believers, in the village of Sfînta Elena (Coronini Township, Caraș-Severin County) being the only Czech Baptist community in our country. Here, besides Catholics, a Baptist community is to be found, twice as small and of fairly recent origin. In the following, we intend to outline its image, based on field observations and interviews carried out between 2005-2010 (All of these have been materialised in our book, *Istorie și memorie în comunitățile cehilor din Clisura Dunării*). We paid a particular interest in the neo-Protestant group, in order to identify means of building the image of another group with a different faith, considering the double minority, ethnic and religious status. Also, we tried to capture the ratio of forces between two different faith groups that were facing the same economic and social problems, problems that have caused the depopulation of villages, by massive migration of people to the Czech Republic.

Key Words: Baptist, Evangelical, Czechs, Banat, religion, identity, Catholic

Introduction

In Romania, the Baptist denomination includes, according to the 2002 census, about 130,000 believers¹, subsequent to the Pentecostal denomination. One of the smallest minorities in Romania, that is the Czechs, also provides a number of believers, in the village of Sfînta Elena (Coronini Township, Caraş-Severin County) being the only Czech Baptist community in our country. Most representatives of the Czech minority live in Banat; for the most part, they are descendants of settlers brought in by the Habsburg Empire (they arrived in a few waves, since 1823). Nowadays, from the colonies founded in the South-Western part of the province at the first half of the 19th century, there are only six of them (Sfînta Elena, Gîrnic, Bigăr, Ravenska, Şumiţa, Eibenthal) where the Czech population is homogeneous, an ethnic group different not only as for origin and language, but also in beliefs. Excepting the first colony, in the other settlements lives a population of Roman Catholic beliefs.

At the beginning of our documentation process, we started off with the prerequisites that religious identity represents an important dimension in defining the group, regardless of their members' options. The research process revealed that the double status, of Czech and Catholic/neo-Protestant, made survival possible in a hostile environment among strangers, those known as Pemi². The interview guide applied included questions related to the establishment of the place, social-economic and cultural aspects; in the case of religious dimension, our intention was granting as much as possible freedom to the interlocutor. Thus, the tellers emphasized upon the points considered important by them³, and which, from their perspective, particularises Baptism, especially in relation to Catholicism. To the researcher, the material collected through discussions and participative observation (direct and indirect⁴) outlined the specific nature of the Baptist Czechs' community, explained through – from our perspective – a specific ethnic identity, developed within an enclave, following strictly certain moral and behavioural rules⁵. In addition to this, there are amiable social relations with the Catholic group with which they coexist and one moderate discourse, in the name of tolerance, in which the other is sensed only as different, not as enemy.

Since 1989, the Romanian scientific world's interest for the neo-Protestants communities remains fairly low, even though it has become obvious a certain tendency to rediscover divinity (at least among some ex-communist states), along the release of the national churches (and many more) from the restrictions of the political regime⁶. The research references on the Baptist cult includes the studies of Denisa Florentina Bodeanu⁷ (which reveal – by analyzing the collective memory – the community image, for the Transylvania region, in the communist era) and

the works with a monographic character belonging to Alexa Popovici (The History of Baptists in Romania) and Ioan Bunaciu (The History of Baptist Churches in Romania). As for the writings dedicated to the Banat Czech group, with the exception of two of them⁸, all the others (in an overwhelming extent, works belonging to Czech authors) only mentions the presence of neo-Protestants in Sfînta Elena. One explanation lies in the fact that most of the writings were dating from early decades of the last century, when the Baptist faith barely had reached the village.

The Advent and Growth of the Baptist Denomination in Sfînta Elena

Introducing Baptism among Czech community members is not based on a miraculous story, born around a revelation, an encounter with the divinity, in one way or another. It occurred in the early 1920s, exploiting a conflicting situation that had started few decades ago, when forced Magyarization (and more aggressive) followed the abolition of the military frontier of Banat. After 1873, the language of Government gradually became the language of the religious service, which (and this is not the only case) displeased the Evangelicals⁹ from Sfînta Elena, often lacking – throughout their existence – a pastor to preach in their mother tongue (moreover, in the first stage of the colony's existence, although they had a house of prayer, almost for four decades they had been deprived of a priest¹⁰). Worship service was provided by Catholic priests at important events in family life (baptism, religious marriage, burial) and the liturgy was celebrated by some villagers, selected from the Protestant community¹¹. Only after 1860, some believers could benefit from the services of certain Evangelical pastors who were coming from a Slovak Lutheran community (Clopodia, Timiș county), but rarely reaching into the community¹². All these shortcomings seem to explain the second position¹³ of the Protestants, within the Czech community of Sfînta Elena. In addition to this, the usage of the Hungarian language by the priests from Clopodia village, as well as the installation of several pastors, either strengthened the Evangelicals' Magyarization or determined some of parishioners (at the end of the 19th century) to get closer to the Adventist cult¹⁴.

On the other hand, the abolition of the frontier guard's communion (as a result of the removal of the military border) caused a shortage of land tenure, among the settlements included in the former frontier. The families from Czech villages were large, and the land was insufficient and of a low quality, which resulted in the emigration of entire families, particularly to the United States. In 1897 for instance, in Sfînta Elena, 25 Evangelical families left to Bulgaria, and of those remaining, some have joined the teachings of an Adventist missionary¹⁵. In 1913, of nearly 1,000 residents, there were 64 Adventists¹⁶, while Catholics continued to be the majority, seconded by Calvinists. In a small community, in just a few

decades, the religious landscape has undergone significant fluctuations: the arrival and departure of a large number of pastors with different orientations, numerous conversions, the construction of two churches (Catholic and Evangelical), and of an Adventist prayer house. This represented the background where Baptist faith would grow, by converting the Adventist, Křivánek Ferdinand, in 1921. In the neighbouring Romanian village Coronini, there was already a community of this type, to which a part of Czech Adventists got closer, after the First World War. During it, many conversions took place¹⁷ among Romanian soldiers from the Austro-Hungarian army, under the influence of Baptists, with whom they came into contact with in that environment (it is probably relevant of the Magyar and German Baptists from Transylvania, who were converted by missionaries from the service of British Bible Society¹⁸); at the end of military service, they became, in turn, missionaries working at the places they came from¹⁹. The increased number of Baptist followers is also due to the rule's abolition according to which only the pastors with a long activity could baptize (this happened in order to limit the access, within the community of faith, of those individuals who were not really convinced of the creed of the cult): after creating the Baptist Union (as part of Romanian national unitary state), it was decided that any pastor "could fulfil all acts of worship, including baptism [...]. As a result, baptisms were held in each locality, for any number of prospective candidates and at the date that suited the church. Thus, the work of winning souls to the cult grew more intense [...]"²⁰. ("The analysis of statistics showed that between 1920-1925 there had been set up most of Baptist churches throughout history, that is, in five years, there were founded 957 churches. Two facts explain this fast expansion: firstly – the return of hundreds of prisoners that were converted in Russia, secondly – the turning of the demobilized soldiers to neo-Protestantism at the front, in Hungary, Italy, Germany. Once they all got home to their villages, they worked and converted to faith their families, friends and neighbours, thus many Baptist churches were established. Also, many Romanians came back from America, already converted to faith there"²¹).

Following these changes, the village became, during this period, a true religious heterogeneous "site"²² (but unitary from the ethnical point of view), where four faiths coexisted without discord. Before the incorporation of Banat into the Romanian state, Magyarization abused the fundamental identity bases, e.g. church and school. The Calvinists seem to have suffered the most, being short (for a long time) of corresponding spiritual leaders, a strongly felt shortcoming within a traditional rural community, where the pastor/priest had a strong word to say, where the relationship with the priest was "personalized", compared to the urban area (in a tiny settlement, the inhabitants know each other and the priest knows his parishioners pretty well, with whom informal relations are established). In an enclave – both ethnic and religious – the (successive)

absence of spiritual leaders of the same blood and of the same language as the parishioners (a shepherd to guide them and to feel connected to, not by faith alone, but also dialect – the spoken word being the one that attracts and persuades rather than the written one) threatens their unity, and ultimately their faith. The language of preaching was important²³ but more important was, of course, faith, the support of the colonists in the hostile environment in which they had been brought²⁴ and in the development filled with obstacles in the isolated mountain villages, which they founded. The soundness of Evangelical faith is also proven by the fact that they chose not to turn to Catholicism, although there were Catholic priests in the village of the same origin and language. When Budapest's pressures increased and when, in this context, an Adventist missionary arrived in the village – who preached in Slovak, which is very similar to the Czech language – the change occurred: the doctrinal and linguistic similarity overlapped and a series of Calvinists passed to Adventists, preparing as such the subsequent migration to a cult close to it as dogma, Baptism.

Not all Evangelicals joined the Adventists, but ultimately, both sides were close to the Baptists and were absorbed by them. In the first stage of this history of consecutive conversions we see how necessary a religious service in the language of the congregation really was, we witness the gradual victory of Baptism in the next stage. This cult has gained supporters from other three faiths (Adventists, Evangelicals, Catholics) and has remained so until today unlike the Calvinists and those awaiting the “second coming” of Christ. We find out about the entrance of neo-Protestant cults in Sfînta Elena and the expansion of the Baptist community from a Czech's records who moved to this faith in 1931, Alois Boháček; in his memoirs, he included Václav Černík's memories, the first deacon of the cult in the village²⁵. The chronicle, called *Zpráva o Duchovní práci na Svaté Heleně v Rumunsku, podle ustního vyprávění jednoho z pamětníků, bratra Václava Černíka, narozeného 22.10.1883 a podle sepsání bratra Štěpána Křívánka* (Report on the spiritual work at Sfînta Elena of Romania, inspired by the oral narratives of the storyteller, Brother Václav Černík, born on 22.10.1883 and by Brother Štěpán Křívánek's notes)²⁶, is kept even today in the archives of the local Baptist church.

Through the nominal mention of those who stuck to the neo-Protestant faith, through the detailed presentation of the tensions that occurred in the midst of the Evangelical community and by describing the early history of Baptists, Boháček's chronicle²⁷ remains a primary source in reconstructing the religious life in Sfînta Elena, for a period of more than half a century. A life of austerity preached by Adventists, the ritual and social constraints to which the followers were obliged to subscribe, partially explains the orientation towards Baptists. On the other hand, the latter recognize the opening provided by the Adventists to the “living word of the Gospel” (work done in the village by the missionary

schoolteacher Chorvát, who shared the vision of the spiritual movement “Modrý kríž”, of Star Turá – Slovakia, but also of other missionary pastors who arrived to Sfînta Elena²⁸). Up to a point – we find out from the chronicle – the prayers of the two neo-Protestant cults were held in common, but the Baptists tendency to win converts deposed the leader of the Adventists, who had to leave his village²⁹. As a result, his followers migrated to another cult similar in teachings, a cult whose image was slightly better in Romania after the First World War.

The Orthodox Synod from March 22, 1921 had introduced measures against Adventists (“Mr. Octavian Goga, the minister of religions and arts, promised that the Holy Synod meeting would give all his power onto the fight against Adventist propaganda by holding conferences and special courses”)³⁰, but shortly followed other measures against Baptists (and others). By Order no. 15,831 (April 1, 1921)³¹ it was prohibited, inter alia, the meetings outside the worship places or residences (“sectarians are forbidden to take part in mass or in groups, in the cult held in the worship house from other communes”³²); In addition, the assembly of believers were allowed only in buildings particularly designated for this, not in the homes of the individuals³³. Mass spread of Baptist belief was forbidden, and “individuals holding religious propaganda, and coming from other villages, would be sent under escort to their villages, to which they belong”³⁴. The provisions of the Ministry of Religious Affairs were the result of several analysis reports from local authorities, who claimed neo-proselytism undertaken by various groups, “with money received from abroad via secret channels”. Consequently, the Ministry considered that “this propaganda may disturb the citizens and [may] contain dangerous elements of the country's highest interests”³⁵. The situation would improve the following year, as decided by the new Minister of Religious Affairs (circular order of 17 January 1922), which restored the Baptist cult, by cancelling all the provisions of the order of April 1921 you (“[...] So please, warn all the administrative authorities to leave the absolute liberty to this cult, subject to state security and public morality”)³⁶.

Once baptised, Křívánek would turn his home into a prayer house, for his fellow villagers who chose to switch to Baptism³⁷ (this happened in 1923, after he had baptised five villagers³⁸). The documentary information is completed by the oral historical one, which brings original details and another shade to the migration story from one cult to another. At Coronini, Baptist faith was spread by missionaries who “were baptised in the war, one from Coronini and two from Moldova Nouă (the neighbouring city, author’s note)”³⁹. The Czech Křívánek, “hearing God’s word, more doctrinaire, more biblical, understood that this is the more righteous word; then he converted, he wanted to be baptised according to the Scriptures”. The story insists on one of the main elements of differentiation between traditional churches and neo-Protestant cults, Baptism (the age at which it is received): “Man then (at maturity, author’s

note) knows what he does, and what he wants and what he does not want!”. However, the newly converted, faced with the refusal from those from Coronini, had to accept him into their church (refusal motivated by the storyteller through the changing nature of some of us – “That’s how man is, you know”), he will not return to the Adventist group, but will turn their own home into a meeting place. “And then, says [he], if you do not want me (to accept me, author’s note), I do not...I was baptised, I know that’s biblical”. As the numbers of the neophytes increased, the issue of a roomier house of prayer was raised; it was solved (temporarily) by taking over the Adventist house of prayer (with the consent of the few parishioners left), and in 1937, a house of prayer is built. “When I started to go, it was there where I went to the church until 1982⁴⁰. It was...I do not know what it would sound in Romanian like...a kind of current, Blue Cross (“Crucea Albastră”, author’s note), Modrý kríž, this is how they call it in Slovakia as well. It was sort of a Protestant movement...it was not yet established as a church”. The takeover without incidents is due to, the current pastor believes, closeness that exists between neo-Protestants, who only have “different names”.

The dissolution of two other Protestant confessions, under Baptist pressure, occurs gradually, in the interwar period. It is a time of growth of the new group⁴¹, due to the “great grace of God”⁴². The Baptists’ image was much improved because of the promotion and support of various preachers, from the country and abroad. In 1923, the Czechoslovakian preacher František Dostal was baptised at Sfînta Elena⁴³, and in 1932, “20 people turned to the Lord”⁴⁴, through the work of Evangelization carried out by a Bulgarian brother. In the month of June that same year, another Czechoslovakian pastor, Adam Marco, urged the villagers to conversion and met with local leaders of the cult: “After this visit, the Czech Baptist Church of Sfînta Elena had a lot to benefit from; it was enlivened and created an even greater prestige in the village”⁴⁵. Through pastoral work and devotion, the local Václav Černík was noticed (in 1949, he migrates to Czechoslovakia⁴⁶, like many other inhabitants of the six of the Clisura Dunării, under the agreement of “repatriation” between Prague and Bucharest in the summer of 1946). Local history of the community seemed to have developed untouched by vast history, especially the outlawry of all Evangelical denominations – by order of Marshal Ion Antonescu, in December 1942; The Baptist cult was, in fact, the first one recognized by State in November 1944. During the Second World War, although the prayer house was closed, the hunger for the living word of God would increase⁴⁷.

The Other Belief: The Dimensions of Coexistence

After 1990, in Sfînta Elena, as well as in the Catholic community, the number of Baptists began to decrease, through the final migration of the

villagers to the Czech Republic, with the closure of the mine from Moldova Nouă and of other companies in the area. “We’ve been 180”⁴⁸, but in the fall of 2010, Baptists were just over 50. It seems that young people of this confession decide to emigrate sooner than Catholics, and in greater numbers⁴⁹. According to the latter, the explanation is that in the Czech Republic the restrictions they have at home and public opprobrium are missing, in the case of violated rules. “With the Baptists, as soon as a youngster turns 18 years of age, he leaves. I think it depends on their freedom offered by the creed: here, if they stay, they can’t go to the disco, but there they can go; yet, if they stay here, they do not go to the bar, or (to other places, author’s note)”⁵⁰. For a Baptist, to go to places that don’t have a good image, labelled “illegal” by the speaker, would mean, he says, exclusion from the church. Beyond the speculative assertion, the rules are much stricter for the Baptists of this community, than of the urban ones (Our statement is based on participatory observation made in many Baptist communities, be they rural or urban. We note, however, the influence of specific education models of this ethnic group⁵¹, earnest, honesty through which they have become known in the region, have become real identity hallmarks). Some Catholics remark the libertarian behaviour displayed by the Baptists who spend time in the Czech Republic (or live there), the liberties taken in appearance (clothes, hair dying⁵²), billed as “injustice” being done to the Baptists who lived in the village.

Regardless of their nature, the groups watch and count each other’s faults. In this case, religion – which F. Barth (in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*) includes in “cultural stuff”, along with language, tradition, laws, material culture⁵³ etc. – acts not as “a convenient marker of ethnic difference”⁵⁴, but as a marker of social difference. The restrictions which follow from a specific religious identity are culturally instrumentalized, and generate a certain social behaviour. In a different location (the Czech Republic), this behavior (the state of inhibition) changes, giving a new meaning to the social identity (verbally amended by some members of the Catholic group). To observe another is easier than understanding him. To Catholics, the action and the behaviors are the true evidence within the social space, beyond the affiliation to one or another religious group. “(Catholics get along with Baptists?) – There are people and people. Do you know? (With a low tone): There are some who want a little more... they talk and say all sorts of things...both among our believers and the other ones (the Baptists, author’s note), how should I say it: there is no garden without its weeds. There are people who are more or less understanding”⁵⁵. People invent religions, claim one’s supremacy over others, inherit or create their own religious identities, but “faith is the same for all. Faith in God. How many sects are there? Or as they say in Romanian – I heard that there are hundreds and millions, how should I say...as there are Catholics, Baptists, Pentecostals, all of them. You can be Czech, Romanian, Gypsy, whatever: if you have faith in God, then it’s

called faith. Do not discriminate. Do you know how I differentiate between people? Between a good person and a bad one. That is the difference”⁵⁶. And on the other hand, “ecumenical” accents, at least at the declarative level, are never missing: “(I see you have mugs imprinted with “House Blessing”, “The Lord is my shepherd”. Are these messages connected to Baptist faith?) – No! Not necessarily. Because the Lord may be the shepherd of all, so it’s not...(So it’s for all faithful people) – Yes, those who believe that God is [exists]”⁵⁷.

If Catholics primarily amend the image of the other, neo-Protestants take into consideration the doctrinal differences. Their speech insists on the significance of faith in one’s life: it’s not just another segment of existence, but it is its foundation, and not just theoretically, but through active participation, ongoing awareness. It also represents a personal choice. Religious identity is not defined as a family gift, a self-evident inheritance; it is acquired through questions and searches, through personal effort, through self-knowledge and, especially, through the desire of to know the divine word. These inward dynamics can end with one’s receiving baptism at the age at which “the aspirant” understands and assumes all that entails the commission of that act. “So we you get baptised, so when you surrender, not when your mother, father or... shepherd wants you to...or...So when you think you have to get baptised, you get baptised, right?”⁵⁸. Baptism of young children is seen as a ritual devoid of substance, confirming the tradition of an institution (the Church), and not the direct relationship between man and God. Only at mature age, baptism confirms new birth, rebirth, another life, but this time, one that is given to Jesus, by word and deed. For the future devout, choosing their religious identity requires their own involvement and not the others’ decision, even if they are family. Moreover, being part of a Baptist family (or church attendance), without receiving baptism – a sign of the decision to follow Christ, the decision being publicly confessed through the baptism of faith – means only partial religious identity: “You are considered a Baptist, but...just considered, because you were raised in a Baptist family”⁵⁹.

Nowadays, most Baptists from the village are in families who have behind two to three generations having the same faith. The reasons of conversion are barely being mentioned, one explanation being, probably, the absence of those extraordinary circumstances, the situations of “relative economic, social, ethical, physical, psychic deprivation”, which could lead to the decision of religious conversion⁶⁰. The family’s memory (a factual memory, which did not retain the circumstances of individual revelation) recovers sequentially the history of conversions: “(Were your parents Baptists?) – Yes, yes. (And their parents, too?) – Yes, but my grandmother was Catholic”⁶¹. The reason of her conversion did not reach her granddaughter, but it is almost certain that she “heard the call and surrendered herself”. As part of the interlocutor’s family there were also

some of the first Baptists from the village: “The first to be baptised was my grandfather's sister. (The first in the village?) – Yes, from the village. Eliaš was her name and she was baptized somewhere in the river. (Who baptized her?) – Somebody from Coronini, from the neighboring village Coronini”. In the family of the storyteller's spouse, the baptism accepted by the Evangelical grandparents was also an example to the next generation. Later on, in some Evangelical families, girls turned to Baptism and boys to Catholicism”⁶².

The two religious groups in Sfînta Elena are not defined as being in opposition. Yet, there is a certain distance, beyond sharing the same territory, a common origin and ethnic solidarity, activated in relation with others (coming from) outside the settlement. Faith is not negotiable, even in a peaceful coexistence. One way or another, mixed marriages⁶³ mean compromising, except the cases in which the partner is persuaded to convert. A speaker⁶⁴, born from Evangelical parents, received baptism in 1967, followed after three years by her husband. Some Catholic partners have also agreed to be baptised again: “I was born a Catholic and my husband was a Baptist, and I read and I saw it was better”⁶⁵. In a Baptist environment (spouse, daughter⁶⁶, in-laws, some neighbours), the storyteller discovers another dimension of faith, which emphasizes, among other things, the Christian admonition to treat the other like yourself: “I saw that it was better like this, not to hurt anyone”. An important part was played by the religious books, apart from the faith confessions of the close ones. “(Have in-laws told you that Baptist doctrine is better?) – Well, yes, I have heard and read myself in books, that it's better, you know. (What kind of books? The Bible?) – The Bible also. The New Testament is here, in Romanian”. Unfortunately, people have drifted away from God and those who come to faith are few: “People don't want, don't want to be baptised...”. In other cases, conversion started by a family member attracts the conversion of other members, particularly the elderly. Born Evangelical, the father of the current pastor received baptism when he was 18, which resulted in his parents' decision of adopting the new faith. The model recognized by the community (still valid for Catholics), of automatic transmission of the paternal faith, is replaced by choice, after the individual concerned goes through a stage of inner transformation.

The importance of practicing the same faith by both spouses is emphasized: “it's preferable to take someone from its own religion, it's easier...otherwise, they confront. If a man lives in his religion and woman in her religion, then there are conflicts in...so, it's not good”⁶⁷. However, there are exceptions, if not understood, at least admitted. Striving to gain followers is not seen as a positive thing, because it would annul one's decision, who is going down a specific spiritual path. In time, however, by attending church, through the knowledge of the doctrine (and, of course, through influencing the baptised ones), adherence may occur. “A

daughter of mine married a Catholic; he goes to our church, to the Baptists with her...He is not converted yet, we hope...We are not allowed to compel anyone. We are not of those guys, the ones who walk, to...Everyone...has to decide upon [his] own life”⁶⁸. Discouragement, at an informal level, of marital unions outside the faith, prevents the potential loss of a member of the community of faith and represents a strategy for its conservation, especially in this case, with the neo-Protestants, to a lesser extent than the Catholics (Actually, this claim is valid for the latter as well, for although they represent the majority comparing to the Baptists, they are in minority comparing to the Orthodox from the neighbourhood. Marriage with Orthodox partners – whether they are Catholics or Baptists – marks the entry of the relationship with another identity, not only religious, but also ethnic, only the last remaining unalterable). Discouragement does not take the appearance of a formal policy, but it is rather a recommendation, because “you know what it is written there: if God unites two souls, we are not allowed to separate, we are not allowed to hinder it [marriage]”⁶⁹.

Faith without Frontiers: Baptist Immigrants in the Czech Republic

The existence of a strong Baptist community in Czech Republic (partly composed of those who emigrated from the village after the war) represents a real support for the current influx of migrants. The existence of this strong community represents a real support for the young Baptist migrants coming from Sfînta Elena. There is no doubt that both the Catholics and the neo-Protestants have relatives and friends in The Czech Republic, with whom they can live until they manage to find a job and a place to live. In the long process of adapting themselves in their new country, the Baptists also benefit of the support of the spiritual core formed in the decades that passed since the “implantation” of the villagers from the Banat in the Sudet region (replacing the German population, expelled at the end of the war). Their social network is created starting from the religious belonging. The church plays an important part in the integration of the immigrants⁷⁰, by making the process easier and by representing a support for the trauma that is generated by abandoning the home territory. The church is the meeting place of those sharing similar cultural patterns (given by the same origin) as well as the place where one can communicate with those sharing the same religious orientation, and this fact strengthens the identity of the group, both from an ethical and a religious point of view⁷¹, as opposed to the Czech society, mostly atheistic, society which perceives the immigrants as Romanians and not as Czechs. “I spoke to a Czech pastor who is the president of the Czech Baptist community – [the Baptists] are few, about 2000 members in the whole country. That’s all in the Czech Republic – can you imagine? You won’t believe me – 70% of the Czechs declare themselves atheists. I can’t really say ‘atheists’ – they believe in their own way – but they don’t belong to

any church, they were not baptised, they're not married, nothing"⁷². Regardless of their religious belonging, the Czechs from the Banat cannot conceive integrating in a world that doesn't recognize the existence of the divine. Still addicted to a traditional vision, in which the human being is the creation and subject of God, the immigrants continue – even after establishing themselves in the land of their ancestors – to remain a separate group, more united, culturally speaking, by the space left behind than by the one they moved to. "I feel [closer] to Romania, although I'm not Romanian. In the Czech Republic the culture and life are different. And in Prague – he told me (the president of the Czech Baptist community, author's note) – they don't have funeral services, not official (laic, author's note), not with priests; 50% of the dead are buried without a funeral service, which in Romania is unconceivable"⁷³. Secularization, the loss of traditions, the decrease of the religious feeling in the contemporary world, the individualism, hampers the Baptist migrants' understanding and acceptance of the world they have established themselves in. One must notice that the Czechs from Banat have managed to preserve their faith despite all the obstacles they faced (the lack of churches, of priests, denationalization) and despite having always been surrounded by Orthodox population, while back in their country of origin, where such difficulties were never met, only "30%" of the population is affiliated to a cult, and "only 5% are practising Christians. I don't know how they became [this way], the Czech Republic was – back in the time of Jan Hus – it was Protestant, the country was more... I don't know how religion ended up this way"⁷⁴.

The spiritual life represents, therefore, an indicator of the soul structure a nation develops in its becoming. As for this topic, the discourse of the Czech villagers (both Catholic and Baptist) proves that they identify themselves with the population from the Banat and not with the main ethnic group from the Czech Republic. When it comes down to faith, the origin and language differences disappear. "I collaborate with all the Romanians, pastors, colleagues. And we get along truly like brothers, there's no difference between Romanians and Czechs. And they also think of us as being close to them, we don't have any...(problems, author's note)". In the difficult moments, when it is necessary that what is preached (helping your neighbour) be put into practice, the distance between the two groups having the same origin becomes even more obvious: "When we meet the Czechs from the Czech Republic, they are – so it is said – more civilised. Yeah, right! Compared to us, they're a mess. They and all their civilization. It's everyone for themselves over there. You can drop dead in the street and no one cares. We, here, I think we were educated in this environment, and because of the poorness our parents had to go through, and also through this atmosphere that is...we've lived among Romanians, and Romanians are more sympathetic, different"⁷⁵. The active dimension of faith seems to be of great importance,

since the immigrant's expectations are reduced as he is suddenly confronted with an individualist, atomised society; here, the immigrant will not find the same communion, the same mutual help. "Everyone is a stranger over there...Everyone...They don't care about the others. And we know that you are human in a collective, with your neighbours, not all alone. You are not human if you're all alone, you're nothing". It is necessary that the Christians form a group not only inside the church, but also outside from it, in order to help each other (including those of different religions), to stand by one another in good and in bad times. "The fellowship group becomes the point of reference of the individual, since there is this feeling that in the big churches people have the impression that nobody cares about them and it's because of this that meetings in smaller groups would solve this problem in great measure"⁷⁶.

What do the others say about us? What do they represent for us? The Czechs from the Czech Republic call the Czechs from the Clisură "immigrants" or "Romanians", with an obvious reference to a certain state of development (standard of living). Their criterion is of an economical kind: the criterion of social separation derives from it. The image of the Romanian as a poor and uncivilized individual is transferred upon the immigrant from Banat, contributing to the social isolation of those who left from these villages. Moreover, their efforts of integrating themselves (taking jobs that are hard to do, working overtime and over the weekends) are seen by the locals as a trial to undermine their position at the workplace in particular and in society, in general. The evaluation of the Czechs from Banat, however, emphasizes the character and the spiritual side of the others. If the first group operates based on a cliché, the second draws the conclusions based on the experience of its members. For the Baptists from Sfînta Elena, faith – the way the Christian principles are put into practice – becomes a clue in representing the host society. Same as in the case of other cults, "the church is the living role model after which the facts from the outside world can be guided"⁷⁷.

The establishment of the Baptists from Sfînta Elena in the Czech Republic does not endanger their religious feelings. In Cheb, Aš, Lovosice, Žatec, areas in which many of the Baptists who left in 1947 from Banat settled, their community of faith has lasted and has consolidated, being a real help for those who came after 1990. Although they have, in time, included the local believers, the Baptist churches from these areas declare the community of Sfînta Elena as their origin⁷⁸ and speak about their avatars of becoming in an environment that has proved to be quite hostile, as opposed to the image that the migrants had about it. The ordeals the believers have been through can give birth to comparisons with the tried history of the people of Israel ("Although on the land of their ancestors, they felt like the people of Israel, under Babylonian captivity"⁷⁹). It is not just a figure of speech: in general, "returnees" have not found in Czechoslovakia the good conditions of life that official propaganda

circulated, and in particular, Baptists did not have many houses of prayer. At Žatec, the bases for the local Baptist union were also established by Czech immigrants who came from Poland and Volyn; in 1988, a Czech born in Sfînta Elena would be elected as head, František Hruza⁸⁰. In Cheb, in 1948, several families from Sfînta Elena, with “the same beliefs and common desire to serve God”, would found the Baptist Union⁸¹ (“In Cheb, for example, the Baptists started our church. In ‘48...that was when they founded the Baptist church, and ever since then it’s a big church. In other parts there were only a few of us and afterwards our own people also went there and...”⁸²). Especially, due to their condition as immigrants (although they were officially counted as “sons of [the motherland] lost in Europe and worldwide”⁸³, faith was a refuge, a comfort, as it was for their colonised ancestors. As their life settled, the systematization of Banat neo-Protestants took the form of compact congregations, “distinguished with their staunch religious feelings enhancing their isolation”⁸⁴. This prompted a certain degree of isolation, in which, “a strict, religiously motivated ascetic ethic”⁸⁵ was preserved, at least, within the first generation.

After 1989, the arrival of Baptists, coming in different waves, may be interpreted from at least two perspectives. When political situation allowed it (and at some point, the economic state of the Sfînta Elena’s community demanded), emigration followed the routes of 1947. Not being organised by the state, it lasted longer and used the infrastructure represented by the family networks of the first immigrants. “In the beginning, how was it? Each had to arrange for someone, because you could not go and find yourself a home. Virtually, everyone found something for somebody”⁸⁶. From one person to the next, by calling family members and those from a close group, the transfer of a small group of Baptists to a larger community was accomplished, but with the need of consolidating its spiritual life⁸⁷. The pressure of the Atheist Communist State was present both in Czechoslovakia and in Romania⁸⁸, but in the rural enclave of Sfînta Elena, the cohesion of the believers’ group was less affected than that from the open, urban areas, from Western Czechoslovakia. In addition, this group has continued to lead a stable existence, compared to those who left after the war, who have gone through the labour of adaptation and integration, both material and mental, in a world that was foreign to them, even though it spoke the same language.

The Baptists remaining in the village are now part of the Baptist Union of Romania, but also of the Baptist Union of the Czech Republic. “We have two identities: we’re registered there, and here...we are glad that we do not separate”⁸⁹. The Community is visited by pastors from the Czech Republic⁹⁰ (“to come to see these parts, to see that it’s from a church, which comes from the Romanian Czechs, from these parts”⁹¹) and when it succeeds to receive funding, its orchestra travels to the Czech

Republic, in those areas where religious communities were formed with the contribution of the Banat villagers ("even now there are churches there, founded by our own people: more from here, than of them there!"⁹²). With money for transportation, received from U.D.C.S.R. (The Democratic Union of Czechs and Slovaks in Romania), the mandolin orchestra⁹³ brings new breath into the friends and families' churches from there. "And now we'll go again, in early September, in cities where our own people are, in churches, to sing. (Will they invite you?) – Yes. They summon us and we go. (Where will you stay?) – At relatives! We have enough (She smiles)"⁹⁴. With a history of 40 years⁹⁵, the band's performing completes the act of collective worship: "[As such] we somehow make the church flourish, being more alive, because if you only preach...this way you attract others, it's nice, isn't it? To sing, to praise God, that is why we sing, normally, for God. So the rest of the world can also hear, but we praise Him (first of all, author's note) The Lord"⁹⁶. Besides the formal side – preaching is intended for the believer's soul, as an instructive lesson – deity worship, through song, is an expression of emotion, a religious experience which is enhanced when hearts and voices join. The orchestra's exoticism also attracts Czech tourists (especially in summer, they come in great numbers to visit the six villages), who attend Sunday service (and also the Catholic liturgy); the villagers' devotion, regardless of religion (the separation of women and men in the church, the time given to read Scripture in everyday life, the place that holiness has in individual and collective life), thrills foreigners of the civilized but also of the secularised world. "In the Czech Republic, people are not faithful at all. Our own people who left, yes, they are, but these ones who are tourists...rarely is there one to say that there will be another life, all of them pretend that life is going to end here, on Earth. But I do not believe it"⁹⁷. Village elders do not accept the assumption of a universe without a Creator, to whom we all owe obedience and respect; people should seek and fulfil God's word, because only then salvation and divine help can be earned, in a life full of trials and hardships. The peasant's speech from Sfînta Elena is punctuated by eloquent statements for the local religious ethos: "Well, with God's willing, [it will be] it is raining, if not, there is no problem"⁹⁸.

Conclusions

Lacking the „Pentecostals' effervescence", the Baptists are generally regarded as being reasonable among the neo-Protestant cults. In contrast to other mixed communities – the Orthodox-Pentecostal case, where a faulty knowing and understanding of the other becomes obvious – at Sfînta Elena, the difference between the two congregations do not appear that strong. For instance, concerning the distinctive signals, we could take into account the absence of jewellery at the Baptist women, but not the

clothes (as we noticed in the Pentecostal groups which we researched this year, in two rural communities in Arad County). As for the intensity of religious feeling shown by the Catholic neighbors, it is similar to the neo-Protestant piety, with the distinction that, in the latter case, this type of feeling strongly marks all facets of the believer's life. „Their cultural and social life solely takes place within the religious community”⁹⁹. From the perspective of ethnic identity, changing faith equals to some type of loss, sanctioned by ethnographers, for it marks the (partial) alteration of cultural identity.¹⁰⁰ Through the specifics of faith, Baptist Czechs are passive carriers of traditional culture, typical for Clisură enclave: we refer both to distinctive Czechs feasts from the six villages (Fărșangul, Májové Svátky, Dožinky, Saint Lucia, Saint Varvara etc.) and to “balls” (reunions with dance and music); the neo-Protestants know details about all of these, not by partaking (like the Catholics), but through observation (or family stories).

It is difficult to determine how the Baptist collectivity of Sfînta Elena will evolve in the coming years. In the spirit of the early church, dozens of believers live a life in which they strive to respect the principles of the Scripture, having the duty to read it every day. Unlike the national history of the cult¹⁰¹ (and that of the second half of the 20th century) – a history “distributed and pressured between liberty and coercion, between surveillance and tolerance”¹⁰² – the Czech community's evolution faces other issues and highlights different types of rapports (for example, not with regard to the Orthodox, but with regard to Czechs Catholics). In terms of interethnic relations, faith brings Czech Baptists closer to Romanians (to a greater extent than the Czech Catholics), to whom they get in contact in prayer houses in the neighbouring villages. Nonetheless, a strengthening of this closeness (for example, through mixed marriages) is not present, since the villagers of Sfînta Elena (Catholics or Baptists) continue to leave for good to the Czech Republic, and the remaining ones choose partners from the village, as they have been doing it for nearly 200 years. The expansion of the neo-Protestant congregation seems improbable, due to immigration, negative population growth, and also because of their non-proselytism attitudes (in opposition to the politics of winning new adepts, lead by the Pentecostal cult). However, the residential space counts less: it either takes place on the Banat territory, or in the „mother nation”, the search for God and existence lived through His Word represent the most important objectives to the Baptist group from the Czech village.

Nevertheless, from an economic viewpoint, Baptists encounter the same difficulties as their fellow villagers and apply the same strategy of survival: emigration. In the Czech Republic, they have a double minority status: ethnical and religious. As for the first one, they endeavour to overcome it (to cancel the social differences arising from it), as for the second, they attempt to defend it, in a mostly agnostic society. During

their Banat history, ethnic identity was the protective identity of the Czech group (regardless of faith). After nearly two centuries, and on another territory, for the Baptists from Sfînta Elena, protective identity became the religious one. Belonging to the Baptist cult also generates strong social relationships: it is assumed that the group coalesced by sharing the same beliefs (described by what Kottak calls “communitas”¹⁰³) will preserve – at least until the disappearance of the generation that immigrated after 1989 – the cultural heritage of the universe created in Banat.

Notes:

¹ A percent of 0,58% of the total existing population existing at that time (21.680.974) – Liviu Andreescu, “The Construction of Orthodox Churches in Post-Communist Romania”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 59, Issue 3 (May 2007): 458, accessed October 9, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/20451363.pdf>.

² In time, the term that points out the native area of the colonists (“Die Böhmen”) turned into “Pemi”, Teodora Alexandru-Dobrițoiu, “Istoricul așezării cehilor în Banatul de sud (Republica Socialistă România)”, *Romanoslavica*, XII (1965): 143.

³ In that respect, Klaus G. Witz (“The Participant as Ally and Essentialist Portraiture”, *Qualitative Inquiry*, n° 12, 2, 2006, p. 246-268) speaks about “interviewer pour sentir”, in opposition with “interviewer pour s’informer”, Annemarie Sorescu Marinković, “«Nous venons des Carpates, des Carpates d’Inde, de Russie». Gérer une identité traumatisée – les cas des Bayaches de Serbie”, in *Mémoire et histoire en Europe centrale et orientale*, ed. Daniel Baric et al. (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011), 219.

⁴ Among other things, the partaking of both denominations to the religious ceremony.

⁵ For details, refer to the chapter “«Pem» versus the Other”, from our above mentioned book.

⁶ “Interest in religion increased in Hungary in the years following the change of regime”, Zoltan Rajki, “Preobraćenja u mađarskoj posle promene režima”, *Religion and Tolerance*, 4 (2005): 32, accessed October 9, 2011, <http://nikodimljutic.com/ceir/download/Religija%20i%20tolerancija%20br.4.pdf>.

⁷ Denisa Florentina Bodeanu, “«Între libertate și persecuție». Credincioșii bapțiști din România între 1948-1989. Studiu de caz: comunitatea Cluj”. *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Orală*, VIII (2007): 81-116. *Neoprotestanții din Transilvania în timpul regimului comunist. Studiu de caz: bapțiștii din județul Cluj – Mărturii și documente* (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2007). “Cultul Baptist din Transilvania între 1948-1989 în memoria colectivă (județele Cluj, Maramureș, Bistrița-Năsăud și Sălaj)”. PhD diss., Babeș-Bolyai-University, 2009. *Afacerea Evanghelistul. Vizita lui Billy Graham în România* (1985), edited by Bodeanu Denisa and Valentin Vasile (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2010). Other significant works are: Gavriș, Mihai. “Aspecte privind situația Bisericii Adventiste din România în perioada 1965-1989”. *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Orală* VI (2005): 241-261. Elis Neagoe-Pleșa and Liviu Pleșa. “Culte neoprotestante din România în perioada 1975-1989”. In *Partidul, Securitatea și Cultele: 1945-1989*, edited by Adrian Nicolae Petcu, 350- 394 (București: Nemira,

2005). Simion Pop, "The Socio-Cultural Space of Pentecostalism in Present-Day Transylvania: Dynamics of Religious Pluralization in Post-Communist Romania", *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Sociologia*, LIV, issue 2 (2009): 141-158. Delia Sântămărean, "Imaginea creștinului penticostal în perioada comunistă", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Orală*, VIII (2007): 117-132. Monic Vlase, "Viața și practica religioasă a comunității creștin penticostale din Cluj-Napoca în perioada dictaturii comuniste", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Orală*, III (2002): 134-156. "Rolul femeii creștine penticostale în viața și practica cultului", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Orală*, IV (2003): 68-84.

⁸ *Istorie și memorie în comunitățile cehilor din Clisura Dunării* and Desideriu Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților cehe din România (așezare, evoluție etno-demografică, socio-economică și cultural-confesională)" (PhD diss., "George Barițiu" Institute of History, 2009).

⁹ In Sfînta Elena, The Habsburgs colonised Catholics and Protestants pertaining to the Helvetic faith, *Schematismus venerabilis Cleri Dioecesis Csanádiensis Pro Anno A Christo Nato 1833* (Szegedini: Typis Heredum Urbani Grün, 1883), 69.

¹⁰ See Evangelical colonists letter in Preda, *Istorie și memorie*, 89-90.

¹¹ Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 269.

¹² "Once every 2 or 3 years", Alexandru Moisi, *Monografia Clisurei* (Oravița: Librăria Românească, 1938), 255.

¹³ In 1900, 420 Catholics and 344 Evangelicals lived in the village; in 1910, 429 Catholics and 321 Evangelicals, Jan Auerhan, *Čechoslováci v Jugoslavii, v Rumunsku, v Maďarsku a v Bulharsku* (Praga: Melantrich, 1921), 68.

¹⁴ Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 269-271.

¹⁵ Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 270.

¹⁶ Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 272.

¹⁷ During this period, many conversions took place in the favour of the Adventist cult, Elis Neagoe-Pleșa, Liviu Pleșa, "Culte neoprotestante din România în perioada 1975-1989", in *Partidul, Securitatea și Cultele: 1945-1989*, ed. Adrian Nicolae Petcu (București: Nemira, 2005).

¹⁸ Daniela Cârlea Șontică, "Culte permise în Republica Socialistă România", *Jurnalul Național*, February 27, 2009, accessed February 15, 2011, <http://www.jurnalul.ro/sc-nteia/jurnalul-national/culte-permise-in-republica-socialista-romania-319374.html>.

¹⁹ Florentina Bodeanu, in Camelia Sisko, "Baptismul, de peste 120 de ani în Transilvania", *Corso*, July 13, 2010, accessed February 15, 2011, <http://www.ofcorso.ro/articol/oras/4/inapoi/cluj/articol/baptismul-de-pest-120-de-ani-in-transilvania.html>.

²⁰ Alexa Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România - Curs prelat la seminarul teologic baptist din București, România*, vol. 2 (1919-1944) (Chicago: Romanian Baptist Church Publishing, 1980), 41.

²¹ Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România*, 327.

²² Milena Secká, 1996: 98, in Magdaléna Vyletová, "Rumunští Češi, čeští Rumuni: Formy identifikace krajanů žijících ve vesnici Svatá Helena" (bachelor's thesis, Masaryk University, 2007), accessed July 27, 2009, http://is.muni.cz/th/144329/fss_b/BAKULE.pdf.

²³ Preaching the Bible in the national languages was a requirement for Protestants; Evangelicals from Sfînta Elena have made several requests to receive a Czech pastor considering that they had received only Evangelical ones, who

were holding religious service in the Hungarian language, Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 269.

²⁴ See our book (the chapter called *Poveștile întemeierii*).

²⁵ Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 270.

²⁶ Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 450.

²⁷ Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 269-273; Detailed information can be found in Štěpán Křivánek, "Historie sboru BJB v Chebu - 1. Kořeny", accessed February 11, 2011,

[http://notabene.granosalis.cz/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=110&m](http://notabene.granosalis.cz/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=110&mode=nested&order=0&thold=0)
ode=nested&order=0&thold=0.

²⁸ Štěpán Křivánek, "Historie sboru BJB v Chebu - 1. Kořeny".

²⁹ Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 272.

³⁰ Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România*, 105.

³¹ Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România*, 42.

³² Originally: "at the cult held in the prayer house of other communes" – Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România*, 44.

³³ Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România*, 104.

³⁴ Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România*, 44.

³⁵ Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România*, 104.

³⁶ Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România*, 109.

³⁷ V. P., born in Sfînta Elena, 1948, male, Baptist pastor. Interview was conducted in Sfînta Elena, August 8, 2010.

³⁸ Štěpán Křivánek, "Historie sboru BJB v Chebu - 1. Kořeny".

³⁹ V. P.

⁴⁰ Since 1982, with the consent of a few remaining Evangelists, the Baptists would take over their church.

⁴¹ In a monography from 1938, a religious situation of the village is exposed: 672 Catholics, 498 Evangelicals and 112 neo-Protestants (Baptists, Adventists, and Anabaptists) without specifying the size of each group.

⁴² Štěpán Křivánek, "Historie sboru BJB v Chebu - 1. Kořeny".

⁴³ Gecse, "Istoricul comunităților", 272.

⁴⁴ Štěpán Křivánek, "Historie sboru BJB v Chebu - 1. Kořeny".

⁴⁵ Popovici, *Istoria Bapțiștilor din România*, 206.

⁴⁶ Štěpán Křivánek, "Historie sboru BJB v Chebu - 1. Kořeny".

⁴⁷ Štěpán Křivánek, "Historie sboru BJB v Chebu - 1. Kořeny".

⁴⁸ V. P.

⁴⁹ Baptists confirm the fact ("Especially at the beginning, Baptists have left, many of them" – B. S., born in Sfînta Elena, 1970, female, Baptist. Interview was conducted in Sfînta Elena, August 9, 2010), but without being able to explain it.

⁵⁰ I. T., born in Sfînta Elena, 1961, female, Catholic. Interview was conducted in Sfînta Elena, August 10, 2010.

⁵¹ F. R., born in Bigăr, 1957, male, Catholic. Interview was conducted in Sfînta Elena, August 7, 2010.

⁵² I. T.

⁵³ Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 107.

⁵⁴ Jenkins, *Rethinking ethnicity*, 108.

⁵⁵ Ș. T., born in Sfînta Elena, 1950, female, Catholic. Interview was conducted in Sfînta Elena, August 8, 2010.

⁵⁶ Ș. T.

⁵⁷ B. S.

⁵⁸ B. S.

⁵⁹ B. S.

⁶⁰ Dénes Kiss, "Romii din Herculian și rolul religiei penticostale în viața lor comunitară", in *Incluziune și excluziune. Studii de caz asupra comunităților de romi din România*, ed. Kiss Tamás et al. (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul pentru Studiarea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, Kriterion, 2009), 136.

⁶¹ B. S.

⁶² I. T.

⁶³ "We hold onto, that those who are Christians to enter into a marriage only in the name of the Lord, meaning only with believers" – "Mărturisirea de credință a Cultului Creștin Baptist din România", *Timișoara Evanghelică wordpress*, January 14, 2009, accessed February 19, 2011, <http://timisoaraevangelica.wordpress.com/2009/01/14/marturisirea-de-credinta-a-cultului-crestin-baptist-din-romania>.

⁶⁴ Field information, September 2005.

⁶⁵ A. Ș., born in Ravenska, 1939, female, Baptist. Interview was conducted in Ravenska, October 3, 2010.

⁶⁶ A. Ș.: "She was baptised before me, yes, she was 19 years old. [Then] we were Catholics, we argued with her, even we beat her, we didn't want her to repent. But now, [God] gave us the thought too, to do it [the conversion]".

⁶⁷ V. P.

⁶⁸ V. P.

⁶⁹ V. P.

⁷⁰ A similar function is held by the Catholic Church: see Răzvan Stan, "Patterns and socio-economic consequences of international labour migration on Catholic and Orthodox villages from eastern Romania (Neamț County)", accessed February 14, 2011, <http://www.ccrit.ro/Pdf/ResearchReports2006/>.

⁷¹ Changing the residence means losing a known space, along many freedoms and habits; also adapting from rural to urban; in the new homeland, the religious group, besides family, stands for the place that reminds of home, of past experiences, of familiar things. To be and to pray together with those familiar recompose an intimate space, that is the relaxed atmosphere from Banat.

⁷² V. P.

⁷³ V. P.

⁷⁴ V. P.

⁷⁵ V. P.

⁷⁶ Monica Vlase, "Rolul femeii creștine penticostale în viața și practica cultului", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Orală*, IV (2003): 73–74.

⁷⁷ Vlase, "Rolul femeii creștine penticostale", 71.

⁷⁸ For example, churches from Cheb and Žatec.

⁷⁹ Štěpán Křivánek, "Historie sboru BJB v Chebu - 1. Kořeny".

⁸⁰ "Něco o našem sboru", Sbor Bratrské Jednoty Baptistů v Žatci, accessed February 16, 2011, http://web.quick.cz/bjbzatec/o_sboru.html.

⁸¹ "Z historie sboru", Bratrská jednota baptistů Cheb, accessed February 16, 2011, <http://cheb.baptistcz.org/index.php/z-historie-sboru.html>.

⁸² B. S.

⁸³ Pavel Rozkoš, “După șaizeci de ani...”, in *Europa identităților*, ed. Elena Rodica Colta (Arad: Complexul Muzeal Arad, 2008), 491.

⁸⁴ Zdeněk R. Nešpor, Martina Hornofová and Marek Jakoubek, “Čeští nekatolíci v rumunském Banátu a v Bulharsku – Část čtvrtá: Religiozita reemigrantů. Závěry”, *Lidé města* 8 (2002): 103.

⁸⁵ Nešpor, Hornofová and Jakoubek, “Čeští nekatolíci v rumunském Banátu”: 103.

⁸⁶ B. S.

⁸⁷ This way, a revival of religious feeling occurred in the communities formed after Second World War – Nešpor, Hornofová and Jakoubek, “Čeští nekatolíci v rumunském Banátu”: 87.

⁸⁸ The pastor V. Pek thinks that in Czechoslovakia the situation was worse to the „Christians” – Michal Pavlásek, “Úpadek tradice a změny v životě obyvatel Svaté Heleny” (M.A. thesis, Masaryk University, 2006), accessed October 9, 2011, http://is.muni.cz/th/110312/ff_b/.

⁸⁹ V. P.

⁹⁰ For instance, on the website of the Union of the Baptist Brothers from the Czech Republic (Bratrské jednotě baptistů v České republice) visits as such are being mentioned; see the feature report of a pastor invited by the local congregation: Vladislav Donát, “Svatá Helena”, accessed January 23, 2011, <http://archiv.bjb.cz/view.php?cisloclanku=2006090901>.

⁹¹ V. P.

⁹² V. P.

⁹³ This instrument is used by many neo-Protestant cults (Baptists, Pentecostals, Adventists). They are used in the Baptist church of Cheb (where many parishioners from Sfînta Elena are to be found).

⁹⁴ B. S.

⁹⁵ B. S. (“We were taught by parents, we taught children and so on”).

⁹⁶ B. S.

⁹⁷ Ș. T.

⁹⁸ Vyletová, “Rumunští Češi, čeští Rumuni”, 37.

⁹⁹ Adéla Kosinová, “Česká Menšina V Rumunském Banátu – Reemigrace” (bachelor’s thesis, Pardubice University, 2005), accessed October 1, 2010, http://krajane.czu.cz/geografie-nab/doku.php?id=ceska_mensina_v_rumunskem_banatu_-_reemigrace.

¹⁰⁰ László Fosztó, *Colecție de studii despre romii din România* (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, Kriterion, 2009), 167.

¹⁰¹ Although the activity of the Baptists from Sfînta Elena was supervised by communists (Gecse, “Istoricul comunităților”, 261), the villagers have not mentioned information as such.

¹⁰² Doru Radosav, preface to *Neoprotestanții din Transilvania în timpul regimului comunist. Studiu de caz: bapțiștii din județul Cluj – Mărturii și documente*, by Denisa Bodeanu (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2007), 7.

¹⁰³ “Intense community spirit, a feeling of great social solidarity, equality and togetherness”, Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology* (Columbus: McGraw Hill, 2000), 502.

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