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FROM MISSIONARING TO PROSELYTISM
(Conceptual Differentiation, Historical Survey and Indications of Future Perspectives)*

Introduction

Any consideration of the process of ethno-cultural separation or coming together of different religious and ethnic communities inevitably involves a complex scheme of evangelization, conversion and proselytism that has evidently been neglected in the domestic sociology of religion and even in theological disciplines. "A modern department store of religion and spirituality", as E. Barker would call it, made the population of the Balkan societies in transition face religious pluralism, that is, the demand for peaceful co-existence of the traditional and the alternative religious structures. This encounter has actually launched a two-way process, namely, on one hand, there is diverse and controversial acceptance of religious innovations on the part of the believers (i. e., deeply devoted and traditional believers), and, on the other hand, the same ones are being transformed into objects of intensified influence of minority and, especially, new religions. Hence, in the whole whirlpool of the relations among religions of the minorities and minority historical and unhistorical beliefs, traditional religions and new religious movements, a problem of evangelization, conversion and proselytism inevitably opens up.

The paper first discusses the understanding of the crucial concepts, namely, "missionaring", "conversion" and "proselytism" in domestic and translated layman and theological literature. Further on, we follow a historical development and interrelations among the traditional religions as well as a chronology of differences in the religious worldviews in the Balkan societies from the Middle Ages till the very end of the twentieth century with a special reference to the territories of the "second" Yugoslavia. This is followed by making a map of the whole plurality of social and material reasons that favored further spreading of minority and new religions all over the Balkan religious field which was, up to that time, mostly pervaded with the traditional national churches. The paper ends with an analysis of the character of the small religious communities' religious engagement at the Balkans in the first decade of the new millenium.

Missionaring/Evangelization

The concept of "missionaring" (lat. *missio*, errand) has its own *internal* and *external* meaning. The internal missionaring implies "the work of the church among its own believers for the sake of keeping and improving their religious and moral life" (Драшковић, 1982: 19); in its external sense it is understood as "an activity of the religious organizations thereby they spread their beliefs among followers of other religions in order to convert them to their religion (Mandić, 1969: 315), "activities of

representatives of a religious community directed to winning over members of other religion" (Cvitković, 1991: 190), "a movement or action for converting infidel, usually non-Christian, backward peoples into Christianity" (Драшковић, 1982: 20) or "a systematic effort to expand Christianity so as to captivate non-Christian peoples by teaching, preaching and social activity" (*Енциклопедија живих религија /Dictionary of Living Religions/*, 1990: 459). The mission is "activity of some religious community" while the missionary is "a person carrying out a religious mission among followers of other religions" (Cvitković, 1991: 189-190).

And evangelization in a narrow sense means giving instructions about "the principles and ideas of the Gospels" (Cvitković, 1991: 97) while in its wider meaning it implies "activities of some Christian community among people; conversion to Christianity" (Cvitković, 1991:97), that is, "the process by which the members of a certain nation, namely those that are colonization target, are converted to one of the Christian religions" (Mandić, 1969: 162).

The beginnings of the Christian missionaring are related to the personage and deeds of Jesus Christ, that is, missionary journeys and missionary sermon of his disciples and Apostle Paul all over Asia Minor, Greece and Palestine (around 45-58). His message was focused upon the birth of new humanity thanks to the redeeming act of Jesus Christ, crucified and resurrected (Dap. 17, 16-34; 1. Corinthians, 1, 18-31; Galatians, 2, 15-3, 14). Early in the second century Christianity reached Britain in the north and the Persian Gulf in the east while the Roman Empire becomes Christian in the fifth century. It reached Slavic peoples in the 9th and 10th centuries while between the 7th and 12th centuries it expanded to Germany and Scandinavia. The Islam campaign and the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in the year of 1453 caused the center of the Roman Catholic mission to cross the Atlantic Ocean: the Spanish got to Central and South America, Portugal reached Brazil while the English and French reached North America. At the same time, the Portuguese reached the Far East thus laying the foundation for further mission spread across Asia. In the seventeenth century the first Protestant missionary programs developed in India as well as in Chine in early 19th century (*Енциклопедија живих религија /Dictionary of Living Religions/*, 1990: 459-460).

The genuine Christian missionary activity in Asia started as late as the nineteenth century. It was especially forwarded by the Protestant spirit eager to promote trade activities in the New World together with the spread of education as a means of diverting people from idolatry and superstition. The sermons of the Christian Protestant missionaries among the enlightened layers of the mainstream religious traditions of Asia did not give any significant results mainly due to the fear of rejecting the former religious confessions while they did have impact on lower social classes and tribal cultures.[1] Following the footsteps of the Protestant missions, the Roman Catholic ones also developed. They set up, among other things, missionary activities and, in addition to religious orders, especially organized widest layer of religious population (for instance, the Society for Expansion of Faith founded in Lyon in 1822). It was also noted that the Orthodox Church, in the mid-nineteenth century, also developed missionary activity, most of all in the Altai Mountains in Central Siberia, in Alaska (that belonged to Russia till 1864) and in Japan.

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[1] T. Ling (1990: 419) presents statistical data of the German Rheine mission in the region of Batak at Sumatra: "After the first twenty years of missionary activity, up to 1881, the result was 7,500 converts; it the next twenty years it became a mass movement with an inflow of 103,000 of converted natives. Since the Protestant Christian was focused on the conversion of individuals as well as their introduction into the Church as *individuals*, on principle one for one, such mass movements gave birth to the problems for whose solution Protestantism was not validly equipped".

Conversion

Any analysis of the process of ethno-cultural separation or coming together of different religious and ethnic communities inevitably involves the phenomenon of *conversion*. So far the research of the past and the culture in the Balkan areas, consciously or unconsciously, has tended to overlook this issue.

In the *Dictionary of Serbo-Croatian Literary Language* (1982: 962-963) *to convert* is defined as "to turn into, change into something else, give a completely new form to something... to turn oneself into, to change into somebody else, to take on a completely new shape". *Conversion* is a noun derived from the verb *to convert* and it implies both one's own conversion and that of making others convert.

In *Jewish religion,* this word is used only for the way in which a person born as a non-Jew becomes a Jew. It has the same meaning as "to become a proselyte or a newly-converted."

W. James (1990: 129) gives a psychological definition of the specific experience that most often happens to an individual only once in his lifetime having in view, primarily, the experience in the Protestant Christianity since the late eighteenth till the first half of the twentieth century: "To convert, to be reborn, to accept Grace, to experience religion, to gain security; all these are expressions denoting a process, gradual or sudden, by which the conscious becomes healthy, superior and happy as a consequence of the firm adherence to religious realities".

According to I. Cvitković (1991), *the convert* is "the one who has undergone conversion, that is, passed from one religion to another" (p. 155) while *conversion* is "conscious abandonment of one religious belief and acceptance of another" (p. 155).

For P. Tilich (1988: 105-106) the term "conversion" has connotations that make it hardly usable: "It may signify awakening from the state in which ultimate care is lacking (or it is hidden) and the transition of the awakened consciousness in it. If this is conversion, then every spiritual experience is one of conversion. Conversion also means substitution of a set of beliefs by another one. Conversion in that sense has no ultimate value. It may though it does not have to happen. It is important only if the experience of the ultimate faith, in the new belief, is better preserved in the old belief. If this happens, conversion is of great importance...".

In *Dictionary of Living Religions* (1990: 555, 583) conversion is defined as "willing abandonment of one way of life or religious system for the sake of another", that is, it often implies "an open change of affiliation or adherence that goes either from *the lack* of faith to *some* faith or from the *old* faith to the *new* one".

A similar definition of conversion can be also found in Đ. Šušnjić's works (1998: 446): "Conversion is abandonment of one religious view of the world (which includes learning, experience, rituals, etc.) and acceptance of some other: man is awakened for some other faith in intellectual, emotional and practical sense so that his past religious life seems strange like someone else's for he has just 'found himself', 'discovered his true self' or 'experienced rebirth'. Conversion, therefore, assumes renunciation of the old and acceptance of the new attitude to life: it is either transition from faith to unfaith or transition from the old faith into the new one as both of them are expressed and manifested in official religious systems".

Z. Kuburić (2003: 403) considers conversion as a progressive and interactive process of man's adaptation to the life which is in accordance with God's will: "The religious systems imply the need for some sort of reorientation from the life in disbelief towards the life in faith or from the immature to the mature religious life. Within the religious Judeo-Christian it means to turn away from what is evil and turn to God. Of all the words used for expressing the concept of conversion, the most often used is the Jewish verb *schub* or changing the path, returning. In Greek the

verb *epistrephein* is used for expressing 'return to God.' The verb *metanoein* expressed an inner turn".

The phenomenon of conversion – including one's own conversion, conversion of others and other above-mentioned meanings – can be approached from many aspects, namely, historical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, theological and the like. From the socio-cultural standpoint it is possible to distinguish: 1. conversion from atheism to life in faith, 2. conversions within the same religious tradition (for example, within Christianity), 3. conversion from different religious traditions (for instance, from Christianity to Islam and *vice versa*) and 4. conversion to fundamentalist "holes" and new religious movements.[2]

The search for the spiritual *self* and the achievement of the true, religiously-grounded personality are the decisive factors that make a community member opt for a new way of believing, thinking and living. Concerning this, we can distinguish between *intracultural* and *intercultural* conversion. Intracultural conversion assumes that a person born within a certain religious tradition as a non-believer becomes a believer or when conversion takes place within the same religious system, for instance, when an Orthodox believer converts into a Protestant, or when a Roman Catholic turns into an Orthodox, etc. No radical change of the worldview takes place since there is no change of the traditional cultural pattern. In the case of intercultural conversion – or attempts of the contemporary West Christian missions all over the world or conversion of a Christian into Islam – fundamental changes in the cognitive emotional and ideological life of an individual take place; moreover, there is an unavoidable obligation to adjust oneself to the faith whose roots are in some other radically different culture.

The act of abandoning the former religious view of the world and accepting some other one is usually marked by some ritual acts (ritual washing, circumcision, pilgrimage, prayer, taking Communion, baptism, etc.) and that is how the convert gets an official confirmation that he has converted. Likewise, he promises in public that in the future he would respect symbols, values and norms of the newly accepted faith.

However, there still remains an ambiguity regarding the possibility of differentiating the genuine conversion from the false one. The one closest to the truth represents the view that the decision about abandoning one religious world view and accepting some other one is made after a long-term contact with the members of some other faith and gradual learning about its doctrine, rituals, symbols, norms and institutions.[3]

Apart from this gradual conversion, there is also the possibility of sudden conversion, that is, an instantaneous break-up with the old way of belief. Yet, it is hard to find someone whose disappointment in his faith is so great that any other one seems better to him without his having any previous contact with the faith to which he is converting. The convert either returns to his old faith quickly or just performs religious rites of the new one without any deeper religious experience or
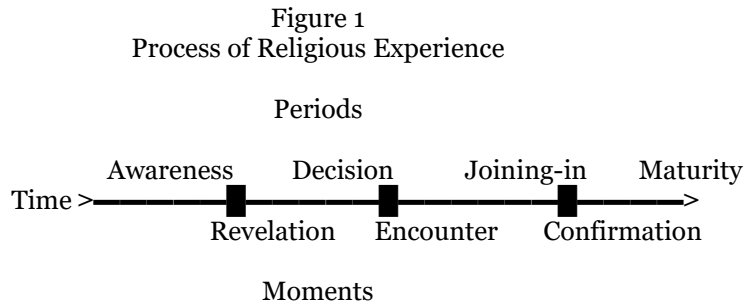
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[2] Z. Kuburić (2003: 403) differentiates between: a) individual and collective conversions according to the number of participants, b) with respect to conversion act duration, fast and efficient conversions unlike those that last for a long time and are almost unnoticeable, c) with respect to freedom of choice – voluntary and compulsory conversions, and, d) according to duration – lasting and temporary conversions, etc.

[2] "His decision surprised his surroundings and sometimes even himself (to the extent that the process went along unconscious pathways). For his surroundings he changed all of a sudden but, as we can see, for such a fundamental change to take place it needed to be preceded by gradual depositing of small experiences and partial findings whose total sum, under certain circumstances, brought about a radical change of the overall view of the world and in the way of life congenial to it" (Šušnjić, 1998: 447)

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search for the sacred; though, by the outside manifestations, he can still perform his religious duties very dutifully, even better than other members of the same faith. What we do witness here is *cultural alienation* that only confirms the thesis that lasting conversions cannot be a fruit of a change imposed by force.

For Tippett, the act of conversion is a constituent part of some longitudinal process whose former stages can be tracked down:[4]

Figure 1
Process of Religious Experience

Periods

Awareness   Decision   Joining-in   Maturity
Time >━━━━━■━━━━━━━■━━━━━━■━━━━━━>
         Revelation   Encounter   Confirmation

Moments

For Lofland and Stark conversion is "a process which comprises all previous affinities, degrees or phases" (Hamilton, 2003: 430). In their studies of the Church of Unification or, more precisely, a sect better known as "Moonies" at the onset of its expansion in the USA, they defined the model consisting of seven phases according to which every convert has to: 1) experience permanent tension, 2) express willingness to solve problems within the religious perspective, 3) defines himself as a religious seeker, 4) finds himself at some turning point of his life, 5) enters into affective (emotional) relations with the cult members, 6) neutralizes and breaks the remaining connections outside the cult, and 7) establishes an intensive interaction with the other members.

Later studies carried out by Greil and Rudy proved that only two aspects of the Lofland and Stark model – namely, establishment of emotional ties and an intensive interaction (no matter if it is a face-to-face interaction or through communication network and media) – are universally or almost universally applicable. Yet, they agree in their estimate that "acceptance of some teaching is a gradual process that is realized only as a result of the devotion to one organization or group", that is, that "conversion is not something that simply happens to people but, instead, they must be actively engaged in its realization" (Ibid., p. 433).

Proselytism
Proselytism (gr. *prosēlytos* = ardor, enthusiasm with newly-accepted faith – from *pros-ēlitos* = one who has passed into another faith, a convert) denotes "at-

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[4] "At the beginning there is a period in the person is minimally aware that he lives in an atmosphere in which religious experiences are taking place. After this period there comes a moment of revelation in which the person is consciously focused upon those who undergo a religious experience. This is followed by the decision-making period during which the person for the first time takes into consideration the possibility that he himself might have such an experience. This brings about the moment of encounter in which the person undergoes conversion... Tippet's later period refer to the religious experiences undergone after the conversion. First there is a period of joining in during which the person, together with others, joins the community of learning, training and discipline. This is usually followed by a period of confirmation when the new convert undergoes "a rite of passage" that confirms him as a member of the religious body with all the rights and that he able to experience religion in all its depth. Finally, there is a period of maturity during which the person develops and grows while living in the religious community. In this period the religious experience more and more takes on a stylized, ritualistic and traditional character" (*Енциклопедија живих религија /Dictionary of Living Religions/*, 1990: 584).

tempts to collect as many followers of new faith as possible and it is predominantly related to Christianity and Islam" (Тодоровић, 2003б: 406). It is also defined as "propaganda for the sake of converting to one's own religion followers of other religious teachings" while the proselyte is defined as a "person who has passed from one religious community into another and who tries to get as many new adherents as possible" (Cvitković, 1991: 227-228).

For O. Mandić (1969: 396) the proselyte is "an evangelical name for the one who is not a Jew but who has converted to Jewish religion... Later on, the proselyte came to refer to anyone who has just converted to some religion".

At the moment when one religious system is abandoned for the sake of another, the prescribed rituals (baptism, circumcision, pilgrimage) all at once announce the conversion and offer psychological support to the convert. Those subject to proselytism are expected to renounce the traditional cultural model and to accept the new one (for instance, activities of Western Christian missions in South America). One of the reactions to the radical requests may be acceptance of the ceremonies and rituals of the new faith without more significant adjustment regarding the worldview of the convert in faith. Imposing themselves by force, the missions under the sign of Christ or Mohammed turned out to be lacking life-generating aspect since they were not accompanied with a willing and all-inclusive inner conversion of the newly converted.

After the Christianization of the South Slavic peoples was completed, the first conversions of individuals, groups and large segments of the ethnos to other religions or confessions at the Balkans were related to the process of Islamization at the Balkan Peninsula up to the mid-fifteenth century. The process which started with the first Turkish conquests in Thracia spread along with the Ottoman expansion and finally caught all the Christian countries that came under Ottoman rule. Islamization in the sixteenth century was especially strong in Bosnia and Serbia and it led to mass conversion, first of all, of urban Christian population to Islam.

On principle, conversion to Islam was based upon free will of people while the element of compulsion stayed behind. An organized and adamant missionary work on propagating the new faith assumed declarative and formal character of the conversion to Islam.[5] In fact, however, this was proselytism supported with the following processes: "weakening of respective Christian institutions and hindrance of their work, giving full civil rights to new Muslims as well as material privileges and a set of benefits stemming from acceptance of the faith of the ruling class and the state" (Васић, 1998: 54-55).

Yet, not rarely did the "new" Muslims try to preserve their ties with the old faith. The most drastic example of the preservation of faith was *crypto-Christianity* (Crypto-Orthodox and Crypto-Catholics) or *bireligioisty*.[6] Among the converts a

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[5] "It was enough for the Christian to say the learnt formula of *shehadet* stating: *'Ešhedu en la ilahe illallah ve ešhedu enne Muhammedun abduhu ve resuluhu'*, meaning, 'I confirm that there is no other god except for Allah and that Mohammed is his slave and emissary'. Christians were very often talked by their Islamized relatives and neighbors into saying *shehadet* so that they could be immediately proclaimed Muslims. The refusal was considered as an offence to the faith and was cruelly punished by law" (Васић, 1998: 59).

[6] One of our best-known historians-Turkologian, Olga Zirojević (2003: 7), gives a whole scepter of names from different Balkan countries: "... Albanian synonym for bireligiosity is *'laramane'* which means "colorful, of different colors" (di vari colori)... Bireligiosity (of two faiths, colorful - domestic, Slavic name; Greek *dipistia* and *patsali*) was also registered in Macedonia, Kosovo, in South Serbia, Montenegro, Herzegovina, Bosnia, Bulgaria. There were also at the Hellespont, in Trapezunt (*stavrioti*), in Greece, Dodekanez, Mitilena, Crete, and especially at Cyprus where they were called *linovamvak*" (meaning linen and cotton – between Christian and Muslims in faith, just like clothes) or *lardokophtedi* (since they were pigeaters), *mesokertedi* (Italian. *mezzo quarto* – fifty-fifty), that is, *mesi* (*paramesi*), *patsali*, *apostoliki*, as well as *Valahads* (in Greek Macedonia) who, unlike other Crypto-Christians, did not hide themselves."

whole set of Christian remains survived, namely, respect for churches and monasteries, acceptance of the cross and baptism, celebration of family patron saint holiday, of Christmas, Easter and St. George's Day as well as celebrations of Holy Apostles and dedication of their tombs as cult places, preservation of old customs from the life cycle, etc. those who still adhered to the Christian customs and holidays were regarded by Islam – as the most influential monotheistic religion – as infidels liable to severe punishment. The converts were publicly condemned by Pope Benedict XIV at the first Albanian Council (1744).

Moreover, even the ecumenical dialogue[7] between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics is pregnant with objections to Rome for its proselytic and unionist pretensions. This refers to over ten million members of Uniate, Greek-Catholic churches that preach the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and accept the Pope primacy while preserving Orthodox rituals and organization.

Christianity and Islam through History

The Roman Catholic religion rightfully regarded itself as a system that gathers together the most diverse elements of human religious and cultural life. Its roots are in the Old Testament that unites the ritual and the moral types of faith, Hellenistic mystery religions, individual mysticism, classical Greek humanism and scientific methods of late classical times. Finally, it is founded most immediately on the New Testament that comprises diverse types and represents a unity of ethical and mystic elements.

The primary assumptions of the West European Christian belief comprise the idea that the world is ruled by one single all-mighty divine being that created all that exists *ex nihilo*; mankind is for ever in a state of rebellion against this all-mighty divinity and hence it deserves eternal suffering; filled with compassion for the weaknesses of those it created, the divinity is ready to offer to humanity another chance only if it accepts the announcement of forgiveness performed in words and by death, by resurrection and ascension of man but also of God and man Jesus; God's faith in man can be regained through holy sacraments of the institutional Church (baptism, chrism, Communion, confession, ordaining, wedding and consecration) and in no other way whatsoever; depending on whether they have received or rejected God's Mercy available through the clergy service of the Church, people will be either blessed to enjoy in the eternal bliss of The Paradise or sentenced to suffer eternal pains in Hell (along with the third alternative – Purgatory – where there was still some hope left to get to Paradise). In other words, this is a specific *religious mould* within which man is not capable of any other good whatsoever apart from God's

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[7] "*Ecumenism* (Greek, *oikoumene* from *ikos* = home, house; today 'Universe' or 'all the settled world', all the world system, cosmos – harmony, agreement, order) represents a movement for coming closer of all the Christian churches that came into being in the twentieth century. The secular bases of ecumenism are comprised within a universal aspiration of all people to come together and to try to find together solutions of accumulated social problems. Its religious foundations lie in the understanding of the utter senselessness of any controversy among some churches and of the need for common engagement in the search for unity and renewal (of the Body of Christ). The Orthodox authors usually take the beginnings of ecumenism to have been in 1902 while the Protestant authors relate it to the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburg in 1910. The very term "ecumenism" was more precisely determined as inter-Christian collaboration and dialogue for the sake of achieving full-fledged unity of the Church at the Oxford Conference on Faith and Order in 1937. A visible sign of the ecumenical movement and the church instrument for cherishing the pathway to Christian unity is the World Council of Churches (WCC) with about 330 member churches and its seat in Geneva. The founding assembly of the SSC was in Amsterdam in 1948 attended by 351 delegates from 146 churches including 51 Orthodox ones. So far six more assemblies were held, namely in Evanston (USA) 1954, New Delhi 1961, Uppsala 1968, Nairobi 1975, Vancouver 1982 and Canberra 1991" (Тодоровић, 2003a: 388).

Grace that is accessible to him through mediation of the sacramental system of the Church.

The first conflicts between the churches of the Latin West and the Greek East arose due to the efforts of Emperor Leo III the Iconoclast to persuade the church in Italy his belief that Islam is evil sent by god as a punishment for idolatric use of figures in the Christian Church. That is why, in 731, he was anatemized by Pope Gregory III. Further worsening of the relationship between Rome and Byzantium came about when the papal Church was criticized for many things that the East considered as deviations from the Christian principles such as the concept of The Purgatory, compulsory celibacy of the clergy, denying the rights of the clergy to chrism the baptized, etc. The final separation happened when the Eastern Church objected to Pope for adding, without consulting anyone, the word *Filioque* to the Nikeian symbol of faith in order to point out that the Holy Ghost comes from (God) Father and *Son*. That is why, in 1054, Papal Nuncio Cardinal Humbert left at the altar of St. Sofia a letter in which the Patriarch of Constantinople and all the like-minded persons are excommunicated from the Church. Four centuries later, before Constantinople fell into the hands of Islam in 1453, the negotiations started again concerning possible help from the West while the four publicly declared points that the two churches disagreed about were Pope's right to ultimate power, addition of the word *Filioque* to the symbol of faith, teaching about the purgatory and the question of using yeast or yeast-less bread at the Holy Communion.

Apart from these questions, the differences were also present in some other issues as well, namely, an essential trait of the Western Christian life is man's *justification* by faith and good deeds while in the East this is his *godlike aspect*; the Western Christian Church stresses man's *Original Sin* while the Eastern Church puts an emphasis upon man's *potential* goodness; western theology tends to dualism of matter and spirit (St. Augustine) while the East holds on to the idea of the unity of matter and spirit or at least their mutual dependence; in the West of the greatest importance is to hold on to the upright norms while in the East the genuine faith ("Orthodox" in the sense of "genuine") comprises both proper religious service and an honest experience of it. The Western Church stresses the idea of Christ as a *victim*, of making a sacrifice to God that would revoke human sin while in the East a much greater stress is placed on the idea of Christ *Triumphant* over the forces of evil. The Western Church finds it congenial to have a monarchic authoritarian system with the recognized papacy while in the East the power belongs to the overall community of believers without any authoritarian individual that would be considered as Christ's monarch on Earth.

The signs of dissatisfaction with the Pope's monopolistic Orthodoxy were continually manifested between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries in the form of religious ideas and procedures as well as renegade movements (Waldensians, Begine, Bogard, Amori, mysticism of David Dinan and Heinrich Eckhardt, Occamists, etc.)[8] despite Pope's anatemas and rigorous persecution by the Inquisition. Gradually the importance of the holy secrets eroded while the sacramental clerical system of the Papal Christianity was being refuted; finally, all this erupted in Luther's protest against the abuse of the clerical vocation for the sake of selling absolutions. The Christian religious communities that originated from an immense movement of the *Reformation* in the fifteenth century Europe objected to the Roman Catholic Church its exclusion of prophetic self-criticism with the help of the authoritarian system of the Church as well as the growth of the ritual elements of faith at the

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[8] More about it in: Ling, 1990: 333-339.

expense of moral and personal. In other words, the "Protestant faith in an un-mediated, face-to-face encounter with God creates more independent individualities than the Catholic faith and its clerical mediation in the relation between God and man" (Tilich, 1988: 100).

The philosophy of Protestantism, in its simplest form, stressed that men existed for the sake of God; some of them were saved while others damned while the guarantee of salvation could be found in the success which accompanied one's commitment to his secular vocation. What was encouraged was a serious use of time and means whose spending on this world's pleasure was anatemized. With its *moralistic individualism*, the Protestant teaching justified the fact that the rich people were becoming richer by emphasizing their serious commitment to their duties and responsibilities, their hard work, moderation and savings; on the other hand, the poverty of the poor was explained as idleness, moral corruption and a vicious way of life. The above-described doctrine especially favored the emergence of modern rational capitalism in the nineteenth century. That is why Protestantism ensured for itself an entirely specific role in the universal process of rationalization of the form of social organization and management in all the domains of social life; besides it established itself as a powerful and attractive alternative religious system in comparison with the Papal pattern of religious faith and practice in the West.

Lutheranism and *Calvinism* mostly established themselves as middle-class religions. As religious movements capable of representing the so-called "disinherited classes" of their time (peasantry, workers, underpaid craftsmen, seasonal workers in cities) there came into being *Anabaptists* in the sixteenth century and *Quakers* in the seventeenth century but even these movements, in the eighteenth century, increasingly became religions of honest, sober and caring traders and businessman. The emotional needs for the religion of salvation of the widest social layers were satisfied by *early Methodism* thus marking a revolution in the religious life and ethos of the eighteenth century England. The Methodism of John Wesley, an otherwise ordained priest of the Anglican Church, stressed the importance of the reality of *salvation* that was done by Christ for the sake of man, namely, the salvation accessible to all without any restrains, the salvation as an objective fact as well as the possibilities of arriving at a subjective or personal belief into salvation by emotional means. Its impact continued in the following century in the Anglo-Saxon world inspiring its mostly working class membership with the idea of holiness as an achievable religious goal thus shaping its moral and social position. According to the numerous interpretations, the Methodist ideas worked as a safety-valve that eased off the revolutionary tensions of the English working class movement while the experience of the family community and collective prayers is regarded as a precursor of trade union organization.

However, the history of the Christian religion in the first half of the nineteenth century on the European continent and in England was characterized by the movement known as *evangelicalism* with the following traits: it is distinguished by "a powerful emphasis on the secular rather than on the spiritual..., its care for uprooting social injustice such as slavery, its care for education and, above all, its respect for the Christian Bible as an inspired word of God and measure of universal truth" (Ling, 1990: 406). Evangelicalism was most strongly expressed in America where it took on the form peculiar for socially lower layers that is usually known as "revivalism". It is a movement dealing with the issues of individual conversion and salvation whose roots are in English Puritanism and European Pietism. In America the Puritan and the Pietan influences were felt in the colonial period while after the American Revolution the Methodists became the strongest advocates of this drift.

Apart from the South and some parts of the West, revivalism experienced, after the First World War, a drastic decline and it almost became identified with conservative Protestantism.

An inter-religion dialogue between Christianity and Islam took place as early as in Byzantium though a long time before its official downfall. M. Vukomanović (2003: 27) states that as early as in the eighth century the Christian defenders proclaimed the *Koran* an untrue book while considering Mohammed a false prophet, namely, "the convert to the new religion was, in fact, obliged to anatemize Mohammed, all of His relatives by names as well as all the *haifas* till Jazid (680-83). Other anatemas were directed against the *Koran*, teaching about Paradise, polygamy and predestination". The central theological problem was consistent monotheism of the Muslims, namely, the one that could not reconcile with the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity. Likewise, what was criticized was Muslim polygamy, the teaching about Paradise as a place of joy and pleasure and the belief in predestination, which was so unlike the Christian teaching about free will. On the other hand, Islam recognized to Judaism and Christianity the character of authentic revelations but it also launched a controversy against the religious arts, iconography and the Gospels as second-hand reports instead of being treated as direct announcement of God's Word. Some attempts to improve the relations between the two mainstream religions were recorded as late as between the two world wars but they weakened after the revolution in Iran in 1979 and Islam revivalism. After the events of September 11, 2001, the question remains open if in the new millenium the relationship between the West and Islam would develop in the light of Huntington's projection of irreconcilable differences or as a relationship that would give birth to a completely new quality, as a direct expression of mutual influence and dialogue.

Serbian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, Islam Religious Community, Protestant Religious Communities and "New" Religious Movements at the Balkans and on the Territory of Former Yugoslav Republics

With the blessing of Nikeian Emperor and Patriarch, the Serbian autocephalous archbishopric was established in 1219 while its first Archbishop was Sava Nemanjić. The elevation of the Serbian archbishropic to the level of the Patriarchate took place in 1346 which was, after a period of open disagreement, officially recognized by the ecumenical Patriarch in 1375. Byzantium made a concession to the Patriarchate of Peć due to the increased danger spreading across the Balkan region of being conquered by the Turks. Thus, harmony was established between the Serbian medieval Church and state, namely, in the canonical-legal domain, concerning the issues of dogma and liturgy, the church organs were independent in their decision-making while the church-political, social and administrative matters that were of equal importance for the Church and the state were discussed and decided upon by the state assembly. This state lasted until the onset of the Osmanli-Turkish rule at the Balkans.

What it brought about was first extinction followed by renewal of the Patriarchate (1557) as an expression of the territorial pretensions of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent towards Hungary. A changed attitude toward the Serbian ecclesiastical organization brought to the throne Makarije Sokolović while its legal position was constituted by the Hatisherif. A church-layman council of the Patriarchate of Peć was constituted while the ecclesiastical self-rule communities were set up though all of them subordinated to the centralized rule. Due to some counter-Turks foreign policy combinations and for the sake of preserving the Serbian national identity and

constituting the Serbian national being, the Church again lost the confidence of the Turkish state, which led to its new abolition in 1766. The Sultan Berat (decree) forbid its renewal while its institutions were taken over by the Ecumenical Church. Despite numerous migrations and adjustments to turbulent international developments, the church-cultural and rural-poetic language was used to build upon the ornaments of the Serbian national tradition in the eighteenth century just as the idea of the right to the future was preserved.

On the wings of the national liberation zeal of the First Serbian Insurrection in 1809 Archimandrite Melentije Stefanović was elected as the Metropolitan while, a year later, in Belgrade, the first theological school was founded financed by the state. Prince Miloš Obrenović used his influence with the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1815 to ordain Archimandrite Melentije Nikšić as Bishop of Šabac. By the Sultan Hatisherif dating 1830 Serbia became a vassal princedom within Turkey; on the basis of the same document, the Concordat was concluded between Serbia and the Patriarchate of Constantinople by which the Orthodox Church obtained the characteristics of an autonomous body thus achieving the status of a state church. The already-mentioned pan-Hellenism of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as well as pan-Bulgarism of the established Bulgarian Exarhat in 1870 as well as the first indications of the Macedonian population that, due to more than evident Bulgarian assimilating tendencies, it should get its own church moved the Serbian state and church to bring up once again the question of renewal of the Patriarchate of Peć. The things were considerably improved by the international recognition of the independence of Serbia at the Congress in Berlin in 1878. Until the Yugoslav state unity on December 1 1918 the Orthodox dioceses outside Serbia continued their educational, cultural and national activities despite the efforts on the part of the Ecumenical, Habsburg and Ottoman rules to dissolve the national and religious identity of Serbs in the region.

The Declaration of Corfu in 1917 announced the intention of the Yugoslav authorities to make official all the religions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Islam) thereby the Serbian Orthodox Church would lose its status of the state church. This happened soon after the foundation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (or, from 1929, Kingdom of Yugoslavia) by uniting all former local (autochephalous and autonomous) Serbian Orthodox Churches into the Autocephalous United Orthodox Serbian Church of the Kingdom of SCS. Yet, despite all this, the Serbian Orthodox Church in the following period completed its organizational build-up firstly by issuing a temporary act on the Serbian Patriarchate in 1920 followed by the Act on the Serbian Orthodox Church (1929) and the Constitution of the Serbian Orthodox Church (1931). [9] Its jurisdiction extended to include certain parishes and bishoprics in the Diaspora while, in 1920, the Orthodox Theological Faculty was founded. On the turbulent scenes of social and political troubles in the thirties until the fall of the pro-pact-with-Germany policy of the last Yugoslav government, the Serbian Orthodox Church mostly kept its neutrality but not always. It first expressed its lack of sympathy for the foundation of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia followed by the legal confirmation of the Concordat with the Vatican signed in 1935 by M. Stojadinović's and, finally, it allied with the forces of the *coup d'etat*, namely those who op-

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[9] "It is upon these legislative acts that a unified and centralized system of the ecclesiastical rule and government was founded. Its essential elements are : Patriarch – ultimate ruler, Holy Archbishop Council - highest collective authority, Holy Archbishop Synod - highest collective executive body, High Church Court and Patriarchate Council. The bishoprics are headed by bishops. The church municipalities consisting of one or more parishes are basic units of the system. Within its domain there are other bodies and organs with assisting administration and a spiritual role or with self-rule jurisdiction" (Mirković, 1988: 356).

posed the country's joining the Tripartite Pact; hence it suffered the consequences of the fascist invasion during the Second World War.

Mass Christianization of Slovenians was completed by the early eighth century while that of Croats was done between the seventh and the ninth centuries. After this, these peoples fell into many centuries of dependence on the state of the Francs that they would manage to get out of only after the constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Slovenians and Croats in 1918. With the extinction of the national dynasty in 1102 the Metropolitanate of Split became dependent on new Hungarian lords while the coastal regions were under jurisdiction of Venice. The Bosnian bishropic also abandoned its original seat in Sarajevo and moved to Đakovo thus surrendering to the aspirations of Hungary. The Bishropic of Zagreb was founded by separating a part of the Split Metropolitanate territory thus finally breaking the connection between the North and the South while the ecclesiastical and political seat of Croatia moved from the coast to Zagreb. Around the mid-tenth century in Dubrovnik an independent arch-bishropic was established with its sufragan in Kotor and Trebinje but not for long. The seat in Bar was likewise raised to the level of archbishropic with jurisdiction over the Latin bishropic in Herzegovina, Bosnia, Serbia and Albania. A number of bishropics exist in the region of Duklja, that is, Zeta. The consequences of the schism Between Byzantium and Rome were not so evident as in some other European countries.

Fundamental changes took place with the Turks' intrusion into the Balkans. Catholic bishroprics, both continental and coastal, remained empty while the bishops, appointed by Vienna and Venetian courts managed them from the West. The Catholic population migrated to the border and overseas regions while the Orthodox population formed military frontier areas as the last defense belt of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the countryside there were colonies of Dubrovnik merchants that survived as well as, thanks to special Turkish legislature, larger Catholic mining communities.

The renewal of the Roman Catholic Church started in late seventeenth century with further weakening of the Ottoman Empire. The bishropics of Zagreb, Srem, Bosnia and Dalmatia were restored while the edict issued by Pope Leo XII established Metropolitanates of Zadar, Gorica and Vrhbosanska. At the very end of the nineteenth century there were only about ten thousand Catholics living in Serbia.

Since the Vatican regulated its relations with individual states by special international agreements or Concordants, the position of the Bar bishropic and Catholic population in Montenegro was settled as early as 1886. The negotiations with Serbia started immediately after the Congress of Berlin and they ended on June 24 1914 thus enabling the legal annulment of the Austro-Hungarian Protectorate over Roman Catholic in the independent Serbian state as well as the restoration of Belgrade bishropic (that developed into an arch-bishropic) and the formation of a new bishropic of Skopje. Despite all this, the Holy Seat opposed, till the very last moment, the establishment of the common Yugoslav state headed by Serbia and Orthodox faith though it was forced to do that by the changed political circumstances and the final collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

The position of the Catholic Church in the new state was made twice as difficult: on one hand, there was a continual reserve of the Vatican toward the official authorities (though it exchanged, in 1920, international emissaries with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians) and, on the other hand, there were internal crises induced by "the agrarian reform and compensation of the damage done to the church estates, the Institute of St. Hyeronimo in Rome, the use of the Old Slavic liturgy and Glagolitic, the religious instructions in schools and religious upbringing of

the youth, the ecclesiastical-administrative partition of those parts of the bishropics on the Yugoslav territory whose ordinaria were located in other states, etc." (Unković, 1988: 374).

On the eve of the first Yugoslav community, the state politics of the Catholic Church took on pro-fascist political orientation; separatist tendencies and clericalism grew stronger so that it is no wonder that the Archbishop of Zagreb Alojz Stepinac officially supported the Quisling Independent State of Croatia.[10] The Catholic clergy and press were joined in their affirmation of the pro-fascist spirit by the papers of all sorts of Catholic organizations whose membership comprised adult activists and Catholic youth. The cruelties done by the *ustashas* in the camps all over the Independent State of Croatia to Serbs, Romas, Jews and communists of all nationalities were never condemned while, regarding forceful conversion of Orthodox population into Catholicism, a special body headed by Archbishop Stepinac was formed. Exceptions from the rule included Christian socialists in Slovenia, rare leaders from the highest Church authorities and individual examples of Catholic clergy's engagement in the national liberation movement.

By the Osmanli conquests from the late fourteenth till the late sixteenth century at the Balkans *Islam* established itself as the youngest proclaimed universal monotheist religion of Near East origin. One of its best connoisseurs from the region, D. Tanasković (1988: 381), states that "Balkan Muslims belonged to a united and centralized community of the Osmanli Empire and preached Sunniti Islam of Hanefit (traditional) ritual which, by nature, remained peculiar for the Muslims in Yugoslavia in the post-Osmanli period".

After the retreat of the Osmanli troops from Europe at the end of the seventeenth and in early eighteenth century, the Muslim population from Dalmatia, Lika, Slavonija and Vojvodina moved to Bosnia and Serbia. Again, it left Serbia during the successive stages of its liberation in the period from 1793 to 1867; it is recorded that at the time of the Congress of Berlin, in 1878, there were only some ten thousands. The decree of Mihailo Obrenović dating 1868 officially proclaimed the freedom of worshipping Islam and the Bairakli mosque was put into use. By the Constitutional regulations from 1869 the system of the Islam community in Serbia was established; at its head there was a religious leader, Mufti, whose seat was in Niš and whose appointment was confirmed by the Sheih-ul-islam of Istanbul, the ultimate religious-legal authority of the Osmanli Empire. The Ordinance regulating the ordering of the liberated territories (1913) set up many regional Muftis whose first-grade Sheriat jurisdiction included affairs from the domain of family and hereditary legislature. The state of Montenegro undertook the same actions by its Constitution dating 1905, which stated that Podgorica was the seat of Montenegro Mufti and which guaranteed to Muslims the freedom of undisturbed religious worship. The most compact Slavic Islam community lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite its temporary annexation by the Catholic Austria after 1878. By bringing about the *Statute on the Autonomous Government of Islam Religious and Vacouf Mearif Affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina* in 1909 the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina freed themselves from a too strong state influence and determined their right to manage independently their religious affairs, Islam schooling and vacouf property. Already in 1915 there were 1,200 traditional Islam elementary schools and 32 secondary schools or medreses. The equality of Islam with the other religions was confirmed in Slovenia and Dalmatia in 1912 and in Croatia and Slovenia in 1916.

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[10] "... that more than 200 Catholic priests, 11 of them being bishops and archbishops, were decorated with high-ranking *ustasha* medals" (Unković, 1988: 376).

The legal status and the internal organization of the Islam religious community in the Kingdom of SCS were founded on the Constitutional principle of the freedom of faith and consciousness as well as of the equality of all the accepted faiths. The organizational unity was established on January 31 1930 by issuing the Act on Islam Religious Community and accompanying regulations including the Constitution of the Islam Religious Community,[11] that is, by subjecting all the Yugoslav Muslims under the spiritual authority of the Reis-ul-ulema whose seat as well as that of the High Islam Authorities was transferred to Belgrade. By the new law dating 1936 the seat of the Reis-ul-ulema moved to Sarajevo while all the Muftis were abolished; the basic units were still Dzemats headed by Imams. In addition to a widely spread network of theological institutes, the Islam Religious Community has also involved in rich publishing activity. The future inter-national and inter-confessional relationships with Serbian and other peoples in Yugoslavia were considerably determined by the role that the Islam Religious Community played in war conflicts.

Along with Luther's translation of the *Bible* from Latin into German in early sixteenth century, similar steps were undertaken by Primož Trubar who, in this way, built foundations for Protestantism among the gentry and upper social layers in Slovenia. The same religion was advocated for in Croatia by Croatian Governor Petar Erdedi while in the coastal area and Istria the same was done by a close associate of Luther's, Marija Franković whose penname was Vlačić Ilirik. All of them were, however, under a strong influence of the Counter-Reformation by which the Catholic Church defended itself from the intrusion of "other-way Christians" (Lutherans, Calvinists, Baptists, Methodists, Adventists, Nazarenes and others). The second wave of Protestantization of Slovenia and Croatia came with the spread of religious tolerance, more precisely, with the activities of "Joseph II who proclaimed his 'Patent of Tolerance' in 1781 when the equality of all the confessions in the Empire was recognized" (Branković, 1996: 145). The last wave fell somewhere between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century when the Protestant ideas gradually reached as far as eastern and southern parts of the country, namely those that were, by that time, mostly engaged in the fights against the Islamization process. The first to come among the Serbs were Nazarenes followed by Baptists and Adventists. Meeting with the natural resistance on the part of the Orthodox and Catholic churches, Seventh day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pantecostalians, Methodists and others had also conflicts with the state authorities that forbid and prosecuted them. In particular their position got worse in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia since the St. Vitus Constitution did not allow them to be filed either among "adopted" or "recognized" religious communities.

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Once the Second World War ended, regarding the attitude toward the religious communities, the party and state elite on the territory of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) had three targets, namely, "to restrain the influence of religion and activities of religious communities in the society, to control their activities and to exert pressure upon the leading representatives of the religious communities in the sense of their loyalty to the state organs" (Radić, 2003: 120). The openly expressed ambitions were to keep the religious activities within the constraints of merely performing religious rituals and to suppress them to the periphery of social developments.

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[11] More about in in Новаковић, 2003: 457-462.

In order to realize the above-mentioned goals very concrete state measures were undertaken such as: expropriation and nationalization of all church property, revalorization of church fond, prohibition of collecting contribution for religious needs, transfer of marriages and birth registries into state jurisdiction, suppression of religious schools, restrictions of religious instructions, seizure of printing firms and control of religious media, prohibition of religious holidays, spread of atheist literature, etc. Any resistance to the execution of the political will was sanctioned by bringing to trial the representatives of the hierarchy[12] as well as abolition or strict regulation of state endowments and interruption of communication. Various forms of the pressure from the inside were also applied such as interventions with some members of the church hierarchy, direct interference in the election of bishops or patriarch or the formation of local priests' societies,[13] and the like.

The Serbian Orthodox Church, autocephalous and independent, has always been, in its history, closely related to the official authorities, materially more dependent and considerably more sensitive to the state pressure; that is why the above-mentioned measures had more tragic consequences for it than for either the Roman Catholic Church or the Islam Religious Community. Until the issuing of the Clergy Social Insurance Ordinance in 1952 it was left in poverty. In the same year the Orthodox Theological Faculty was separated from the University of Belgrade. Though it increased, in fact, the number of its bishropics, the American-Canadian eparchy was divided into three separate eparchies as a consequence of straightforward objections of former Bishop Dionisije Milivojević to the support given to the formation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church.[14] For the Serbian Orthodox Church as a religious institution its identification with the national mission, that is, accusations of *ethno-philetism,* also had negative connotations.

Neither was the Roman Catholic Church favored or spared by the state authorities partly because of its infamous role in the fight against fascism. It was asked to acknowledge the social and political of the new Yugoslavia, the separation of the church from the state, the ceasing of enemy propaganda and aid to *ustasha* emigration, non-interference into the internal affairs of the state, identification of the territories of the border bishropics with the state borders, the ceasing of the procedure for the beautification of Stepinac, etc. There was even an official break-up of the relationship between the two states in 1952. The changes in the Vatican after the death of Pope Pius XII and a more open approach on the Yugoslav side brought about the signing of the 1960 Protocol by which the Vatican got the jurisdiction over the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia in the spiritual matters. The government became more benevolent to the Church activities while the first inter-religious meetings with the Serbian Orthodox Church and other religious communities were organized. Unlike the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church managed, in the second half of the twentieth century, to consolidate its forces considerably in its conflict

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[12] The trials of Alojz Stepinc, Bishop Varnava in Sarajevo 1948 or Metropolitan Arsenije in Podgorica in 1954.

[13] Created by the state authorities, on March 3 1949, the *Union of the Orthodox Priests' Associations in the SFRY* came into being. Though it gathered together some 80% of the overall number of Orthodox priests in the country, due to its powerful Catholic hierarchy the same association of Catholic priests was one of most poorly organized.

[14] Justifying the formation of the MOC (according to the formula: state, language, church) by the strengthening of the Macedonian factor due to incessant territorial pretensions of the neighboring countries, the state openly exerted pressure upon the Patriarchate to acknowledge autonomy of the Macedonian Orthodox Church which it finally did by accepting its Constitution brought about at the synod of both the Church and the people in Ohrid in 1958. And while the Serbian Orthodox Church cherished hopes that the problem was thus solved, in Macedonia this was regarded only as a step toward the authocephalous status, which was formally proclaimed at the synod in Ohrid in 1967.

with "militant atheism". The reasons for this are rather in its structure, ways of functioning, possibilities of adjustment and international circumstances in which the role of the Vatican was not negligible. The material resources of the Roman Catholic Church coming from abroad were in time identified with those received by all the other religious communities.[15]

After the victory of the democratic socialist revolution and issuing of the Act on Legal Position of Religious Communities (1953), the position of the Islam Religious Communities objectively improved in the old Yugoslavia though the government authorities, just like in the case of the SOC and RCC, tried to achieve a decisive influence on organization, election of leaders and property management. Already in 1947 the Constitution of the Islam Religious Community was adopted by which the highest regulation issuing organ on the territory of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia became the High Vacouf Synod that brought about the Constitution of the Community, elected Reis-ul-ulemas and four members of the High Religious Leadership. The religious-executive organs were Dzemat Board, Representation of Vacouf, Ulema Medjlis and High Religious Leadership headed by the Reis-ul-ulema. By the last change of the Constitution in 1969 the three-part title was modified and shortened into the Islam Community (IC). In the post-war period there were almost 900 mosques and masjids built or reconstructed, the religious instructions were organized for the youngest in accordance with the Constitutional and legal provisions. In the year of 1977 the Islam Theological Faculty in Sarajevo was founded while an opportunity was offered to a number of students to do their schooling all over the Islamic world, primarily at the Al Azhar University in Cairo.

The Protestant religious communities in post-war Yugoslavia can be regarded as branches of the Protestant churches in Europe and the USA. The Act on Legal Position of Religious Communities also regulated the position of the Religious Community of Jehovah's Witnesses, of the Christian Pentecostal Church, the Christian Evangelist-Methodist Church and other churches of the "third branch" of Christianity that are having either their official name or are known as Protestant religious communities. In sociology they are also called "small religious communities" though the expression familiar among the laymen is utterly wrong, namely the "sects". A great variety of teachings – though all of them referring to one single Holy Scripture – a variety of organizational and management forms from democratic to autocratic ones as well as different attitudes toward some social requirements and other religious communities (though all of them are classified into the same religious framework, even today most of them seem to be having no inter-relations at all or cooperation) – all these things were some of the motives for getting to know better the Protestant communities and for studying them. What makes them especially interesting for studies is their relatedness with the mother communities abroad, that is, with international religious organizations such the Ecumenical World Council, the European Conference of Churches, the World Lutheran Federation and the like. In the teachings of some of these Protestant churches there were important resources for certain problems with the state since these segments of their teachings brought about respective legal sanctions. These are issues like absence from work or school, refusal of arm-carrying during the military service, an aggressive missionary work in the recruitment of new believers, issues regarding the building of religious objects, transformation of the residential space into public (business) premises and some

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[15] R. Radić (2003: 137) states that the Catholic Church at the celebration of the Lady of Sinj in Sinj in 1965 there were more than 50,000 people while only a week ago at the celebration of the traditional secular annual *alka* contest attended by the President of the Republic there were only 8,000 to 10,000 people.

other items in the religious teachings or activities of Protestant communities.[16] According to the 1991 Population Census, the number of Protestants was slightly greater than 1%[17] while the largest of the churches are evangelistic and the Reformist Christian Church having their own official associations (Association of the Slovak Evangelistic Clergy and the Association of the Clergy of the Reformist Christian Church).

An equal place in the confessional panorama of the Yugoslav space, former and especially present, is reserved for the so-called "new" religious movements.[18] In the beginning organized as unconventional forms of expressing individual religious views, they very swiftly developed into doctrinaire systems subjected to the will of the leader and his closest associates. Looking from the sociological perspective, they are most often *cults* as the lowest form of religious organization. Each of them has the following ideal-type characteristics: "1. a charismatic leader, 2. strict hierarchy of relationship, 3. total separation from the society, 4. total separation from the family, 5. a small number of members, 6. most often young people as believers, 7. property and work for the leader, 8. manipulative means and programming techniques, 9. economic, psychic (sexual) use of members, and, 10. existence on the verge of legitimacy (on the brink of crime)" (Đorđević, 1998: 12). In Serbia and Montenegro the following movements are active: Ordo Templi Orientalis, Aum Shinrikyo, Rosicrucians, God's Children, Bahaian and Computer sects, Peoples' Temple, Weiko Group, Hare Krishna, Scientological and Unification Churches, and etc.[19] Some cults do not hesitate to take to inhuman, destructive and criminal behavior which, in its turn, causes publicly organized anti-cult movements which try to unmask the detrimental activities of the cults though even sometimes they themselves exaggerate that rightfully deserve appropriate social criticism.

Why Do People Turn to "Small Religious Communities" and "New" Religious Movements?

In their self-critical reference to the inclination of the great historical churches to bury their original religious messages under diverse non-religious elements, rituals and duties, that is, to disguise it into theological expressions and symbols that are hardly comprehensible to modern man, both the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic theologians openly reveal the reasons of joining various movements of "underground Christianity". The attraction of these movements lies in the fact that "their religiosity is spontaneous while the religious expression is pure and understandable", that is, they "offer such forms of collective participation in which it is possible to experience warm human closeness, tranquility and peace of mind" (Коларић, 1987: 94). Their existence is not denied; instead, it is interpreted as an expression of "inner turbulence in the ever living organism of the Church". They are not discarded for their moral, cultural, humane, philanthropic and other values but their religious-doctrinaire character is experienced only as "man's natural psychological aspiration to God carried out through spotless organization and iron formal discipline" (Калезић, 1987: 89-91).

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[16] At the Chair for Sociology of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad this autumn there will be a ph. dissertation defended by Tomislav Branković, MA, dealing with the position and activities of the Protestant religious communities in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1991.

[17] Z. Kuburić (1997: 105) states that "at the Balkans in 1995 there were only 2% of Protestant population".

[18] "Disappointed with the civilization he came from... Western man turns to some new solutions such as messianic sects, millenium movements, salvation sects, pseudo-Christian or pseudo-Oriental and, most often, pseudo-religious groups and movements" (Đurić, 1988: 411).

[19] It is evident that the wave of new faiths is not limited to the Judeo-Christian tradition; instead, it relies on Buddhist, Muslim, Shinto and pagan sources or even psychoanalytic ideas of Freud and Yung, political ideologies, science fiction and UFO-logy.

In the opinion of distinguished Catholic theologian A. Kopilović (2003: 146-147), while the West is overwhelmed with "'new' offers that are, in fact, of Christian inspiration with somewhat adjusted mentality of the modern seeker or even accommodate the mentality of the European way of life", in the European East numerous non-traditional religious organizations are, among other things, approached out of protest against the ideology of 'scientific' materialism. We are referring here to an uneducated and spiritually hungry individual who does not substitute the existing religious adherence with a new alternative but, instead, he converts from the state of atheist lack of faith into one of so many options at the newly created religious market. In the newly-created social circumstances in the countries of this region large religious communities have mostly devoted themselves to make up for many decades of deterioration especially in the material sense; less are they devoted to the genuine spiritual renewal of their flock. The emptiness in the human soul has been in a much more skillful way filled, with their teachings, by no one else but religious organization of Protestant orientation.

The Roman Catholics distinguish three types of Christian communities. *The Church* implies, in addition to the Catholic, Orthodox and Old Eastern faiths of Nestorians, Jacobites, Armenians, Copti and Ethiopians, the religious communities founded at the time of the Reformation: Lutheran, Evangelistic, Reformed (Calvinist) Church, Old Catholics as well as some Christian communities that came into being by breaking away from the Anglican Church such as Episcopalian and Presbyterian. *The Free Church* assumes those Christian communities that consider any connection with the state as a hindrance to their religious development and thus they discard any church organization on the national or territorial basis such as Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Congregationalists or Independents. *Sects* are small church communities of the Protestant type that tend to the spiritualist understanding of the Church, that tend to individualism and elitism such as Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.

Sociologically speaking, "small religious communities" are an offspring of the dissatisfaction with the modern society as well as with the manifest shortcomings of the mainstream churches. A whole series of reasons that encourage the conversion of the Orthodox, Catholics and Islam believers to Protestantism can be summed up in three groups, namely, *religious, social* and *material*. Leaving aside the first ones that are never fully known to the majority of common believers, the social and material aspects most often become predominant when it comes to decision-making. "Small religious communities" 1) are very-well organized communities on local level, 2) have elaborated mechanisms of integration and involvement of their members into the life and activities of the church, 3) are a-national and advocate for equality and brotherhood, 4) refuse socio-political engagement, 5) base their common life on strict adherence to a smaller or greater number of written and unwritten rules, 6) have a developed endowment system and sponsorship, 7) take care about daily practical needs of their members (sick and old people care, children care, education of the youngest, encounters and travels, jobs), and, 8) propagate a healthy way of living (insist upon abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, harmful drugs, coffee), etc.[20]

On the other hand, what is understandable also is animosity of the mainstream institutionalized religious communities towards all new religious movements especially when it comes to mind that the latter ones, with their active ritual. their lack of the classical clerical hierarchy and the appearance of the individual's in-

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[20] More about it in Ђорђевић, 1987: 145-148.

volvement in the religious developments, attract a considerable number of young people otherwise former members of the traditional churches.

What is common to all objections made both by the mainstream religion clergy and the laymen from the surroundings refers to the ways of acceptance of new members. Namely, they are objected to because *conversion does not appear to be an act of free will but a result of manipulation, seduction and compulsion*. The converts loose their spiritual independence, ability for critical reasoning and free choice. Thus, they become victims of brain control, brain washing, hypnosis, social isolation and limited physical freedom. In his scrupulous analysis of the sociological research of the new religious movements from the English-speaking regions, M. Hamilton (2003: 425-443) presents an attitude that there is not enough empirical evidence to support this thesis. It is, in his opinion, rather odium of open hostility and anti-cult orientation of the whole social community. The reaction of an individual to an active, intense and suggestive approach of the religious groups and movements does not have to mean automatically seduction; neither does the very act of joining the group have to mean an unconditional conviction into beliefs and values. It can only mean agreement with beliefs and values without their confirmation in life. The "brainwashing" thesis as an explanation of someone's permanent membership in the movement is very often used by *de-programmers*. These are the people who materially benefit from the unfortunate families of a number of former members. Thus, what is being ignored here are clear statistical indicators showing that the highest percentages of the "recruited" ones are perfectly capable of resisting the proselytic attempts of the movement members. In addition, it is not only the movement but the very personality of the convert (his hopes, fears, expectations and past experience) that must be taken into account in the attempts to figure out the reasons why someone has joined the movement.

E. Barker thinks that the reasons for which people join a movement or remain attached to it are different with respect to what an individual might be looking for as well as to what the given movement can offer him. Those who join in probably believe that they are having a certain positive benefit from their membership regardless of whether it is a feeling of developing a profound relation with God, or better working efficiency, or improvement of the general health state or more qualitative friendly relations within the community of alike-minded persons-believers, or apparent safety or a challenge that the movement is offering.

There are enormous differences among the movements in particular domains of beliefs and practice; that is why it must be avoided to make errors of proclaiming some movement's characteristics as universally valid for all others. Some movements advocate for adjustment to the world (Neo-Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Renewal Movement, some non-Christian groups and western variants of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism), others plead for confirmation of the world (Human-potential Movement) while others are ardent advocates for the rejection of the world (Unification Church). Each of them offers different Utopian, millenium, revolutionary or reforming enterprises in the realization of the given targets and objectives. In all this, some of them do not, indeed, restrain themselves from criminal activities, disturbances of people's mental health by the use of opiates or physical violence (for which they have to be openly stigmatized and suppressed); yet, not all that is offered by the "new" religious movements should be negatively assessed. That is why E. Barker wisely concludes that we have to acknowledge the rights of every individual while checking, at the same time, that they are not reducing the rights of others.[21]

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[21] The editorial efforts of Prof. Dr Dragoljub B. Đorđević from the Mechanical Engineering Faculty and the translation efforts of Prof. Dr Dragana R. Mašović from the Faculty of Philosophy of Niš should result in

On Evangelization, Conversion and Proselytism at the Balkans Today

It is true that pluralist societies ensure choice making in the religious matters. In the liberal societies the citizens are free to be religious and atheists (apostasy), secularists and atheists, to belong to one religious community and question the doctrine of their church (heresy), to convert completely or win over new believers to their own church.

The observations made by the geographer of religion that the "Balkan region is the most complex border area in Europe since it is the territory where Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam meet" (Šećibović, 2001: 107) are still valid in the first years of the twenty-first century though the situation has somewhat changed. The "old" wounds are healed;[22] the centuries-old controversies of the traditional and respected religions (Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Islam) in the Balkan societies have become quite and, finally, the regional entities in which particular religious systems are prevailing have been differentiated. However, a new trend – unsurpressable *conversion* to numerous Protestant religious communities encouraged by the modernization processes in mostly post-socialist Balkan societies – has again launched disputes about missionaring, conversion and proselytism. The traditional, as a rule, national faiths have joined their forces into a unified anti-cult front to condemn the activities of the alternative Christian faiths upon the disintegration of the mono-confessional identity. Is the panic justified?

We hold the following opinion:

1) It is *evangelization* when it is done among non-believers, very often spiritually "hungry" people who remained, under the burden of many decades of anti-religious and communist socialization, deprived of religious education and education about religion,

2) It is *conversion* when converts come from the layers of "cool" traditional believers whose religiosity exhausts itself in the ritual practicing of a few religious rituals of the ancestors' religion (baptism, wedding, funeral, customs),

3) It is *proselytism* when it comes to the *"buying of souls"* among ardent believers of the traditional religions whose knowledge of their own religious tradition and ritual is regularly accompanied with a well-developed awareness about the basic axioms of faith, familiarity with the basic theses of the sacred books as well as the knowledge of the of the spiritual concepts for exploring the transcendent.

"The guilty party" for the occurrence of the first two processes is the clergy of the traditional religions, unaccustomed to the demands of the changed social environment. In their persistent traditional understanding of their role, they have neglected the importance of *practical theology* and *pastoral service.* The emptied place in satisfying diverse social services (free literature and foreign language courses, organized travels abroad, ensured employment, charity activities and the like) was taken by small religious communities while using, at the same time, strong financial support and benefits offered by the new technologies and means of mass communication.

This, however, does not free them of any responsibility for proselytism, which is, by no means, the most unfavored way of expanding religious population. Though intensive missionaring is a dogmatic requirement of the majority of the

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the Serbian edition of Eileen Barker's book on the "New Religious Movements". The given paraphrase is of the Serbian translation of the chapter comprising the concluding remarks.

[22] The Roman Catholic Church more and more rejects Uniatism as a method of achieving the all-inclusive Christian unity while the "Turkization" is just remembered in the historiographic writings from the turbulent events in the past century.

Protestant churches, it is counterproductive to encourage the membership to apply force in trying to win over as many new members as possible even when they are already declared members of some other faith. In this way, it is additionally contributed to the generalizations of the already-rooted prejudices about them as "dangerous and destructive sects and cults" instead of as alternative faiths contributing to the richness of a nation's culture. The peculiarity of the Balkan present day situation is spread of the Protestant worldview into the Roma ethnos.[23] To start dealing with the issue is of importance since further stratification of the Roma confessional being in a specific way makes more complex the process of building up their national and cultural identity. [24]

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[23] In the South of Serbia, on the territory until recently almost "untouchable" for the Protestants, we are witnessing the formation and constant increase of purely Roma Protestant churches. We stress *the Protestant Evangelical Church in Leskovac* headed by the young priest Selim Alijević who, after completing the Biblical Studies in England, took over the spiritual care of his compatriots. More about it in Kurtić, 2003.

[24] More detailed in: Todorović, 2002; Ђорђевић и Тодоровић, 2003; Đorđević, 2003, 2004a, 2004b.

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