1918,
In the Pages of the Review *Christian Culture* from Blaj
(If St. Paul Were Alive … He Would Be a Journalist!)

Viorella MANOLACHE

The present study reviews/retextures and comments columns, signals and texts devoted by the magazine ***Cultura Creştină – Christian culture*** *(1911-1944) to the Great Union, pointing to a double creative valence: on the one hand, the magazine's premise is favourable to* ***militating****, in the spirit of a more than theological culture, through synchronization with landmarks/modern European culture goals of the moment and by attachment to traditional local requests; on the other hand, it insists on valuing the manifesto-act of engaging in the process of renovating society", by focusing on "issues of the major nation", of countermeasures and the settlement of the political, social and ideological-religious crises existing not only in the area of the Church, but also in the sphere of local realities, with unwanted impact on the fundamentals/Christian values of society. The essential reference in the pages of the journal is* ***the year 1918****, with a decisive role in the approach explicitly focused on* ***"The great Union, seen deeper than its concrete and its present"*** *and* ***guided by*** *pivoting elements –* ***the Blaj press; the commemorative anniversary context; post-Union reflections****, but,* ***also*** *the interest* ***given to the substance of memoirs, the importance of the manifestos and imperative ideas of the Great Union program.***

The vocational profile, the action modality and the complex value of the journal ***Cultura Creştină – Christian Culture*** *needs to be subsumed, primarily, to the illustrative cultural and reactionary context of the moment, considered as a process decisively imprinted by the Pauline breath/spirit. Not by chance, within the targeted period and reality, the year 1918 announced the mission of the clergy, with historical-national implications, acknowledged the importance of Church press, recognizing its overwhelming* ***power*** *of influence* ***on the national conscience*** *and suggested that,* ***if St. Paul were alive, he would certainly be a journalist****.*

*Keywords****:*** *militant culture/reactive cultural, 1918,* ***Cultura Creştină – Christian Culture*** *magazine*

Christian culture: militant culture/reactive cultural

Responsive (contextually) to the doctrinal spreading of Enlightenment ideas [as they were synchroniz(ingly) articulated by the coryphaei of the Transylvanian

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School], through a sustained activity, adapted to historical and cultural framework / requests in the proximity of the First World War (1911), the laboratory of thought of *Cultura Creştină* [*Christian Culture*] magazine flaunts its double founding valence: on the one hand, the favourable premise of *militating* in favour of a more than theological culture through a theological-professorial initiative (the magazine was founded – on the par – by five theologians and teachers of Blaj schools – I. Sâmpăleanu, Şt. Roşianu, V. Macaveiu, Al. Nicolescu, Al. Rusu) by syncing with landmarks/targets of modern European culture goals of the moment and attachment to traditional-local requests (the year 1911 resonated to the imperative of emancipation and enlightenment of the priesthood, by urging it to subscribe to and read as many newspapers as possible, to cater to the needs of the mind and soul, but also to enable/secure new stages of progress in science – Wainberg, 2009: 180-185); on the other hand, valuing the *manifesto-act* of involvement in "the process of renovating society" by focusing on "issues of the majoritarian population of the province" (Mârza, 2012: 401-404), issuing countermeasures for the settlement of the political, social and ideological-religious crisis obvious not only inside the Church, but also in the sphere of local realities, with undesirable impact upon the Christian values/fundamentals of society, referring to a corrective act impossible to accomplish outside culture.

The article-program of the magazine, titled "To the readers!" underscores the unprecedented extent of the movement for the culturalization of society ("today's world is running towards culture"), a tendency that ignores precisely the defining attribute of a "true culture" responsible for "the service of the human soul (...) tending towards harmonization of all faculties of man, to a conciliation of technical progress with the longing for happiness inherent in the soul of man (...). True culture must, in its last thought, seek to make the souls better, to bring them closer and to unite them, to warm them for the love of God and for the love of their fellow men" (Editorial Board, "Cătră cetitori!", in *Cultura Creştină*, 1st year, no. 1, pp. 1-2). The one appearance considered amendable, incompatible with the definition of the concept of culture – *culturally non-true(ing)* – is "material progress, unilateral, clean material culture", "the cult of technical inventions, of civilization without a soul", doubled by the satisfaction of culturally reporting to the "steam car, aircraft or radium", achievements which mean nothing else than the products of "subversive-vicious ideas", subordinated to "freedom of thought" and "modern science"; the first forms the basis of religious and political anarchism, the second represents a hint of annihilating the positive themes of religion and endangering "moral-civil order". Hence the stated purpose of the magazine – to promote and defend the values of Christian culture, but also the *manifest* aim of *recognizing, following and re-affirming* the status, landmarks and ideals of the nation and its correctional placing "within the frameworks of the disciplinary settlements of the East" ("dogmatic union with the Church of Rome"), through the "cultural-political development of the Romanian people", by "defending the falsifiable tendentious

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directions of history", by counteracting "the distortion of aspirations and good thoughts" and by resistance to "disregarding truth and its worth" (*Ibidem:* 5). The "praise of religious and moral unbelief" can be controlled and contradicted by the contribution and the instruments of press/journalism, an eloquent example being *Cultura Creştină* which became a clear mirror, a faithful reporter, a filter of authentic information and a just de-conspirator of "the destructive aspirations of various powers that are hostile to the Christian faith."

With a discontinued road-map (1911-1926, 1936-1944, with a bi-monthly periodicity, and published on the 10th and 25th of each month, except for the months of July and August; at a later stage, with a monthly occurrence), but non-syncopated, balanced and consistent, polemic-combative, the magazine introduced a range of cultural perspectives and expressed cultural answers offered, alike, to the priests and the laity, but, above all it targeted the *Romanian intelligentsia*, by valuing operationally – *knowing, understanding, reasoning and deciding* –moral perfection being irrelevant outside culture and reading, in the opaqueness of (only) reading from the Liturgical Book and the Euchologion of knowledge, and the deprivation of cultivating an *Apostolic culture* subsumed, eloquently, to *the vine which grows and produces* (Senior, "Importanţa lecturii", in *Cultura Creştină*, year I, no. 2, p. 43).

It is appropriate, in this introductory context, to highlight three structurally essential nodes for the affirmation and sedimentation of *Christian culture*, in the specific propitiation of a *militant culture* and the census affirmed in a *cultural reaction*. The first pivot concerns the acceptance, through *militant culture*, of a set of activities and actions directed (to)wards a central objective, considered imperative, and adapted to the historical perception. The second one follows, in the footsteps of Tiberiu Toader (2010), the coagulation and consecration of a *medium* / community of acutely combative cultural spirit, of an editorial elite *united* not only as a personality, but especially as a generational age (at the time of its first appearance, Ioan Sămpăleanu was 45 years old; Ştefan Roşianu, 44; Victoriu Macaveiu, 34; Alexandru Nicolescu, 30; and Alexandru Rusu, 27), to them being added, later, the plethora of Blaj's teachers. The guiding principle of the unity of generation confirms, in a Deguyan manner, that *cultural identity* also has a direction, a goal and a vigorous cultural force, assimilating the *elite united* around the magazine to a knowledgeable *companion*, firmly pursuing a principle/cause, in affirming the valences of *"with* and *together*", and *the* solidification *o* of a *reactive culture*, whose space, enlarged as an area of manifestation, equally comprises school, and the entire literary-artistic environment. *Reactive culture* therefore gives priority to an assumed culture/cultural principle, with pivots in national identity and collective memory, in close correlation with the sustained activity that implies the completion of national education.

Christian culture must be the faithful expression of *the local signs*, framed in the organic view of theological, philosophical, scientific and practical perspectives,

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and accepting, by culture, a programmatic and legitimate model of distancing and correcting the absence of ideal values. The cultural program also involves a precise and applied debate and clarification of the mission of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church and specifies the way of organizing the religious-cultural life of the Church (by: emancipation guided by training and economic development; correction of relations maintained with the secularized world and distancing from faith; countering the adverse influence of materialism and the moral decay of the individual; deepening relations with other churches and with the Hungarian State, or subsequently with the Romanian State; and through the development of social relations, and valuing individual-State, individual-society relations; solving problems belonging to pastorate-rite and dogma; attention to peace and war; analysis of the contribution of Christianity to European civilization; inventory of Church activity, etc. – Toader, 2010: 8), educational activity and education (from catechism, to parochial schools, the issue of textbooks and programmes, legislation concerning education, school guidance projects, trends for the secularization of education at European level), as well as reporting to events, congresses and real situations, in fact (through sections devoted to reviews and signals, as well as materials relating to the information concerning the activity of the Roman Catholic Church around the world).

Blaj Press and the 1918 Union
"Press is done now"

The *Chronicles* section of the magazine *Christian Culture* (1944) presents the conference with instructive implications (*just up to a point/moment*), "thoroughly prepared and thorough," of professor Ion Gherghel (Commercial Academy Cluj-Braşov), whose approach was focused on the role of journalism in the preparation of the Unification. By its very interest manifested for the crucial event, the conference was a *complete and just* appeal, in the spirit of moral commandments, bias and oblivion representing, in this context of academic investigation, deadly sins. The conference will also review publications with an essential role in the *spiritual preparation* and in the *soulful support* of the Union of 1918 – from the pivoting-central ones (*Transylvanian Gazette, the Organ of the enlightenment* – subsequently, *the Body of the Nation, The people's paper, Freedom, Justice* or *Our country*), to the modest, small-ephemeral editorial occurrences ("routed by Sigismund Pop"). Any retrospective stakes reporting the event amend the inexplicable and unjustified omission of the *Union* magazine from the series of periodicals devoted to the Union (edited in Blaj, appearing from the year 1891, converted in 1918 in everyday newspaper, on the background of the need for a form / formula of daily publishing action / activity, felt by the by Teachers of Blaj) . The magazine, published without interruption, challenged and contested in press processes and holding editors imprisoned in Szeged, was defined as a necessary

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and vital "tool of daily reaction" ("Aşa se scrie istoria", in *Cultura Creştină*, 24, no. 1-2, 1944, p. 108-109).

A letter from Nicolae Brînzeu to Alexandru Rusu (January 1918) confirms the need for a continuous publishing endeavour (with reference to the article in No. 18-20, about *Our Church press* and the special plug-in about the "life chapters of our Church"), having as essentialized subject/object the importance of church press (recognizing its power in the media, which "binds the interests of the Church" and says that *if St. Paul were alive, he would be a journalist*). Arguments regarding the critical mission of the (Church) press are correlated with the foundation principle of a Church loaded by a cultural past, the proud owner of an elite formed in the West and qualified in Europe, but also responsible for the documentation of written reactions, located in the very centre "from which the sun of the Romanians rises" (Dr. Nicolae Brînzeu, "În definitoriu cauza presei noastre bisericeşti – Scrisoare părintelui Dr. Alexandru", in *Cultura Creștină*, year VII, no. 2, January 25, 1918, p. 33-40).

More than to report and comment (in a fraternal letter) upon issues of the Church press, the article written by Nicolae Brînzeu point to a series of solutions able to correct and boost the block(ed) state of facts: the application of ideas germinated in the Bishop's palace of Oradea, in the form of the society *The Saint Union*, through an authentic press, more than a simple "literary reunion", limited only to the support and the guide; attention paid to "spreading / disseminating", by solving the problem of *when* and *how* the press will reach the hands of readers; boosting provincial organizations, "naturally-healthy" (*Union, the Christian Culture, the Word of Truth*) and interest for the functional organization of libraries (*the Books of the People, the Library of the People, the Annunciation, the Library of the Good Christian, the Christian Library*); changing the mentality by engaging directly in cultural projects, passing from groups to engaged communities; the revival of the *Union* as political-national sheet, published in time; the dedication of the specialty sheet for priests, by merging *Christian Culture* and *the Word of Truth*; drafting and publication of the territorial editorials: a popular-Christian sheet (the diocese of Lugoj), a literary-scientific magazine (Oradea-Beiuş), a sheet for the youth in the schools (the diocese Gherla with Năsăud) and an "asketic" magazine/book (the Monastery of Prislop).

We note, in this regard, a directorial double-primacy – the need for an approved press, current in time and correlated with the times, with a specific methodology and a timely and dynamic calendar of occurrence, attached to the objectives of national policy and responsive to the demands of the theological environment (of achieving the purpose of the Church), designed as *press that makes culture* (where the mission of groups, companies and literary-scientific communities stops) and requiring the identification, assertion, and launch, through the Blaj press, of an individualizing trade mark , in a strengthened national cultural context. "The press is made now", claims fraternally Nicholas Brînzeu, but, more than that, he

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recognizes a special status for Blaj: "everything that is coming from Blaj brings solace", a finding of an affective nature which interferes with the imperative of discovering the value of a citadel of strength for the nation, to "look more closely towards Blaj", to establish the importance of this *centre* with certain milestones and meanings belonging to the defining cultural and historical concept.

Commemorative-anniversary context
"Righteousness guards the world"

Summarizing the significance of the date of December 1, 1918, it is considered an "island of light", a temporal knot marked by "the serene majesty of the definite", or an act of confirmation of the "unwavering strength" and "constant unshaken glory of Romanianism in Transylvania", featuring, alike, the status of argument and attribute, denominating the "summary second". To counter the propaganda of Budapest, of "restless hatred, anger and envy", of "thrashings and false whining", of "empty reasoning", "phantasms and make-believe", "crazed denials of sweeping reality", A. P.[1] resorts to arguments that belong to the reality of factual and historical justice: "the historic title and the ethnic principle create the title of the right to independence and sovereignty". So, the date of December 1, shall act "on the grounds of law", "the full consciousness of righteousness and of our own powers to take back our Transylvania", as a fair formula for the correction of "imaginary demarcation lines". In agreement with the spirit of Christian sharing, the text demonstrates the essence of the concept *to be generous*, in the absolute knowledge of the truth stating that there is *no harmony without sacrifice*.

The 1940 moment envelops in mourning, with an acutely yearning tonality, the anniversary[2] of the Great Union – "in the past we were ecstatic, today we cry" (A., "La 1 Decemvrie", in *Cultura Creştină*, 20, no. 10-12, 1940, p. 699), in the sense of the prophecies of Isaiah, of "recognition of faults and mistakes", bearing the pain of *being silent – failing – enduring*, "knowing and sensing, without justice and glory, the tearing of a piece of our body". *The* tragic *amendment – the earth is*

[1] A. P., "Oameni şi fapte, Popas de 1 Decembrie", in *Cultura Creştină*, Nov.-Dec., no. 11-12, year XIX, 1939, p. 746-748. The text is accompanied by the fragment dedicated by V. Stoica to Augustin Bunea (p. 748-750), recognizing in him the precursor and anticipator of the moment of Unification, linking the dates of 30 November 1909 (year of death of A. Bunea) with December 1, 1918, as a node of temporal fulfilment of the "temple of national political liberty".

[2] The anniversary spirit is displayed by M. V., in the signal "Plays from Oradea-Mare" (*Cultura Creştină,* 9, no. 7-9, 1920, p. 219-221), with insistence on the meeting between Church bishops and representatives of the army, members of the government, intellectuals (Nicolae Iorga), the peasants and the people, (not by chance) in Oradea [a city where, in the year 1916, "by force were put in to shelter and safety the princes of the Romanian Churches in Transylvania, with their Consistories and a part of the Romanian schools" – including the Blaj ones – a terminal from which (a few miles away) start the borders of the Hungarian state, but also a model-centre "well arranged as a municipality, with tramway, lights, aqueduct and asphalt."].

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inherited only through suffering – is doubled by the optimistic *form* of faith in a future that heralds rebirth and completion, for *justice underlies the world*[3].

Post-Union reflections

"A great and happy Romania"

Drawn up in the manner of St. Paul's Epistles, *SENIOR's* Letter ("Mărunţişuri actuale. Scrisoare", in *Cultura Creştină*, 7, no. 17-20, 1918, p. 351-357) highlights the affective-emotional influx of a new conduct of the facts, of a promising "atmosphere created by the arrival of events" and marked by a few essential *nodes*. The first issue evokes the dark past of a nation sorely tried by the hardships of fate, regarded as the Calvary of the latter, which meant an act of restitution operated with tolerance, compassion and love, of remembrance of the provisions of harsh, arbitrarily imposed orders (measures of "violent attachment" of Romanian parishes to the Hungarian episcopate of Hajdudorog, of school laws and orders referring to the "Hungarian cultural area") and deprivation of the Romanian people of schools and access to education, of "mockery of the Romanian language", of being dismissive of soldiers and of establishing a system of police – all these being "painful spikes driven into the body of the nation". *Good Friday* was followed by *The Resurrection of a nation*, a mystery "researched by the people" (through popular lectures, through holy missions), for the revelation of freedom and fulfilment (the days of the first half of November 1918 were as warm as in August, "with rich vegetation and wild flowers and trees as in May, with the fields filled with people as in September"). Characterized by generosity and forgiveness, practicing the apostolate of love, the people is compassionate, takes pity, loves, does not give up on the "1848 behaviour", the noble, correct, disciplined and moderate attitude manifested both in 1848 and in 1918, excelling – in ensemble – in an "outfit worthy of the Romanian people".

Alba-Iulia becomes the centre of historical importance, accredited with the evident traits of a privileged space, within which vital acts of the Romanian people were accomplished: the union of 1700 (which has "saved our being, jeopardized, in Church, by the aggressive propaganda of the Calvinists") and the Union of 1918 ("the act of salvation from vehement and systematic attacks in the school"). Memorable events consumed in Alba reaffirm the unity of the nation and the primacy of cooperation, creating conditions for the sedimentation of a common cultural and national background [here we note, with indicative and illustrative title, the Memorandum of the Greek-Catholic Bishop Ioan Bob and the Orthodox Bishop Ivaşcoviciu; the collaboration between the Greco-Catholic Lemeni and the Orthodox Moga, or of the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan Şuluţiu and the Orthodox Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna; the participation of the entire Greco-Catholic and

[3] The following insert is dedicated to *the conditions of peace*, seeing, in Roosevelt, a model in continuation of the Wilsonian approach of 1918.

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Orthodox high clergy in the celebration of the jubilee of the Association, in 1911 – all of these, "in the spirit of the whole nation, represented by the two Romanian churches"; cooperation, in the defence of national culture, of their Romanian Holinesses in Arad and Caransebeș with representatives of the Greek-Catholic church; *in corpore* participation of the rulers of the Romanian churches at the assembly in Alba-Iulia].

SENIOR's Letter insists, also, on the "principles submitted in the Resolution of Alba-Iulia and in the proclamation of the Ruling Council of 11 December," attesting to "a more liberal, more democratic and more just constitution", stating the right of voting and the founding of a state in which *justice, love, and mutual trust reign:* "for the dominion of these virtues we need to work from the pulpits of all the churches, from the lecterns of all the schools, in journalism and in the bosom of all the cultural, literary, philanthropic and economic companies. "Only thus will we have a great and happy Romania - thus and in no other way".

"The great unification seen deeper than its concreteness and its present"

At the time of the anniversary of twenty years since the "fulfilment of the century-old dream" of the Unification of 1 December 1918, the text of N. Comșa ("După două decenii", in *Cultura Creştină,* 18, no. 12, 1938, p. 803-805) recalls the plea of the chroniclers who wisely demonstrated and confirmed "the Latin origin, the unity of feeling and of Romanian language", which stands at the base of what will become "the ideology of an ideal of national unity" and, subsequently, the prerogative of the "artisans of the revealing sap of the book which builds up the final ideal of the Union". In the spirit of collective psychology, it emphasizes the "osmotic fibre", "the concealed or manifest desire of outpouring and meeting the Romanian soul", in the full "mastery of its forms of life". At the time of the announced anniversary moment, "the act of Union acquires a definitive character, inexorable durability, the physiognomy of complete unity, of creative progress in full swing", as "a way for the clarification of the present, and as a formula of assurance for the durability of the future".

Not at all accidental for / in the economy of the magazine, the text is followed by the "truly" patriotic insert of Dragoș Moroșanu ("Cum se făuresc legendele", in *Cultura Creştină*, 18, no. 12, 1938, p. 806-809), interested in removing and correcting "totally wrong opinions and legends regarding the Romanian population in Maramureș, its national consciousness and its power of resistance in front of foreign invasions". The legend in question is one of "false and insulting worlds" that hovers over the historical reality, "putting to sleep the instinct of Romanian life", prophesying an imminent collapse, the result of instincts atrophied by "union with the Church of Rome". The arguments offered by S. Moroșanu insist upon the effect and corrective necessity – Maramureș being placed it in the forefront of "non-possessed" counties, representing the pillar-standard of an "amazing

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resistance", with Romanian villages that have preserved their own character (tradition), with a Romanian population which has "proven its impressive [*demographic* we note] growth" and "whose Romanian churches have decreed, through the Romanian book and bookmarking, the uplifting spirit of the century".

"The happiest events of all big and happy events"

There are, filed in the pages of the magazine *Christian Culture*, two records of *happy events* which confirm the fulfilment and recognition of the Union. The first – *an insurer note*– presents the visit of general Berthelot in Transylvania ("beautiful sight of sun-filled days"), a "thrilling occasion for the Romanian spirit on this side of the mountains, in a spirit of gratitude for ensuring the victory of the cause, for the fulfilment of aspirations and the triumph of glorious expectations of all the Romanian people" (C. I., "Generalul Berthelot în Ardeal", in *Cultura Creştină*, 8, no. 1-2, 1919, p. 35-36). Appreciated, in the Christian spirit, as the Great Feast of Easter, the visit confirms "the moment of happy success, of the fulfilment of all our patience and waiting", featuring a cult of love and an enthusiastic homage to "the stranger who offered his sword and honour" for "the joy of the triumph, the happiness of the fulfilled dream and the holiness of the cause".

The second – *an event sealing our national liberty and independence* – details the visit of their Majesties King Ferdinand and Queen Maria in Transylvania ("Regele şi Regina în Ardeal", in *Cultura Creştină*, 8, no. 9-10, 1919, p. 177-179), highlighting three findings of fact: "deep and spontaneous gratitude for the messengers of the Lord", those who shall be crowned with the "proud crown of Transylvania", compared with Moses (deliverer of his people from the "shameful slavery of Egypt" and its ruler in the Land of Promise) and presented through the prism of the Christ model ("achievers of the golden dream of the meek people"), with "the rare satisfaction" that the dynasty brings to Romanian Christian priests and the particular honour deferred to the editors (priests) of the magazine, by the visit of their Majesties to Blaj, as a gesture of "recognition of deeply religious education", and eloquent sign of "sovereign grace".

Both reported events can be interpreted in the spirit of the Pauline Epistles, which sum up "supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings for all men, for kings and all who are rulers, so we can spend a good life and rest, in all good faith and purity, knowing that it is a good thing and acceptable before God our Saviour".

Memoirs, manifestos, programs

References explicit in the memoirs, articles-manifesto and program of the Great Unification are presented in the pages of the magazine *Christian Culture*, through a triple way of reporting.

In the first place, are confirmed the general interest and concern of the Church for the need, importance and relevance of the resumption thereof, by their

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publication and, by default, through a natural settlement [here we mention, as a node, the resumption of the Memoir submitted to the former Governing Council of the Catholic Church, 1919 (to "get those employer tasks to which they are entitled" and for solving differences between the State and the Catholic Church in Romania, on the one hand, and between the Romanian and the Hungarian state, on the other hand, as regards the right of patronage of the Religionary Fund and the studies of the former Hungarian kingdom – Iacob Radu, "Dreptul de patronat al Fondului catolic religionar şi al studiilor din vechea Ungarie", in *Cultura Creştină*, 10, no. 7-9, 1921, p. 201-212) and reproducing in its entirety the Manifesto of our clergy ("program of fruitful activity", "a beautiful synthesis", "energetic protest against any attempts to humiliate the Church by tainting its lawful rights", "the strong calling voice of all competent factors for the revival of the Church", by solving internal and external problems, regarding Catholic autonomy, guaranteeing the right of choice, the review of the Bull "Christfideles graeci", ensuring a future for confessional schools, the maintenance of aid given by the state to the priesthood, the debate of clarification of the synods, the organization of canonical visits, the completion of the new codices of rights, the development of the press and education in Blaj – Editorial, "Dorinţele clerului român unit. Manifestul sinodului electoral din 9 Maiu 1918", in *Cultura Creştină*, 7, no. 10, 1918, p. 197-202.)]. The reason for resuming and publishing the text of the Memoirs lies both in the impossibility of reading the full text, in plenary; and in the correct understanding of the imminent and vital interest of the already-presented acts/steps.

Also highlighted are the Christian dimensions of the completed projects [the text addressing the Great Assembly of Blaj summarizes the valuable specifications of the event, appreciated as a continuation act of the meeting of May 29, 1912, with significance enhanced by participation, in the "fortress of our liberation, Alba-Iulia", of the clergy, the laity and the entire people; one should remember the respect for the soul of the faithful – as happened in 1912 – doubled by the decision of their liberation, through decisions concerning the whole people and through a program that strictly abides by the precepts of Christianity (A. R., "Marea adunare generală dela Alba-Iulia", in *Cultura Creştină*, 7, no. 17-20, 1918, p. 38-39); with regard to "our First Romanian Ministry", the Great National Council has proposed the choice of a Ruling Council in Sibiu, with "pretty good results", meant to answer not only to the Great Council, but, in the first place, to God (V. Ş., "Primul nostru minister român", in *Cultura Creştină*, 7, no. 17-20, 1918, p. 367); the portrayal of the New Metropolitan of the United Romanians – dr. Vasile Suciu (chosen at the beginning of 1918, to lead with wisdom, in the continuation of the good pastorate of Dr. Victor Mihalyi, the Archdiocese and the Greek-Catholic metropolitan church of Alba Iulia and Făgăraş), characterized by manliness, wisdom, and Pauline attributes – "lover of strangers, of the good, a parable with words, life, love, spirit, faith and purity" and whose duties are not at all easy: the firm defence of the rights of the Church; the revival and internal strengthening of

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the ecclesiastical ; the development and strengthening of a sense of religious and moral conscience of the people, through complex activity: the establishment of confessional schools, the publication of books, brochures, newspapers and the organization of meetings, sacred popular missions and frequent visits ("Noul Mitropolit al Românilor uniţi – Dr. Vasile Suciu", in *Cultura Creştină*, 8, no. 11-12, 1919, p. 221-223).

The third aspect reveals the key features of *peace* (straight and steadfast, embodied in proclaiming the equality of all peoples through a set of concrete, cutting judgments for any problems of the future, with frameworks of manifestation for full individual and ethnic freedom, in the spirit of true democracy), of the accomplishment of the desiderata of an "eminently Christian nation", faithful to the final laws of Christ ("Spre pace", in *Cultura Creştină*, 7, no. 17-20, 1918, p. 313-334), follower of *solidarity* (through the inspiring act, accomplished by the sons of the Romanian Church, translated in the letter of adhesion from the day of the Saint Archangels Michael and Gabriel, 1918 – V. Ş., "Solidarizarea arhiereilor români", in *Cultura Creştină*, 7, no. 17-20, 1918, p. 367-368) and a consistent advocate for the act of *reintegration/ union* (seven years after the Union of Bessarabia, it reaffirms the force of reunification of national politics, and the power derived from the age of revolutions; equally, they blame the "professed liberators of the people and lovers of peace in Moscow", those who practice disguised imperialist and militarist politics, countered by "the sincere peace policy of Romania", consisting in the protection of their own rights as they have been "recognized by the entire civilized world" – R. Șeișanu, "Șapte ani dela Unirea Basarabiei", in *Cultura Creştină,* 14, no. 4, 1925, p.150).

If St. Paul were alive...

The approach, the vocation, the mission and the actionable manner of the magazine *Christian Culture* can be subsumed, in principle, to the established formula, the editorial human factor under the *temperamental* aspect, the *primacy and cultural perspectives* of the reactionary time / moment , imprinted decisively by the Pauline breath /spirit, a an appropriate response, circumstantial referred to requests/emergencies of the moment and the configurations of the future, through a double appeal, illustrated both by a "dogmatism applied to the redeeming justification of faith", and a register of the morally intransigent. Specific references used by *Christian Culture*, on the *model of St. Paul*, highlight, on the one hand, the value of an exemplary Sinaxary copy, an apology of particular space and time, of Christian thought with lessons for the present; and, on the other hand, convey the imperative of locating personality and the meaning of apostleship in the context of modern-age information.

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There are, in this sense, three interventions – two with continuation effect – directly concerned with/by the model of the apostle Paul. The texts of Ioan Ferenț[4] focus on highlighting the role of the personality of the apostle in the temporal flow of his hometown universe, in "the shining and imperishable glory of the city of Tarsus" – a centre of culture with resonance in the soul of the apostle (with all the decline that followed: its subsequent fall to wilderness, becoming a city of the Turks), by disclosing his apostolic mission and the double registry of undertaken works: a Jew and (still) a Pharisee, born abroad, but raised and educated in Jerusalem – *civis romanus*, energy carrier and standard of the won/affirmed law: "here is my fatherland and my right".

Dumitru Neda's series of three articles[5] launches, in value terms, the amount of guiding thoughts, guide feelings and the toil needed for their achievement, expressed by appreciation and comments that converge towards the substantiation of a *holy Ubermensch* (in absolutely non-Nietzschean sense), whose primacy consists in the love of country, of nation and of law, in alive, active, aware, noble and moral patriotism. The national spirit is a sense of divine extraction, defined as "the expression of natural power based on, coming from and led by God". The Pauline model serves as the guide pattern, essential for Christian Romanians, for the "lovers of the nation in Blaj". The apostle is portrayed beyond his "biting wit", through "love for the people that he wants big and powerful, saved and happy", whose grievances he knows and listens to, whose pain, suffering and failures he understands, whose sorrow he feels, advising him, teaching him, illuminating him and sacrificing for him (even if he is often rejected, abused/booed, maltreated and persecuted). Thus, "the sublime program of life" of the apostle impresses, becoming the supreme model for "all the apostles of the peoples in all times and all places", characterized by consistency, faith and love of nation. The texts bring back into focus the originality notes of the specific Romanian heritage, without losing something of the spirit of brotherhood and/or the feeling of solidarity and equality in Christ, all of which are "powerful reasons for heating and strengthening a hope for resurrection under *ex Occidente lux*". The impressive appearance in the Pauline Menologion is precisely the "new turn of Paul's life, his nature in what had been the best", amazing through sincerity, constant action and activity in "new ways", guided by the living impulse of "ephemerally cleansed, fleeting, imperfect, wrong

[4] See, in this regard, Ioan Ferenț, "Patria sfîntului apostol Pavel" [The homeland of Saint Paul the Apostle], in *Cultura Creştină*, 3, no. 6 (1913), pp. 169-174; "Locul naşterii sfîntului Pavel" [Tarsus - Place of birth of saint Paul: Tarsus], in *Cultura Creştină*, 3, no. 7 (1913), p. 208-211; "Iudaeus sum! Civis Romanus sum (I)", in *Cultura Creştină*, 3, no. 16, 1913, p. 484-489 and II, in *Cultura Creştină*, 3, no. 17, 1913, p. 531-537.

[5] Dumitru Neda, "Sfîntul Pavel ca fiul neamului său. Gînduri creştine asupra iubirii de lege şi neam" (I) [St. Paul as the son of his nation. Christian thoughts on the love of law and nation] (I) in *Cultura Creştină*, 14, no. 7-8, 1925, p. 227-236; II, 14, no. 9, 1925, p. 330-340 and III, 14, no. 10, 1925, p. 355-362.

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ideals" and led by good faith, the only one able to indicate the truth – "to love the language and the nation".

The commemoration of the solemn jubilee – 19 centuries from the miracle on the Damascus road – is, for Augustin Pop ("Spirit paulin", in *Cultura Creştină*, 17, no. 1, 1937, p. 1-11), a deeply responsible gesture, an event meant to be (re)placed in the extension and perfection of salvation, an anniversary celebration given for "the ordinance of a world in commotion", marked by contrary appearances: if St. Paul leaves the impression that he is too complex for a schematic-linear mentality, too austere for the spirit of the opportunist, too difficult for the lassitude of the times, too spiritual for the requirements of a mechanized being, the immediate proof is that according to which the Apostle is "the ideal teacher of the time", and the only personality able to brake the generalization process of unravelling – of all sorts. With fortified and transcendent defects, with a private physiognomy of the soul (strong will, grandiose projects, precise targets, the force of overcoming seemingly impossible difficulties, with axial-Christic thinking, behaviour and action), Saint Paul is considered the *totalitarian* model – characterized by that attribute already unburdened of the "wanderings" of inflamed theorists and political slippages, positioned against "dangerous totalitarianism, turned into religion".

The corrective trend of the grandiosely-agonized modern (sign of lack of balance, loss of reason and exaggerated-solvent intellectualism, confusion and scepticism, the death of metaphysics, a theology accommodating the overriding intolerant imperatives – secular state, materialist science, atheist philosophy, art as an end in itself, relative truth, political games of force, history as a product of the laws of matter and belief as particular fact) consists precisely in the revival of Pauline spirit, in the courage, will and passionate enthusiasm of those who react *united* and thus give the measure of a *dynamic* and *involved* Christianity.

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