

# Achievements and Hazards of Contextualization in Theology: The Case of Christian Mission

Ovidiu MOLDOVAN

*Faculty of Baptist Theology, Doctoral School of Theology and Religious Studies,  
University of Bucharest, Romania, ovidiu-lucian.moldovan@s.unibuc.ro*

**ABSTRACT:** This article reviews the major changes in the theological approach that occurred in the second half of the 20th century. There is a naturalness of contextualization. It has to do with how the human mind interrogates reality and then particularizes the answers it receives into sets of truths that help it be the man of its own reality. However, contextualization is a risky approach. The particular does not always reproduce the general at the risk of losing the essence that gives meaning to everything. But the risk is worth taking and the winner is, finally, the Christian mission itself.

**KEYWORDS:** theology, contextualization, models, mission, objective truth, subjective truth, perspectival truth

## 1. Introduction

Christianity seems to be a religion that is constantly in transition. It evolves by taking up—somewhat mimetically—that agonizing dynamic of a world perpetually striving to reinvent itself (Pears 2010, 1). The unprecedented ontological, normative and hermeneutical changes that occur somewhere in the middle of the twentieth century, in a time of late modernity, are somehow linked to the adoption of new ways of perceiving truth and religious phenomena in general. These reorientations or inversions, as Delsol (2022, 35) calls them, will redefine the very essence and foundations of Christian civilization or what we call Christianity.

In pre-modernism, i.e., from the 5th century until the beginning of the Reformation (16th century), truth and knowledge were regarded as revealed, universal and totalizing. The authenticity of truth or knowledge in general was validated by the criterion of objectivity. To proclaim an 'objective truth' had the sense of conformity beyond doubt with a certain absolute reality, external to the human being. Human consciousness (Rotaru 2016,30-37) was thus placed outside the subject (the self), a zone in which it was possible to observe and measure with maximum autonomy.

Later, the period between the late Reformation and the mid-20th century, known as modernity, promotes a broad critique of the theory of knowledge, finally imposing methodical doubt and 'subjective truth'. This time, the truth will be perceived as a mentally constructed reality perfectly framed within the limits of the possibilities of human reason (Kant). Enlightenment modernism, therefore, rejects the premise of objective truth, which gives it the title of idealism.

Postmodernism, which follows in chronological order, will re-evaluate the concept of truth, applying a perspectival grid to it. The method is a self-reflexive and critical one, in which the subject looks at himself in the light of reality and social change by putting himself in tune with the subjectivity of the human community. In such a time, Pears argues, the idea that there can be universally valid statements that can be assembled in one particular context and then transported to any other context becomes a wholly unacceptable one (Pears 2010, 6). Pope Paul VI had publicly acknowledged that Christianity was not

always a beneficial element in the development of the world, but often a destructive factor (Pears 2010, 12). The moment marks an important shift in the approach to Christian theology and theological reflection in general. Subsequently, the liberation theology that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s provided space for contextual theologies by placing human experience alongside the concept in the epistemological toolkit of theological reflection (Bosch 1991, 303). Bevans (1992, 21) argues that reality is not just 'out there, somewhere'—the form of a conceptual understanding—but it is also one 'mediated by meaning', a meaning that we make in the context of our culture or historical period in the form of an experiential understanding.”

The concept of 'contextualization' first appears as a particular perspective in the field of education and training of church officers. Soon, however, it becomes an 'umbrella term' covering a wide variety of theological models (Bosch 1991, 358). Two models prevail that of indigenization and that of socio-economics. Both illustrate the intense efforts to rescue theology as an academic science. Schleiermacher was probably the first theologian to denounce the misguided Enlightenment perspective, in which science—and theology in particular—had been seen as a cumulative endeavor whereby the study of a text could lead to the recovery of the author's original intention, i.e., a kind of truth posited behind the text (Ricoeur), beyond any rational doubt. On the contrary, theology had to become a reflection of the Church on its own life and experiences, i.e., it had to place itself in front of the sacred text. Schleiermacher thus concludes that theology was influenced and perhaps even determined by the very context in which it evolved.

## 2. The mystery of contextualization

By the mid-20th century, there was an awareness of the significance of context. This contributed to the construction of a suite of cultural messages that became increasingly relevant in the perception of contemporary society. Contextualization could thus be recognized as a fundamental operation belonging to the process of human cognition or the way in which human beings interrogate reality with the aim of penetrating its meaning which is truth. Such a definition, for example, would place theology in a perpetual horizon of contextualization, with Christian thought depending directly on the theological context of the Christian community (Pears 2010, 1). Vanhoozer defined theology as attempting to evaluate the play of the world according to the criteria of God's Word. Theological inquiry thus constructs a double interpretation of the Word and of the world itself (Carson and Woodbridge 2006, 14). The world itself constitutes a sum of different contexts.

It is contextualization that continually aims to regulate the content of Christian theology, even if this sometimes demands a dynamization of the very foundations of theology (Tillich 2007, 8). The self-reflexive relationship established between the theologian and the Christian community will henceforth shape theological reflection itself. The conclusion, according to Catholic theologian Robert J. Schreiter, is that contextualization will thus succeed in keeping theology from the sin of neutrality, of falling into obsolescence or irrelevance (Pears 2010, 13).

When actors from the stage of Western Christianity came to 'perform' on the great stages of the secular world (Rotaru 2006, 251-266), they risked not being understood by local audiences. In fact, they had ceased to be relevant. Local cultures are texts that demand to be interpreted first. They have their own identity, just like the local cultures that gave birth to them. And they are not just any texts, for every culture, says the neo-orthodox theologian Paul Tillich, is at its core a religious one, since in one way or another, it preserves the ultimate concerns of an individual or the community of which he or she is a part. To translate one's role into the language of the new scene, but without altering the

meaning of the story, is to contextualize, and contextualization becomes a theological imperative (Bevans 1992, 21).

In the same vein, Wells (1997, 176) challenges theologians to recognize that the nature of biblical revelation is bipolar: revelation was communicated in a particular cultural context particular to the world 'back then', but it was also intended to be shared by every generation 'from then to now'. But for such a movement of revelation from the past to the present, it is necessary, Wells notes, that Scripture be first deconceptualized in order to proclaim its cross-cultural content. Then it must be reconceptualized so that its content fits the cognitive presuppositions and social patterns of our time (Wells 1997, 176). It is precisely here that we may have another support for contextualization, namely, the emergence of a new understanding of culture facilitated by the input of the social sciences of the contemporary world.

While those mentioned so far have the character of external factors, Bevans (1992, 31ff) also identifies some internal factors or evidences of theology that call for contextualization. The first is the incarnational nature of Christ. Bevans argues that God so loved his created world that he wanted to share his own Self with man. This is why Christ became incarnate, but Bevans sees it only as a beginning of the incarnation, because today, the Church, in a sense, is called to continue (through mission) this process of God's incarnation (Rotaru 2012, 5). The second factor is the sacramental nature of reality. The incarnation of the Son of God, Bevans points out, shows that God reveals himself first in concrete reality and then in ideas. Jesus made himself known to humanity in the fullness of his divine as well as human condition. So if reality in the context of revelation becomes something sacramental, it follows that the particular context of reality also acquires a similar, sacramental nature. A third factor that calls for contextualization is that change in the understanding of the nature of divine revelation. In pre-modernism and even in modernism, theology was written in the patterns of propositional truths. Revelation was received in the form of eternal, infallible truths received directly from the Lord Jesus and His apostles. Faith was counted as total intellectual assent to these truths. The problem is that this revelation stopped with the passing of the apostolic generation. These truths were then passed on from generation to generation, each age trying to understand as much as possible of the reality they described.

Finally, the fifth evidence is found in the very doctrinal heart of Christianity, in the doctrine of the Trinity. Contemporary theology has helped to revitalize Trinitarian theological thinking. The understanding of God as Trinity speaks of a dynamic God who is in specific relationship with humans. God acts contextually, this is the teaching of the doctrine of the Trinity, therefore contextualization is truly a theological imperative. These were some of those natural elements that characterize the normality of contextualization. Now, it is time to visualize what it promises.

### **3. The seduction of contextualization**

The horizon of contextual theology is clearly one in its 'infancy'. However, some theologians believe that significant work has already emerged proposing already elaborated ways in which contextual theology should be understood and studied as a theological endeavor (Pears 2010, 2). In fact, its seduction, what it promises, is to respond to the challenges of a major paradigm shift in defining truth and the new goals of theory of knowledge. In this sense, contextual theology is neither an anachronistic nor an overly avant-garde enterprise. It is on the list of those methods that are perfectly adapted to the current epistemological foundation. Bevans is convinced that contextual theology is both a continuation of traditional theology and an innovative theology, if it is seen through the prism of three different sources: Scripture, tradition and human experience, to which a fourth, imagination, could be added (Bevans 1992, 21).

For Schreier, the nature of contextual theologies as local theologies, given that they reflect the cultural traditions of these communities, are tools for spiritual growth (Pears 2010, 17). Such theologies can also be seen as tools for remembering foundational community experiences (community anamnesis). They can therefore be counted as theologies of memory as well. They can be theologies of people of color, feminist, sexist, environmentalist, or even queer theologies.

Bergmann, (2003, xiii) analyses the contextual expression of the continuous revelation of God, observing that it is then fixed as the content of a theological memory of the religious community. For Bergmann, the opportunity of contextual theology is to be open to capturing God's revelatory presence in the very specific places in which people find themselves. Thus, God's self-revelation itself was and is contextual in nature (Pears 2010, 42). Moreover, Bergmann also argues, it is contextual theology that reveals that God's actions are both creative and liberating (Pears 2010, 42).

One of the most enthusiastic and, at the same time, seductive promoters of contextual theologies is Newbigin. Looking back at the exclusivism that characterized Christian theology until recently, he said, "It is as if we were actually engaged in the business of building barriers" (Newbigin 1989, 173). Newbigin is an eternal seeker of the middle way, of that direction which avoids both exclusivism and absolute pluralism. This inclusivist path, which Rahner also proposed at one point, "recognizes Christ as the only Saviour, but affirms that his saving work extends beyond the boundaries of the visible church" (Newbigin 1989, 173). This penetration outside the space of the visible church (a place identified by Rahner as belonging to an anonymous Christianity) is hoped to be achieved through contextualization.

Wells (1997, 189), looking a little from another perspective, notes the servant side of contextualization. He seems, however, to dissociate such contextualization from the one that made a real vogue in the academic circles of the 1980s. Taking the example of Jesus, who assumed the role of servanthood by becoming incarnate and then seeking and saving what was lost, theology must become incarnate in contemporary culture without losing its identity, with the aim of winning those who are lost in sin.

These newly emerging contextual theologies, taken as a whole, therefore promise a few things. First, they promised to keep intact the spirit and message of the gospel. Second, they wanted to take seriously the tradition of the Christian community as a history of interpretations given in ecclesiastical context over the ages. Another important point was to conform the new theologies to the content and specificity of local cultures. Last, but not least, is the promise of clarifying the effects of social changes in those local cultures (Bevans 1992, 15). Bevans, built a map by initially constructing five models of contextual theology, then, added the sixth. For Bevans, the only credible formulation of the theological approach is that of contextualization (Bevans 1992, 15). Contextual theology therefore represents for him a theological imperative, a perspective aligned in all respects with the Christian tradition. What Bevans adds to the 'classical' sources of theology, Scripture and tradition, is human experience, a proposition, Pears argues, with radical implications and far-reaching side-effects (Pears 2010, 21).

The model of translation is one posited at the 'conservative' end of the spectrum of contextual theology. It is the most widely used of the six models involving the translation of Christian discourse into particular or specific contexts. This translation, Bevans insists, incorporates not only the form but also the meaning of the gospel, which is thus translated into an appropriate set of cultural terms. The role of culture is subordinate to that of the pure gospel, but it remains of great importance in the case of a short and non-interrogable message whose value lies in content rather than form. The model insists on the idea of preserving Christian identity.

The anthropological model is a more radical one in terms of its valorization of the idea of culture. Its objective is to preserve the cultural identity of a person who professes the Christian faith. It is a person-centred model, with human experiences becoming important sources of theological reflection.

The *praxis* model refers to a particular context from which Christianity is viewed and aims to develop a way of expressing the Christian faith that is partial to that context. The model considers social change and affirms the important role that Christianity can play in contributing to social change. The use of the word 'praxis' refers to the idea of God's presence in culture, among people, in history and in historical action. Action is a fundamental element of this model. Calling the world to change implies action. Action presents the practical basis for change. The model cannot, however, be simply aligned with liberation theology, because it does not seek liberation but *praxis*.

The synthetic model includes features common to other models, being a 'middle of the road' seeker. The model claims the imposition of a balance between commitment and tradition, Scripture and doctrine, but also vis-à-vis the contemporary local context (Pears 2010, 28). The picture thus emerges of a dichotomy between Tradition on the one hand and cultural experience on the other.

The transcendental model focuses on the person engaged in theological inquiry or reflection. It is not important, then, that the local theology produced is the theology, but that the theologian producing that theology is a genuine convert. This is why Bevans believes that true theology does not first appear in books, but in the converted hearts of people (Pears 2010, 28).

The countercultural model is a radical model based firmly on both history and human experience. It focuses on social change, operating a hermeneutic of suspicion on the role of context, but also of context itself. The driving force within this model is the gospel and not human experience, culture or context. Bevans' criticism, Pears explains, of this model is that it tends to be an example of a more anti-cultural than a counter-cultural approach (Pears 2010, 28). It seems, therefore, that an alternative name for this model should be the prophetic model.

#### **4. The anxieties of contextualization**

The term contextual theology is certainly an elusive, polysemantic, polymorphous one, even having contrasting meanings. The situation becomes extremely complex in the case of liberation theologies, those justice-seeking theologies born out of a hermeneutic of suspicion, imposed as a result of the awareness of the horrors produced by the two world wars (the collapse of humanist ideals, however, wrongly associated by many with European Christian culture and civilization) and the dramas that continue to characterize Western Christian colonialism (Braidotti 2016, 46). This new kind of hermeneutics, some fear, may become a limiting one for contextual theology. The theological horizon could again be reduced exclusively to the context of other and other traditional theologies (some, often radical) outside the American-European space, which will henceforth become the main resources of theological reflection.

Another concern is expressed by Robert Schreiter, who acknowledges that doing theology at a local level, in a contextual way, raises serious reservations about the proliferation of local theologies that are totally different from one another and then dilemmas about their relationship to the Christian tradition (Pears 2010, 17). In other words, there is a danger that the meaning of the biblical narrative will come to differ from the text of the biblical narrative, as Hans Frei observes (Frei 1974; see also Wells 1997, 189). In this case, the theologian will no longer be the academic figure, the ordained minister, characters once separated from the rest of the community and endowed with a central authority, but a contextual local theologian who will articulate the concerns and hopes proper to his or her

community. The question is, however, whether there will not be a risk of losing the Christian foundations (*that theologia perennis*) because of an exclusive, blind focus on the needs and aspirations of local communities, eager mainly for freedom and social change.

Wells looked at contextualization through the prism of the process of affirming biblical doctrine in the particular situation of modernity. This perspective claims to distinguish and even disjunct the concept of doctrine from that of theology. In this way, the meaning of the Christian faith is freed from a number of biblical constraints and becomes an amalgam composed of social or political ideologies as well as scriptural content. The trajectory of revelation, Wells observes, shifts from the area of the authority of the Word to that of contemporary culture, from text to context, and the interpreter becomes the sovereign arbiter, a role once held by the Word of God. Christian continuity becomes a continuity of an awareness of the authority of context, rather than a preservation of the same doctrinal content. The great danger of contextualization is to assume that the modern context determines how the biblical narrative is to be read. In other words, the cognitive horizon of an interpreter can limit or determine the cognitive horizon of the text. To act in faith, Wells remarks, can become to act politically (Wells 1997, 191).

### **5. The praxis of contextualization: the Christian mission**

Pears (2010, 10) sees the role of missiology as particularly important in the process of formation and ongoing development of contextual theology. Moltmann (1975, 7) states in turn, "Today, one of the most powerful impetuses for the renewal of the theological concept of the church comes from within mission theology." Walls said that Christian teaching needs a renaissance in missiological studies (Tennent 2007, 291). Missiology, as a practical approach to the theology of the Christian Church throughout the ages, had been accused by the post-colonialist critique of the mid-twentieth century of imposing, in the name of progress, a reductionist and exclusivist understanding of Western civilization in the pre-modern and modern periods, forcibly imprinting local cultures belonging to colonized countries. It is therefore the Western context that has shaped Christian theology of mission, while ignoring the specific contexts of the social locations/cultures in which the Church has missioned (Rotaru 2017, 57-76). Each era, pre-modern, then modern and post-modern, has visibly left its mark on theology, mission theology and by implication missionary practice.

Premodernism had kept intact until the Renaissance the missionary paradigm of the early church built on the support of biblical revelation, which will not be discussed here, but which appears as antinomian clichés in the other two periods. In modernism, as a result of its presupposition that reason is the only faculty that can facilitate man's knowledge, a number of arguments were formulated, each of which was applied equally to missionary theology. David Bosch, one of the most influential theologians and missiologists, sums up these arguments by showing that Christian religion was seen: 1) as a unique religious experience, 2) as a particular, private way of life, 3) as far more rational than science, 4) as the one most entitled to govern the whole of society, and 5) as the one that frees the human condition from any redundant religious attachment (Bosch 1991, 302). These characteristics attributed to Christianity shaped the concept of mission that remained in place until the mid-20th century, at which point the modernist/Enlightenment mindset regarding the concept of reason became inadequate.

The premise of the objectivity of truth, argue the followers of postmodernism, has crippled the approaches to human knowledge by imposing a reductionist pattern that has halted the development of scientific knowledge. One way or another, human knowledge had to expand, to penetrate new horizons. Rationality itself had to be expanded, and one of the ways proposed was to admit that language is not precise enough to define both the laws of science and the doctrinal truths of the theological disciplines. This led, Bosch (1991, 303) points out, to a reassessment of the role of metaphor, myth, analogy, mystery or incantation.

Northrop Frye also plays an important role in this period of paradigm shift in knowledge, arguing that fundamental doctrines can only be expressed in the form of metaphor. "Metaphor, symbol, ritual, sign and myth, long outlawed, are now rehabilitated. There is growing interest in narrative theology, theology as narrative as well as other non-conceptual forms of theology" (Bosch 1991, 303). Beyond these elements of language, true rationality will now include experience. This change will profoundly affect theological reflection itself. Moreover, the missionary vision as praxis of theological contextualization will undergo substantial changes, which will be legitimized not by the fact that the content of Scripture is changing, but by the fact that the Christian world understands, in the new postmodern grid, the Bible much better (Bosch 1991, 315).

Thus, in the new ecclesiology developing after the 1950s, the Church is seen as essentially missionary. The biblical model adopted is that of 1 Peter 2:9, in which the Church is not the sender, but rather the sent. The Church is then understood as sacrament, sign, or instrument (Bosch 1991, 321). This new perception, as might be expected, significantly altered the relationship between the Church and the world, and mission began to be seen as a turning of God's face towards the world (Bosch 1991, 322).

Another contextual nuance that emerges in the mission sphere is that mission is now not so much of the Church as the Body of Christ, but of the local church. It will no longer be about the mission agenda of the Church, but about the many and varied local mission agendas that will aim at the present salvation of people and not just the future. There are therefore two alternative soteriologies in the field of mission: one that still seeks God's mercy and another that begins to proclaim the mercy of people towards one another. Criticism of conservative evangelicalism has not been slow in coming, and so Carl Henry warns Christianity that "where once the gospel of repentance had a world-changing message, it has now narrowed to a message of resistance against the world" (Bosch 1991, 345). One of the ways to properly contextualize the role and way of doing mission is to understand the relationship between mission and evangelism. Bosch, in order to clarify this, resorts to a definition of the following three terms: mission, evangelism, evangelisation (see Bosch 1991, 349-351). By evangelism, one can understand all the activities carried out with the aim of spreading the gospel and the theological reflection that accompanies or animates these activities. Evangelism refers to the actual process or manner of spreading the gospel and then extending the mission field. There are also some who define evangelism as ministry to those who are no longer Christians, or preaching the gospel among those who have left the Church and live in a post-Christian age.

### 6. Conclusions

Looked at in depth, postmodernism is first and foremost a tragic age of *demolition* and then of the peroration of promises that remain unfulfilled to this day. Lyotard (1993, 15) considered that absolutely all the concepts of life imposed by modernism, those metanarratives, have in themselves an oppressive purpose. Each metanarrative should now be contextualized and then disseminated in the form of micro-narratives. But this has attracted the idea of *demolishing all narratives*. Derrida (Derrida 1976) turned his attention to the text, the fundamental support of any narrative. He saw it as a play on words composed according to grammatical rules that conceals no objective reality. Contextualizing the text by assigning the main role to the interpreter had the effect of *demolishing the text* by minimising the importance that the authorial intention had hitherto had. Mission theology has thus been deprived of the very foundation of its claims and practices conferred by the infallibility of the text of Scripture. Foucault (Foucault 1991), too, seeks to demonstrate that societal institutions are oppressive and proposes nothing less than the *demolition of institutions* by arguing that man must be free in all his manifestations.

In terms of mission, such a contextualization has diminished the role of the Church, the initiator of mission, and thus exaggerated the role of missionary organizations of all kinds. In the end, Deleuze and Guattari (1994) concluded that reality itself does not exist, only its signs. Truth thus becomes linked to what one likes. Science is a contextualization of tastes. Art and literature, through excessive contextualization, become devoid of any set of rules. Everything comes to be seen as a spectacle, religion itself. This *demolition of reality* proclaimed by the two French thinkers was followed by *the demolition of the religious act*, of worship, religion becoming a parade of all kinds of spectacles. This is the context of the contextualization of the Christian mission as a result of the paradigm shift due to the emergence of postmodernism. The purpose for which this critical perspective is useful is to avoid a possible *demolition of the Christian mission* by imposing wrong contextualizations on this extraordinary component of Christian praxis.

## References

- Bergmann, Sigurd. 2003. *God in Context: A Survey of Contextual Theology*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Bevans, Stephen B. 1992. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Bosch, David J. 1991. *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Missions*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Braidotti, Rosi. 2016. *Postumanul [The Posthuman]*. Bucharest: Hecate Publishing House.
- Carson, Don A. and John D. Woodbridge, (ed.). 2006. *Dumnezeu și cultura [God and culture]*. Oradea: Cartea Creștină Publishing House.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. 1994. *What Is Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Delsol, Chantal. 2022. *Sfârșitul creștinătății [The end of Christianity]*. Bucharest: Spandugino Publishing House.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1976. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1991. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin Books.
- Frei, Hans W. 1974. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and*
- Kraft, Charles H. "Culture, Worldview and Contextualization." In *Perspectives on World Mission*, Chapt. 55, 384-391.
- Liotard, Jean-Francois. 1993. Condiția postmodernă. Raport asupra cunoașterii [*The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*]. Bucharest: Babel.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. 1975. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*. London: SCM Press.
- Newbiggin, Lesslie. 1989. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans.
- Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Greenough, Chris. 2020. *Queer Theologies: The Basics*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Pears, Angie. 2010. *Doing Contextual Theology*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2006. "Aspecte ale secularizării și ale omului secularizat" [Aspects of secularisation and secularised man]. *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai, Theologia Orthodoxa* L-LI, 1: 251-266.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2012. "Biserica lui Dumnezeu, sursa unui Râu al Vieții și al Vindecării" [The Church of God, Source of a River of Life and Healing]. *Argeșul Orthodox* XI, 564:5.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2016. "Key aspects of the Freedom of Conscience." *Journal for Freedom of Conscience* 3(2):30-37.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2017. "Misiunea Bisericii în societate" [The mission of the Church in society]. *Timotheus – Incursiuni Teologice Tematice* 42: 57-76.
- Tillich, Paul, 2007. *Cutremurarea temeliiilor [Earthquake of the foundations]*. Bucharest: Herald Publishing House.
- Wells, David F. 1997. "The Nature and Function of Theology." In *The Use of the Bible in Theology*, edited by Johnston, Robert K. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers.