

Abstract

Given the large number of young people who still make up our nation and the fact that fewer and fewer of them are able to discover the Way and the Life on their own - and who wish to remain on the Way despite the more "attractive" offers presented by today's world - I believe that this guide for working with young people - designed to assist those who are called or desire to accompany young people on their journey toward the Truth - is necessary.

The presentation of the vision regarding the Christian education of youth and the values, principles, and pedagogical methods as reflected in the life and work of the educator Simion Mehedinți, as well as the brief synthesis and evaluation of the impact that missionary work through the youth associations coordinated by the Archdiocese of Iași has had and continues to have on the religious formation of young people is also useful to those who wish to deepen their work with young people.

The thesis presents the way in which the Church, the Holy Scriptures, and the Holy Fathers understood the necessity of a distinct missionary work addressed to young people, and how this work constitutes the foundation of Simion Mehedinți's life and pedagogy and has been and continues to be fulfilled through the volunteer activities within the youth associations of the Archdiocese of Iași.

Thus, the originality of our work lies, on the one hand, in presenting the relevance of the Christian principles and values in the pedagogy of the scholar Simion Mehedinți - principles and values that form the foundation of the formation of young people involved in the volunteer work proposed by the Church - and on the other hand, in providing a brief overview of the missionary work for and with young people in the Archdiocese of Iași and in surveying 498 volunteers, high school and college students involved in the missionary activities proposed by the Church, to assess the impact that volunteer work has had on the completion of their religious formation.

The work is structured in two parts. The first, theoretical part, entitled "The Church and Missionary Work with Youth," comprises three chapters which, drawing on the models and methods offered by the Savior, the Holy Fathers, and Christian educators, argue for the necessity of the Church's constant concern for the formation of young people as living members of the Body of Christ. The second, practical part, entitled "The Religious Formation of Youth in the Vision of Simion Mehedinți," is structured into two chapters and presents how the values, principles, and methods of youth formation used by the Savior and the Holy Fathers are reflected in the life and pedagogical work of Simion Mehedinți.

We hoped that this thesis would enrich the fields of religious education and Christian pedagogy by approaching them from a missionary perspective and highlighting the contribution of the scholar Simion Mehedinți in demonstrating the naturalness and necessity of the religious formation of young people. We have also highlighted the role that participation in volunteer activities proposed by the Church plays in the religious formation of young people.

Keywords: youth ministry, Simion Mehedinți, youth formation, education, volunteering

B. Ioan P.