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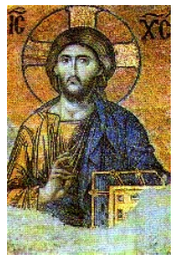
GUIDELINES FOR WITNESSING TO THE EASTERN ORTHODOX



The majority of Romanians belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Most of them are nominal believers. They do not know much biblical truth about God, saving faith, or the Bible.

The Orthodox priests have indoctrinated them to believe the Orthodox Church is the only true apostolic church and their tradition is superior to the Bible and therefore dictates how the Bible should be interpreted.

The Eastern Orthodox believe to be Christians by infant baptism. They adhere to a "works gospel", which nullifies God's grace (Romans 11:6). Very few of them have heard and believed the true unaltered message of the Gospel. Therefore the mission field among nominal Orthodox believers is ripe and ready for harvest, wherever these people may be located – in Romania, Moldova or scattered throughout Europe.

Witnessing to the Eastern Orthodox is not always easy. By being graceful and truthful to them, you need to help them see in the Scriptures that their real need is to:

1- **Trust God and His Word** (the Bible) over any man, church and tradition.
2- **Repent** from their sins and from trusting good works for salvation.
3- **Believe** only in Jesus Christ, who did what *no one else* (not even the priests) and *nothing else* (works, charity, etc.) could do for us – He died in our place to pay our debt to God and rose from the dead to save from eternal damnation all those who believe in Him.

When you witness to them, remember they are spiritually dead and blind. Only when the Holy Spirit lifts the veil from their heart (2 Cor 3:16) will they be able to see and distinguish between truth and deception.

As long as their eyes remain blinded by the prince of this world (2 Cor 4:4), they can only see deception and believe it to be the truth.

- *Please see the "TURN TO GOD" bilingual outline for a good tract with Scriptures to be used in sharing the Gospel!*

Ten Helpful Guidelines For Sharing the Gospel
With Those Belonging To the Orthodox Church

1) Always start with God, His glorious holiness, and His requirement for holiness in His presence.

2) Discuss the total depravity of man and his desperate need of a Savior (forgiveness of sins).

3) Show that no man or priest is without sin. Peter (whose brother Andrew the Orthodox is believed to have laid the foundation of the Orthodox Church in Romania 2,000 years ago) admitted he was wrong and submitted, not to another man, but to the truth of the Gospel, to Jesus Christ alone (Gal 15:2).

4) Explain the need each man has – to repent by turning away from trusting in things that cannot save (tradition, icons, mediators – priests, and infant baptism) and believe in Christ alone for forgiveness of sins and salvation. These nullify the power of the Gospel and oppose the finished work of Christ on the cross. Believing in a false Gospel will result in false hope or no hope at all (1Cor 15:2).

5) Try to establish an agreement on WHO truth is – JESUS (John 14:6; 17:17; Col 1:5); remember not to argue. Show love and understanding with the spiritually blind person.

6) Explain what is the Gospel its power (Romans 1:16; 1Cor 15:1-4; Eph 2:1-10). Discuss the consequences of someone teaching a different gospel and refusing to believe the true gospel (Gal 1:6-9; 2Cor 4:3).

7) Share your personal testimony. Contrast your old life without Christ, with your new life in Christ. Emphasize the greatness of the Lord and the power of the Gospel to change lives. Integrate your testimony with the Gospel presentation.

8) Stay focused on the Gospel during your discussion. Try not to go off on tangents unrelated to salvation. Don't forget to let the person speak. Listen, make him (her) feel accepted and politely go back to the Gospel message in case the discussion takes a different direction.

9) Show them that the Scripture is sufficient for understanding how to be saved (2 Tim 3:15). Give them literature, tracts or key Scriptures with a commitment to pray for him (her) and maybe to meet again (if time allows).

10) Remember that a person must truly believe the Gospel to be saved, therefore always keep your discussion on the gospel, but without exercising pressure on the person to make a decision on the spot. Rather than declaring a person saved because he repeated a sinner's prayer, tell them what the Scripture says – that if they truly repented and believed in Christ it will be seen in a life radically transformed by God – since a new creation in Christ will begin to hate sin and love God and live for God. They need to be told that if their life is not truly changed that means, according to the Scriptures, that real salvation has not happened.

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