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Christian Churches in Slovakia and Roma Communities

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Introduction

Christian mission and particularly holistic ministry with accent on social action may have positive impact on the minorities. Holistic ministry means modeling God's concern for the total well-being of persons and communities. Christian churches in Slovakia mostly understood the need for such an approach to mission in segregated Roma communities. Document analysis will look at the work of some churches focusing on selected Roma communities. The work is of course located in the eastern Slovakia. However, firstly we bring some preliminary facts about Roma population, culture and religiousness.

Roma minority in Slovakia

The estimated percentage of the Roma minority in the Slovak population (8-9%) has increased fourfold in the second half of the 20th century.¹ According to the official statistics, the number of Roma in the Slovak Republic is actually smaller due to the fact that a great deal of them did not register in the population census as Roma. Under the last population census in Slovakia in 2010, 120 000 inhabitants of the Slovak Republic have identified themselves as Roma. More realistic estimates of the number of the Slovak Roma indicate a figure between 414 000-435 000 in that period. Until 2030 the population is expected to rise at least to

¹ *Čo sa osvedčilo? Výber z rómskych projektov v strednej a východnej Európe*, Bratislava 2003, p. 81. According to a research from 2004, only 60% of the Roma people in Slovakia have been integrated with the majority. 40% are living in segregated communities. 149 settlements were classified as segregated; 81% of them were without canalization, 37% without water-supply system, and 46 settlements (with 6355 inhabitants) had no infrastructure. One third of the housings in the Roma settlements is illegal. For more information, see: <http://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/index.php?ID=3554> (9 VIII 2014). Specifications of the regions are described in <http://romovia.vlada.gov.sk/index.php?ID=3556> (9 VIII 2014).

the number 547 000 – it can be 11,4% of the population.² One part of the minority is living in disadvantaged conditions with a high level of long-term unemployment; they strongly depend on welfare payments, their educational level and their social and economic situation is very low, and they are socially excluded from rest of society. However, the Roma population is heterogeneous and differential. Communities are differing in dialects, lifestyle, human environment etc. Majority of the Roma population is living in the eastern and the southern part of Slovakia. Approximately 126 000 Roma people³ are living in 600 poor and segregated settlements without an adequate infrastructure. The current situation was affected by the past marginalization of the Roma identity by the communist ideology. This had resulted in the classification of the Roma community as one of the socially inadapted groups.⁴ The legal situation of the Roma was discussed in different member states of the European Union.

Many research studies have acknowledged the impact of culture and religiousness on communication across nations and its impact on ethnic minorities. Traditional Roma life style with special customs and moral norms of family life started to destroy on the end of the nineteen sanctuaries. Misunderstanding and rejection of the majority culture ended in the destruction of the traditional value systems. Common values are dividing under the concrete living conditions and specific historical experiences of the cultural groups.⁵ Identity of the Roma people is differential in the area of education, social status or living conditions. Identity of the Roma people living in the cities is similar as it is in the majority population.⁶

Socio-cultural development proceeded slower in traditional Roma communities than in the majority population. We can see components of the Roma spiritual culture in archaic forms until today. First researches of the Roma religiosity in our area discovered typical pattern of the magic practices covered up by the formal Christianity.⁷

² See: B. Šprocha, *Reprodukcia rómskeho obyvateľstva na Slovensku a prognóza jeho populačného vývoja*, Bratislava 2014, p. 40-41, http://ce-cesta.eu/uploads/media/Reprodukcia_Romov_a_prognóza_SPROCHA_01.pdf (9 VIII 2014); B. Bleha, B. Vaňo, *Prognóza vývoja rómskeho obyvateľstva v SR do roku 2025 (Aktualizácia)*, Bratislava 2007, p. 13, <http://www.infostat.sk/vdc/pdf/prognóza07.pdf> (9 VIII 2014); Report produced by the *European Roma Right Center (ERRC)*, the part about Slovakia, p. 28; Z. D. Barany, *The East European Gypsies: Regime change, Marginality, and Ethnopolitics*, Cambridge 2002, p. 157.

³ *Čo sa osvedčilo? Výber...*, p. 82.

⁴ *Rómovia, vzdelávanie, tretí sektor*, N. Kušnieriková (ed.), Bratislava 2001, p. 89.

⁵ M. Hübschmannová, *Několik poznámek k hodnotám Romů (Skica)*, [in:] *Romové v České republice (1945-1998)*, Praha 1999, p. 29.

⁶ Z. Uherek, K. A. Novák, *Etnická identita Romů*, [in:] *Čačipen pal o Roma. Súhrnná správa o Rómoch na Slovensku*, M. Vašečka (ed.), Bratislava 2002, p. 97.

⁷ M. Jakoubek, *Romové – Konec (ne)jedného mýtu. Tractatus culturo(mo)logicus*, Praha 2004, p. 179.

In every dialect of the Roma language exists one term – and it is word for God – *del*. This term is expressing as power, authority and rightness. But it means *giving* too. It is possible to understand God as a spiritual personality giving good and punishment. In Roma culture is the understanding of God special – God is good father with respect. Typical temperament we can see in extreme love and anger toward God determined by live conditions and situations.⁸ „The part of the spirituality is faith in the power giving the rules for the world existence and the place of the human being in it. In sociocultural context has this function Christian God.”⁹ Spiritual life is showing itself in public forms of the religion – rituals, customs, superstitions, hymns, traditions and concepts.¹⁰ In agreement with Bartosz many customs have got magic character and they are related to after-life. It indicates developed cult of the decedent Roma people. Most of this customs have Balkan-Slovanian background. Strong persuasion about living spirits of died persons in the middle of the family is related to the faith in spirits.¹¹ It is still beyond comprehension Christian doctrine of resurrection, because it is an apocalyptic idea of spirits’ come back on the earth. Therefore it is easier to believe, that live is ending with the death of the body.¹² But some specific Roma customs survived in some areas- in ghetto like settlements. Roma spiritual culture developed in dependency on the social situation of the Roma people. We can find more symbols of the traditional culture in the country.¹³

The core Roma concept of *romanipen* means: Roma values, language, the consciousness of a community of origins and history and tradition. The main moral and ethical principle accepted in various forms of the Roma communities, known as Oral law tradition too. For example: I told about breaking an oath before... It should be similar like ADAT: total system of inherit norms, customs, worldviews and values of the *Batak* people in Sumatra (what about I heard from the presentation of Anwar this week). *Romanipen* is the keystone of the Roma identity. For Carpathian Roma people it is moral issue. But for the nomadic Roma communities it is still traditional law with its institute of control. This internal legal system not only protects the Roma from external and internal threats, but also serves as a code that organizes Roma society.

⁸ R. Rosinský et al., *Amare Roma, špecifická práce v rómskych komunitách*, Nitra 2006, p. 15.

⁹ Z. Palubová, *Fenomén smrti v ľudovom náboženstve Rómov z okolia Trnavy a Nitry*, [in:] *Boh všetko vidí. Duchovný svet Rómov na Slovensku / O del sa dikhel, Romani paťaviben pre Slovensko*, M. Kováč, A. B. Mann (eds.), Bratislava 2003, p. 19.

¹⁰ *Boh všetko vidí...*, p. 11.

¹¹ A. Bartosz, *Neboj sa cigána. Na dara Romestar*, Sobrance 2004, p. 120-121.

¹² P. Šuleř et al., *Romové. Tradice a současnost*, Brno 1999. p. 67.

¹³ V. Šoltésová, *Misiológia so zameraním na rómske komunity. Religiozita Rómov v kontexte vzdelávania misijných pracovníkov na Slovensku*, [in:] *Potřebujeme misiologii? Pokud ano, proč ji nevyučujeme a systematicky ji nerozvíjíme?*, Praha 2007, p. 63-74; V. Šoltésová, G. R. Robertson, *Misiológia so zameraním na rómske komunity*, Banská Bystrica 2003.

The research in Slovakia has revealed „multi-layered public religiosity”. It is a combination of older pre-Christian and new Christian concepts and ideas.¹⁴ These concepts are superstitions, e.g. signs in dreams and their interpretation. Worldly and posthumous punishments are in contradiction; the reason for God’s punishment is breaking an oath (sanction, ceremonial, oath of loyalty). Religiosity is one of the most important parts of the Roma social and private life, and the Roma attribute great significance to religiosity both in implicit and in explicit forms¹⁵ Roma, in the same way as the rest of the population of Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, Czechs, could choose freely to engage with newly available religion. The phenomenon of Roma converting to new religious movements in significant numbers, especially to Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, appeared. Conversion is a complex and dynamic process with several dimensions and has to be described and analyzed in stages. The reasons to convert arise from complex circumstances, and conversion happens in stages. We need to consider the family and social networks of the converts, and be aware of the role of the authority and charisma of the proselytizing missionary or priest. The factors of family networks and authority of the missionary seem to be of key importance for the conversions of Roma. Significantly, recent waves of conversions among the Roma in the studied locality have occurred only in communities that tend to lack a social structure typical for traditional family-based Roma communities. This decay of traditional values and norms could take place on several scales. It occurs among the Roma that live more or less outside of their communities and logically, their bonds with the original communities are reduced. On the other hand, this decay of traditional culture and community is visible even inside Roma settlements and occurred gradually with relocation and displacement of Roma settlements during the period of socialism, as well as with the impoverishment, unemployment and social and material segregation in Roma settlements during the nineties. One of the effects of this social decay is also the decay of the traditional family bonds and hierarchy which might result in a conversion to a religious movement. Thus, the affiliation to a religious movement can become a way of constructing new forms of social relations.¹⁶

Mission Work in Local Roma Settlement Areas

In the Slovak Republic is working with state approval under the Act 394/2000 Collection of Laws eighteen churches and religious communities, and in 2010,

¹⁴ *Boh všetko vidí...*, p. 124.

¹⁵ M. Kováč, M. Jurík, *Religiozita Rómov a aktivity cirkví vo vzťahu k Rómom*, [in:] *Čačipen pal o Roma...*, p. 134.

¹⁶ <http://www.eminet.sk/?q=node/119> (5 VI 2006); http://www.peterlang.com/download/extract/78618/extract_264885.pdf (9 VIII 2014).

according to census 62% of the population declaring themselves to the Roman Catholic Church. In addition 24% of the population (no religion and unknown) are all other citizens belong to the one of the religions. Together it is therefore up to 76% of the population.¹⁷ However, it is necessary to distinguish between those who have faith in God, in spite of though the does not participate actively in the life of any Christian church in the context of Slovakia and between those who is considered a member of the church, though is not intrinsically convinced the Christian Articles doctrine. On the problem in assessing the statistical information also highlights Krivý social scientist who notes that not everyone who is presented as a member of the church's „religious.” However in a person who receives the message of God and His redemptive by faith action, creates a life philosophy, transforms the scale of values, its moral standards, principles. Consequence of this is the change in life and in action of man.¹⁸ This is a potential of permanent changes that will affect the long-term action.

Let us mention some examples: The activities of Christian churches in the Roma community in Slovakia are education of Roma leaders organized by the Committee for Lutheran Mission among Roma (The Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession), projects of Pastoral centers in Roma settlements developed under the guidance of the Commission for the Pastoral Care of the Roma in Roman Catholic Church, or orphanage managed by the Orthodox Church.¹⁹ There are 14 registered churches and 5 unregistered religious groups who are actively working in approximately 130 Roma communities. According to the internal estimates of each church, the mission outreach to Roma has touched the lives of about 10 000 Roma in Slovakia.²⁰

Roman and Greek Catholic Church published catechism in Roma language „Devleskere čhave” in Slovak and Roma language and Bible for children „Miri jekhto Biblija andro obrazki” (in three Roma dialects). Roma mission has a long tradition in Bardejov, Pečovská Nová Ves, Jarovnice, Snina, Hanušovce nad Topľou, Košice-Luník IX, Sečovce, Plavecký Štvrtok etc.²¹ In Slovakia, the majority of the population claims the Catholic religion, and this preference is reflected in the Roma population as well. In 1993, a *Committee for Ministering to the Roma* was established at the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia (later renamed the Council for

¹⁷ <http://www.scitanie2011.sk/wp-content/uploads/Tab.-141.pdf> (10 IX 2012).

¹⁸ M. Kováč, M. Jurík, *op.cit.*, p. 134.

¹⁹ V. Šoltésová, R. G. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 64-65.

²⁰ T. Podolinská, T. Hrustič, *Boh medzi bariérami. Sociálna inklúzia Rómov náboženskou cestou*, Bytča 2010, p. 150; D. Hanesová, *Sociálna a misijná práca s rómskou komunitou. (Social and Mission Work Among Roma Community)*, Banská Bystrica 2006.

²¹ *Smernice pre pastoráciu Rómov*, Trnava 2007, p. 33; *Pápežská rada pre pastoráciu migrantov a cestujúcich v spolupráci s Konferenciou Biskupov Nemecka*, Freising 2008, p. 7; P. Bešenyei, *Rómske ticho*, Bratislava 2009, p. 70.

Ministering to the Roma), led by the assistant bishop of the archdiocese of Košice, Monsignor Bernard Bober.²² In 2001, the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia published the „Pastoral and Evangelization Plan 2001-2006”, mapping the situation in all spheres of religious work, defining goals, and making concrete suggestions. In the chapter on the Roma, it noted that the religious behavior of the Roma is hard to understand for the majority population, and thus the church has only sporadically succeeded in entering this environment with effective evangelization. Intense ministry work in Bardejov-Poštárka started in 1990 after the Roman Catholic Congregation of Salesians arrived. The main focus of the ministry was to work with the children and teaching. **Roman Catholic Church** (RCC) has built a Church building, Pastoral center with fitness centers and sports facilities in this segregated Roma settlement. There have been set up a nursery and primary school since 2001. After-school activities and summer camps are also available.²³ Jozef Červeň, Roman Catholic priest, worked with Roma in Toporec (Kežmarok, until 2003) and Lunik IX (Košice, from 2004). Pioneer worker with the Roma community, priest Ondrej Porubec, worked in the parish of Toporec also (1941-1999).²⁴ Authors F. Čureja and P. Ružbaský explain Roma relationship to the Catholic Church in Slovakia in the publication about „Spiritual World of the Roma people”.²⁵ **Greek Catholic Church** has a long history of the Roma mission (Commission for Roma in Prešov archbishop etc.), especially in Čičava²⁶, Jakubany (pilgrimage of the Roma families to Lutina)²⁷ and in villages of Vranov nad Topľou city district. Pastoral care centre has been set up in village Čičava with higher population of Roma christians. Mission work is centred on musical production (for example gospel bands *F6* and *Jekh drom*), youth drama club DIK, art club activities, prayer small groups etc.²⁸

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (ECAV) in Slovakia invited pastors Larry C. Merino (American Lutheran pastor, who is a Rom) and Hans M. Dern to work with Roma catechumens. H. M. Dern founded organization ROMA – *Roma organization of the missionary activities*. The organization has a mission in Roma villages Slavošovce, Rudňany, Pozdišovce, Liptovský Peter, Kokava, Štítnik, Spišská Nová Ves (and cooperates with ECAV). Organization operates in Romania and Latvia also.²⁹ ECAV published „Songs of New Life” in

²² Čačipen pal o *Roma*..., p. 106-107.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ J. Mydla, *Priekopník duchovnej farbosleposti*, „Zrno” 2001, No 48, p. 30-31; L. Čurejová, *Te Del o Del*, „Rómske listy” 2003, vol. I, no 2, p. 12.

²⁵ F. Čureja, P. Ružbaský, *Duchovný svet Rómov*, Prešov 2004.

²⁶ <http://mojakomunita.sk/web/pcr-cicava/> (17 VIII 2014).

²⁷ <http://www.jakubanycirkev.sk/put-romskych-rodin-v-lutine-2014-3/> (17 VIII 2014).

²⁸ <http://mojakomunita.sk/web/pcr-cicava/hudobne-albumy> (17 VIII 2014); <http://www.kapelaf6.sk/sk/> (17 VIII 2014).

²⁹ E. Bombová, *Vznikla Rómska organizácia misijných aktivít*, „Evanjelický posol spod Tatier” 2006, vol. 96, no 5, p. 1.

Roma language. *Coordination Committee of the Roma Mission* prepared summer camp STROM 2013 as an abbreviation of the two-year project „The Meeting of Young Romanies”.³⁰

Evangelical Free Church operates in Prešov in the Tehelňa by organizing Roma clubs and summer camps for youth. The work in the Roma community in the village in eastern Slovakia Hlinné is associated with missionary Pierre van Vuuren, who is working on a long-term project – translation of the Bible in the eastern dialect of the Roma language. Another settlement Zlatník is located in the village Vítkovce and missionary work in the Roma community is associated with Daniel Kušnierik. The pastoral activity was focused on employment because there is massive unemployment, many community members are living on welfare. They can not, however, wisely manage the money they receive. It was necessary to encourage them to send their children to school regularly. They also help them deal with moneylenders. During the pastoral interviews people shall assume responsibility for their own lives. They are also learning how to raise their own children.

Lesíček is the youngest of the Roma church plants that are part of the Hermanovce – Evangelical Free Church. The leader of the fellowship, Laci, shares his testimony of God's grace:

I was a very bad person – I drank a lot, I gambled, I was a thief and got into a lot of fights. I had a terrible home life. My wife and children suffered a lot. My life was running away like water, but – praise God – the brothers from Rokycany and Pierre Van Vuuren came to Lesíček. When they preached God's Word, I was deeply touched by what they said. I thank God that Jesus then came into our lives – mine and my wife's – and changed us. I am so glad that God found us here in Lesíček, for now we live only for Him. I serve Him, because I came to know that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.³¹

Local church in Hermanovce nad Topľou is working with Roma people in Gíraltovce, Medzianky, Hlinné and Rokycany too (pastor P. Prištiak, youth workers S. Krupa and D. Krupová).³²

Baptist Union of Slovakia has no written policy regarding the Roma, but belongs to the denominations that are involved with the Roma. There is ministry in Lučenec and Panické Dravce (pastor Michal Šinko) with evangelism and social work activities. In 2004, an American missionary, Shane McNary, started ministry to the Roma in Košice and in the village of Važec. The work in Cinobaňa began in 2004 started with Bible study. They regularly organize camps for Roma

³⁰ http://www.ecav.sk/?p=RM/letny_tabor_strom_vo_velkom_slavkove (25 VII 2014).

³¹ <http://www.thewordfortheworld.org/index.cfm/pageId/1369/fuseaction/blog.tags/tag/Eastern%20Slovak%20Romani> (9 VIII 2014).

³² <http://www.cbhermanovce.sk/> (10 VIII 2014).

children with the teaching of English, teaching English in the local school and conducting day camps with Roma children.³³

Within academic research, there is a dearth of studies regarding Roma Pentecostalism within the wider discipline of religious studies.³⁴ Tatiana Podolinská discussed about deprivation theory. Based on field studies amongst Slovak Roma, she provides a structural comparison of religiosity amongst the community members before and after converting to Pentecostalism. The discussion leads up to a call for scholars to also take religious reasons into consideration when analysing Roma revivalism.³⁵ **Apostolic Church** in Slovakia has under the words of bishop J. Lacho a great challenge to reach Roma people in the country, actually has church opened two gypsy churches with two gypsy pastors.³⁶ The General Presbytery meeting in 1989 adopted a resolution to deal systematically with the problems of the Roma in Slovakia. They started partnership with Prison Fellowship International to reach prisoners, Roma mission in Luník IX Košice, Vranov nad Topľou, Sabinov, Rožňava, Slavošovce and Senica.³⁷ Igor Lázslofi and Laco Duna are the pastors who work with the Roma of Luník IX – Košice since 1998. Pastor Ondrej Vaško had been working with the Roma in Rožňava (since 2001), weekly home Bible studies had been established in other villages too.³⁸

Evangelical Methodist Church has Roma mission in Slavkovce (primarily Roma church), Jenkovce (pastor J. Bassano) with mission station in Veľké Kapušany, Michalovce, Sečovce. Ministry to the Roma is done through *diaconia* or church charity too. This humanitarian work provides clothing and household items.³⁹

Christian churches mentioned in our article are using multiethnic and indigenous congregation concept. Most of them do not have official church policy regarding the ethnic constituency of the local church. The multiethnic congregations' model is preferred by the leaders of the majority of the selected churches, but Apostolic Church allows indigenous model too.⁴⁰

Research SIRONA (Social Inclusion of the Roma by the Religious Path-way) 2010 confirmed the under the influence of religious missions, there is also a positive social change and, under certain conditions even the follow social inclu-

³³ <http://mcnaryministry.blogspot.sk/> (5 VI 2014); G. R. Robertson, *The Romani People and Selected Churches in Slovakia*, Zoetermeer 2009, p. 152.

³⁴ *Romani Pentecostalism: Gypsies and Charismatic Christianity*, D. Thurfjell, A. Marsh (eds.), Frankfurt am Main 2014.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ <http://worldagfellowship.org/fellowship/countries/wagf-participating-member-s-z/slovakia/> (9 VIII 2014).

³⁷ G. R. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 136.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 156.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 135; <http://www.umc.sk/smenu/14/farnosti-ECM/> (17 VIII 2014).

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 175.

sion. Roma mission success in the light of positive social change to Roma people demonstrated the Roma alone, even their non-Roma neighbors, mayors, school teachers, officials of the local employment offices, field social workers, etc.⁴¹ Experts published, among others, the following recommendation:

Because in locations with strong pastoral activity occurs an increase in communication and social skills, changing drinking behavior and consumption habits, and there are community leaders and local authority, we believe that the environment is conducive to subsequent social and other community support programs. Therefore, we recommend these locations as targets for different types of NGO projects that are currently underway and will be held in Slovakia.⁴²

Many religious groups offer social networks in which the Roma can develop their *romanipen* – religious songs in Roma language, Roma as a pastoral language etc.⁴³

The Issue of the Bible Translation in Mission

Most of the national minorities in Europe are speaking public languages. Minority languages were not used for a long time in the official communication and in the educational process. F. Miklosich prepared first research of the Roma dialects in 19th sanctuary. Current research in this area is doing linguist M. Courthiade, member of the Language commission of the Roma Union. Dialect used in Slovakia is part of the *Carpatian* dialects. In accordance with A. Bartosz language is really important part of the Roma minority life. On Fifth Roma Congress in Prague (Czech Republic) in 2000 was prepared official Warsaw standardization of the Roma language.⁴⁴

Bible translation is important tool in the pastoration of the Roma Christians (for example in France). André Barthélémy et alia are working on the Bible translations there.⁴⁵ New Testament translation and parts of the Old Testament in the dialect *lovari* (translation is for Hungarian Roma, but can be used for other communities – it is distributed in Slovakia, Serbia, Austria, Romania etc.)⁴⁶ are not

⁴¹ T. Podolinská, T. Hrustič, *Boh medzi bariérami...*, p. 96-98; eadem, *Dynamika religijnosti Romov na Slovensku – droga ku integrácii czy wykluczeniu społecznemu*, „Studia Romologica” 2011, no 4, p. 125-151.

⁴² Eadem, *Dynamika religijnosti...*, p. 117-118.

⁴³ Eadem, *Religion as a Path to Change? The Possibilities of Social Inclusion of the Roma in Slovakia*, Bratislava 2011, p. 42.

⁴⁴ A. Bartosz, *op.cit.*, p. 102-112.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 130.

⁴⁶ <http://www.rnl.sk/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8371> (29 VI 2008).

very suitable as intelligible version of the transcript. It is exacting process to understand Bible passages written in other dialect of the same language group.

Slovakian Roma people are using three main dialects. First of them is *Olas* Roma dialect with patterns of the Balcan languages and old Roma dialect's. Second group is *Hungarian* dialect (South Slovakia). But 80 percent of the Roma people are speaking *Slovak* Roma dialect (it means in East Slovakia). Roma language in Slovakia was officially standardized on 29 VI 2008. It is possible to use Roma language in educational process. Dialects of the Roma language are influenced by the languages of the majority in variety local regions. It appears language flexibility of the Roma people. But Roma culture is not fixed on special Roma cultural institutions.⁴⁷ It is difficult for some Roma adults to understand similar but not identical dialect of the Roma language.

ECAV prepared bilingual songbook for young people in Roma and in Slovak language – *Songs of New Life*. Roma version of the originally Slovak novel from Kristína Royová with a title *In the World without God* (edition: 5000 printed copies) was published too. In the second edition of the novel was supplemented Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments and short dictionary in three Roma dialects.⁴⁸

Organization *The Word for the World Bible Translators* finished the New Testament translation to the North-Central dialect (East-Slovakian) of the Roma language.⁴⁹ The projected publication of the Eastern Slovak Roma New Testament this year coincides with the unprecedented growth of Roma churches taking place in Slovakia.

Christian churches mentioned in the study are involved in the ministry to the Roma (but not all congregations within these denominations). Participation of the Roma on the church life and projects depends on the congregation model. Mission among the Roma communities started in most cases occasionally, based on the interest of individuals (missionaries from abroad, local pastors and preachers etc.).

Some of the missions and pastoral work grew out of humanitarian and charitable work. One of the reasons for religious missions being highly effective in causing social change in the marginalized Roma settlements is that the church comes with the offer of a social network.⁵⁰ The role of Christian churches in Roma communities is various, as we can see from our list of activities. However, most of the activities are designed to bring the spiritual formation and social support together.

⁴⁷ Z. Uherek, K. A. Novák, *Etnická identita Romů...*, p. 94.

⁴⁸ http://www.foruminst.sk/publ/egyeb/romakultura/romak_10.pdf (24 VI 2000).

⁴⁹ http://www.thewordfortheworld.org/c_east_europe.html (3 VIII 2006); *Preklad Biblie do románčiny*, „Joel Info. Nové Zámky” 2004, vol. V, no 2, p. 17.

⁵⁰ T. Podolinská, T. Hrustič, *Boh medzi bariérami...*, p. 152-155.

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