

Віктор Вронський  
Viktor Vronskiy  
(Sacramento, California, USA)

## ПАСТИРСЬКЕ СЛУЖІННЯ І БІБЛІЙНІ ВИМОГИ ДО СЛУЖИТЕЛЯ ЦЕРКВИ: ЕКЗЕГЕТИЧНИЙ, ПАТРИСТИЧНИЙ ТА ПРАКТИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ

### PASTORAL MINISTRY AND BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A CHURCH MINISTER: EXEGETICAL, PATRISTIC, AND PRACTICAL ANALYSIS

У статті здійснено богословсько-екзегетичний, патристичний і практичний аналіз пасторського служіння в контексті біблійних вимог до служителя Церкви. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена кризою духовного лідерства в сучасному церковному середовищі, що проявляється у секуляризації пасторської ідентичності, зведенні служіння до адміністративних або мотиваційних функцій та втраті еклезіологічної глибини пасторського покликання.

Окремий розділ присвячено патристичному осмисленню пасторства у творах Василія Великого, Кипріана Карфагенського та Іоанна Златоуста, де пасторство розглядається як духовний подвиг, форма служіння і відповідального послуху Церкви. Показано актуальність патристичної спадщини для сучасного п'ятирічного контексту, зокрема у питаннях розрізнення між духовним даром і духовною зрілістю, харизмою і характером.

Зроблено висновок, що повернення до біблійно-патристичного розуміння пасторського служіння є необхідною умовою духовної стабільності, еклезіологічної цілісності та оновлення сучасних церковних спільнот.

**Ключові слова:** пасторське служіння, пастор, духовне лідерство, біблійні вимоги, еклезіологія, характер служителя, патристика, Василій Великий, Кипріан Карфагенський, п'ятирічне циклическе управління.

*The article presents a theological-exegetical, patristic, and practical analysis of pastoral ministry in light of the biblical requirements for a church minister. The relevance of the study is determined by the contemporary crisis of spiritual leadership, manifested in the secularization of pastoral identity, the reduction of ministry to managerial or motivational functions, and the loss of ecclesiological depth in the understanding of pastoral calling.*

*A distinct section is devoted to the patristic understanding of pastoral ministry in the works of Basil the Great, Cyprian of Carthage, and John Chrysostom, where pastoring is interpreted as a spiritual ascetic endeavor, a ministry of moral authority, and a form of responsible obedience within the unity of the Church. The study highlights the relevance of patristic theology for the contemporary Pentecostal context, especially in discerning between spiritual gifting and spiritual maturity, charisma and character.*

*The article concludes that a return to a biblical-patristic understanding of pastoral ministry constitutes a vital prerequisite for ecclesial integrity, spiritual stability, and the renewal of church communities in the context of modern theological and cultural challenges.*

**Keywords:** pastoral ministry, pastor, church leadership, biblical requirements, ecclesiology, ministerial character, patristics, Basil the Great, Cyprian of Carthage, Pentecostalism.

**Relevance of the problem.** The modern church functions in conditions of deep cultural, social, and worldview transformations, which call into question traditional forms of spiritual leadership. Secularization, relativization of truth, a crisis of authorities, and the growth of a pragmatic approach to church administration significantly influence the understanding of pastoral ministry. In public

perception, the pastor is increasingly considered either as a religious manager, or as a motivational speaker or spiritual consultant, which leads to the loss of the biblical and ecclesiological depth of the pastoral calling. Such an understanding enters into direct contradiction with the biblical and patristic image of the shepherd as a bearer of spiritual responsibility and moral authority.

The New Testament offers a fundamentally different model of pastoring, in which the minister is defined not through functional efficiency, but through spiritual calling, moral integrity, and responsibility before God and the church community. The personality of the pastor becomes not only a conductor of teaching, but also a «living message» (2 Cor. 3:2–3). Precisely for this reason, the crises of modern church life—moral falls of ministers, authoritarianism, charismatic subjectivism—require a return to the primary sources of pastoral identity.

In conditions of crises of morality, loss of theological thinking, and destruction of church discipline, the question of the biblical requirements for the pastor acquires special significance.

The goal of the research is to identify the theological foundations of pastoral ministry, to reveal their exegetical and patristic logic, and to show their relevance for modern, including Pentecostal, church practice.

The methodology of the research combines exegetical analysis of New Testament texts, the comparative-historical method, and theological hermeneutics, which makes it possible to consider pastoral ministry as a spiritual institution rooted in the revelation of Scripture and church tradition.

### **Presentation of new material. Biblical foundations of pastoral ministry.**

#### **Terminology of spiritual leadership in the New Testament.**

New Testament teaching on pastoring is formed around a number of key terms: ποιμήν (pastor/shepherd), ἐπίσκοπος (bishop/overseer), and πρεσβύτερος (presbyter/elder). The term ποιμήν goes back to the Old Testament image of a shepherd who cares for the flock, protects it, and leads it to the sources of life, as a caring and responsible guardian of God's people (Ps. 22; Ezek. 34). This image receives Christological content in the person of Jesus Christ, called the “Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet. 5:4). Christ calls Himself the “Good Shepherd” (John 10:11), thereby setting a Christocentric model of ministry, where the pastor does not rule over the flock but sacrifices himself for it.

The terms ἐπίσκοπος (bishop/overseer) and πρεσβύτερος (presbyter/elder) in New Testament ecclesiology do not designate hierarchically different positions, but emphasize different aspects of one ministry: oversight, spiritual maturity, and responsibility (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5–7). As W. Grudem rightly notes, it is not a career ladder, but the multi-aspect identity of one calling.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, pastoral identity is not a product of an institutional career, but is determined by divine calling and ministerial responsibility.

**The theological essence of pastoring.** It should be emphasized that the gift of pastoring in the New Testament understanding never exists in isolation from responsibility before the community. The apostle Paul considers pastoring as a spiritual gift given by Christ to the Church (Eph. 4:11). The apostolic tradition rejects an individualistic understanding of ministry, where the shepherd acts as an autonomous spiritual subject. On the contrary, the shepherd is understood as part of the church organism, whose ministry is directed to the «*edification of the Body of Christ*» (Eph. 4:12).

This gift is directed not to the exaltation of the minister, but to the edification of the Body of Christ and bringing believers «*to the measure of the full stature of Christ*» (Eph. 4:13). The pastor in such an understanding is not a mediator between God and people, but a witness of the presence of Christ in the community.

Thus, pastoral ministry acquires an ecclesiological dimension: it is correlated not with the personal charisma of the minister, but with the spiritual good of the whole community. This excludes the sacralization of the pastor's personality and at the same time places on him increased moral responsibility, since any distortion of ministry inevitably affects the condition of the church body.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grudem W. Systematic Theology. St. Petersburg, 2003. P. 914.

<sup>2</sup> Grudem W. Systematic Theology. St. Petersburg, 2003. Pp. 918–921.

Consequently, the key criterion of pastoral ministry becomes moral authority. A minister who has lost spiritual integrity ceases to be a shepherd in the theological sense, even if he continues to perform administrative or preaching functions.

### **Calling and moral requirements for the minister.**

Calling and moral requirements for the minister we can lay out into two categories:

#### **1) Calling as the basis of pastoral ministry.**

The New Testament consistently asserts that the pastor does not «become» a minister by his own choice, but is called by God (John 15:16). In Acts 20:28 it is emphasized that it is precisely the Holy Spirit who appoints bishops to shepherd the Church of God. From this follows a fundamental position: the church does not produce pastors, but recognizes God's call.

This fundamentally distinguishes pastoring from professions mastered exclusively through education or administrative appointment. That is, it excludes the reduction of pastoring to professional activity and emphasizes its spiritual nature.

#### **2) Character as the core of pastoral authority.**

The apostolic lists of requirements for ministers (1 Tim. 3:2–7; Titus 1:6–9) are focused not on skills, but on character; they are addressed in the first place to the inner world of the minister. The apostle Paul lists qualities formed in the process of long spiritual process of formation: such as self-control, gentleness, sobriety, moral blamelessness, faithfulness in the family, ability to instruction. J. MacArthur rightly indicates that these characteristics cannot be imitated—they are the fruit of long spiritual formation<sup>3</sup>.

These characteristics do not lend themselves to formal assimilation. They are the result of inner transformation of the personality and serve as the basis of the community's trust in the pastor.

### **Family and ethics as a continuation of pastoral identity.**

#### **Family as the space of testing the minister.**

The apostle Paul emphasizes that the shepherd must be able to manage his own house, for «if someone does not know how to manage his own house, how will he care for the Church of God?» (1 Tim. 3:5). This text indicates a fundamental connection between the family life of the minister and his ability for church care. Exegetes of the Pastoral Epistles note that for the apostle the family is not a private sphere, but a primary form of spiritual leadership in which the character and maturity of the pastor are manifested.<sup>4</sup>

The pastor's family becomes a theological argument testifying to the authenticity of his ministry.

Thus, the pastor's family becomes a theological argument testifying to the authenticity of his ministry. As G. Fee emphasizes, managing the household in the Pastoral Epistles should be understood not in an authoritarian, but in a moral-educational key—as the ability to form an environment of love, order, and responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

As a result, the family life of the minister ceases to be exclusively a private sphere and is included in the ecclesiological dimension of pastoring. The German researcher K. Schmitt indicates that in early Christian tradition the pastor's house was considered as a “small church” in which the authenticity of his spiritual authority is tested.<sup>6</sup>

### **Pastoral ethics and the trust of the community.**

The ethical dimension of pastoral ministry forms the spiritual stability of the community. The New Testament consistently affirms a model of leadership based not on domination, but on service (Mark 10:42–45). The pastor is called to lead through personal example, not through institutional pressure.

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, J. *Biblical Leadership*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2008. P. 84.

<sup>4</sup> Marshall, I. H. *The Pastoral Epistles*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Fee, G. *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Schmitt, *Kirche und Amt im Neuen Testament*, 2004.

As J. Stott emphasizes, spiritual leadership in the Church is possible only where authority grows out of character, not out of position.<sup>7</sup>

Violation of ethical principles by a minister inevitably undermines trust and destroys church identity. Modern studies of church crises show that the majority of splits and spiritual traumas of communities are connected not with doctrinal errors, but with the moral falls of leaders.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, pastoral ethics appears not as a secondary application to ministry, but as its ontological foundation.

### **Patristic understanding of pastoring.**

#### **Pastoring as a spiritual struggle (Basil the Great).**

Basil the Great (4th century) considered pastoral ministry as a form of ascetic struggle. In his ascetic treatises and letters the pastor appears as a person bearing double responsibility—for his own soul and for the spiritual state of the flock (Basil the Great, *Ascetical Works*). Basil emphasizes that any moral compromise of the minister has destructive consequences for the entire community, since the pastor is a moral guide for believers.

An important aspect of Basil the Great's pastoral concept is his understanding of the minister's responsibility for the spiritual consequences of his own actions. He emphasizes that the shepherd cannot justify his moral compromises by references to pastoral efficiency or external results of ministry. In this sense Basil opposes a pragmatic approach to spiritual leadership, which evaluates the pastor exclusively by quantitative indicators.

The shepherd, according to Basil, bears double responsibility: for his own soul and for the souls of the flock. Precisely for this reason pastoring is considered as a spiritual struggle requiring constant self-testing, prayer, and ascetic sobriety. Such an approach forms an understanding of the pastor as a moral guide, not as a functional minister of church processes.<sup>9</sup>

For Basil the shepherd is in the first place an example of life, whose behavior must correspond to the proclaimed word. The effectiveness of ministry is evaluated not by quantitative indicators, but by the depth of spiritual impact. As the modern patrologist A. Raddé-Gallwitz notes, for Basil pastoring is «service by personal example, not management through structure».<sup>10</sup>

#### **The pastor as a spiritual physician (Basil the Great).**

A special place in Basil's theology is occupied by the image of the pastor as a spiritual physician. In the “Longer Rules” he asserts that the minister is like a physician who must first heal his own soul before caring for others.<sup>11</sup>

Basil emphasizes the necessity of combining strictness and mercy, distinguishing the spiritual states of the flock, and a sober assessment of one's own limitations. He warns that pastoral authority not based on ascetic discipline and inner sobriety turns into a source of temptation. Thus, the pastor appears as a bearer of spiritual experience, not simply a teacher or administrator.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Pastoring and the unity of the Church (Cyprian of Carthage).**

Cyprian of Carthage (3rd century) develops the ecclesiological dimension of pastoring in the treatise *De unitate Ecclesiae*. He asserts that the minister is a guardian of church unity and apostolic succession. For Cyprian the pastor is not an autonomous charismatic leader, but a minister rooted in the body of the Church.<sup>13</sup>

Pastoral ministry, according to Cyprian, is impossible outside church unity. A minister acting autonomously loses ecclesiological legitimacy. Pastoral authority is understood as ministerial

<sup>7</sup> Stott, J. *Your Mind Matters*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Barna, G. *The Power of Team Leadership*. Ventura, CA: Barna Research Group, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Vasyl the Great. *Ascetical Works*. Lviv: Svichado, 2015. Pp. 211–219.

<sup>10</sup> Raddé-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea*, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Basil of Caesarea. *Ascetical Works*. Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1950.

<sup>12</sup> Elm, S. *Virgins of God*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Cyprian of Carthage. *On the Unity of the Church*. New York: Newman Press, 1957.

obedience to the Church, not as a personal charismatic privilege. As J. Ratzinger notes, Cyprian lays the foundations for understanding pastoral ministry as «the authority of responsibility, not the authority of control».<sup>14</sup>

Cyprian insists that the moral failure of a minister destroys not only his personal witness, but also the very structure of church communion. From this follows his requirement of strict discipline and accountability of bishops and presbyters before God and the community.

The teaching of Cyprian of Carthage acquires particular relevance in the context of modern crises of church leadership connected with individualism and charismatic authoritarianism. Cyprian consistently emphasizes that a minister acting outside church unity loses the legitimacy of his pastoral ministry.

His ecclesiology presupposes that the pastor is accountable not only to God, but also to the church community within which he carries out ministry. Thus, pastoral authority is conceived not as a personal privilege, but as a form of ministerial obedience to the Church. This principle becomes an important corrective factor for modern charismatic movements, where there exists a risk of substituting church authority with personal spiritual charisma.<sup>15</sup>

### **Patristic consensus and its significance.**

What is common for Basil the Great, Cyprian of Carthage, and John Chrysostom is the understanding of pastoring as a struggle of service requiring spiritual maturity, self-discipline, and readiness for sacrifice. The pastor is not thought of apart from moral authority, and the charisma of ministry is always subordinated to responsibility before God and the Church.<sup>16</sup>

This patristic consensus forms a theological matrix that is actual also for the modern church.

### **Pentecostal context of pastoral ministry.**

In the Pentecostal tradition, pastoral ministry is inseparably connected with the action of the Holy Spirit. Of particular importance is the question of distinguishing between spiritual gift and spiritual maturity. In this context, the integration of patristic heritage with the Pentecostal experience of the action of the Holy Spirit makes it possible to form a balanced model of pastoring, where the charisma of ministry is united with moral responsibility and ecclesiological accountability.<sup>17</sup>

The presence of charismatic manifestations cannot be considered a sufficient basis for pastoral authority. Modern Pentecostal theologians emphasize that precisely the absence of theological reflection and spiritual discipline often leads to abuse of power and the destruction of communities.

However, modern Pentecostal theologians emphasize that the presence of spiritual manifestations cannot be considered a sufficient basis for pastoral authority.

F. Macchia and A. Yong emphasize the necessity of a clear distinction between charisma and spiritual maturity, between gift and character<sup>18</sup>. The integration of the patristic understanding of pastoring with Pentecostal pneumatology makes it possible to avoid the extremes of charismatic individualism and to preserve ecclesiological balance.

Therefore, pastoral ministry in the Pentecostal context requires:

- theological education as a form of spiritual responsibility;
- accountability of the minister to the community and the presbytery;
- the joining of spiritual gifts with the patristic understanding of discipline and humility.

<sup>14</sup> Ratzinger, J. *Called to Communion*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Cyprian of Carthage. *On the Unity of the Church*. Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2010. Pp. 73–81.

<sup>16</sup> Chrysostom, John. *On the Priesthood*. Translated by W. R. W. Stephens. In: Philip Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 9 (*St. Chrysostom: On the Priesthood; Ascetic Treatises; Select Homilies and Letters; Homilies on the Statues*). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1889.

<sup>17</sup> Macchia F. D. *Baptized in the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. Pp. 198–205.

<sup>18</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 2006; Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology*, 2014. P. 201.

The integration of patristic heritage with Pentecostal pneumatology makes it possible to form a balanced model of pastoring in which charisma is united with moral responsibility and ecclesiological accountability.

**Conclusion.** Pastoral ministry is not a secondary element of church life, but its structure-forming foundation. It is a key element of church identity. The biblical requirements for the minister express the essence of spiritual leadership based on calling, character, and responsibility before God and the Church. They reveal the pastor as a bearer of spiritual responsibility whose personal integrity forms the stability of the community.

In conditions of modern turbulence, the pastor faithful to Scripture and church tradition becomes not only a guardian of doctrine, but also a living witness of the reality of God's action in history. A return to the biblical-patristic understanding of pastoring opens the way to spiritual renewal and stability of church communities.

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