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## **METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN THE RESEARCH OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGIANS IN THE NATIONAL PEDAGOGICAL DRAGOMANOV UNIVERSITY**

Within the framework of cooperation of the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University with Protestant seminaries and their associations, more than ten defenses of dissertations on Pentecostalism took place. These defenses prove that Pentecostal theologians were able to overcome the closed nature of their own tradition to the development of theology. The ideological leadership of Protestant theology in Ukraine, especially Pentecostal theology, became possible due to the assimilation and development of the best methodological achievements of Western theology of the beginning of the 21st century. Ukrainian Pentecostal theologians actively use the methodology of theological hermeneutics, taking into account the achievements of post-liberal and post-conservative Western theology, modern biblical studies, mission theology and eschatology. The central point for the entire methodology was the recognition of the narrative character of the religious ideology. The analysis of narratives is complemented by the research of key narrative concepts, the research of the interaction of narrative theology and other post-metaphysical methodologies. The vision of the history of Christianity and the history of theology as processes characterized by periodic paradigm shifts allows us to conceptualize narratives and then create new narratives about these stories and about the prospects of both Christianity and theology. A particularly great achievement is the systematic presentation of the history of the Pentecostal movement as the history of communities that have special narratives, cultivate special virtues, and use special narrative concepts.

**Key word:** *Protestant theology, Pentecostal theology, hermeneutics, postmodern theology.*

### **Introduction**

The National Pedagogical University is nowadays a recognized center for the development of religious studies and theology. More than 50 years of existence of the specialized department allowed not only to achieve significant results in educational and pedagogical activity, but also to create significant scientific researches which have improved in the last decade. A fundamentally new stage in the development of religious methodology and the emergence of theological methodology are associated with the creation of the Religion Study Center, reformation of the work of the specialized council for the defense of a doctoral and Ph.D. theses, the intensification of work within the integrated educational and research program "Modern Protestant Theology" of the Religion Study Center of the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University, developed and implemented jointly with the Euro-Asian Theological Association, in accordance with the Additional Agreement No.1 to the Cooperation Agreement between the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University and the public organization "Euro-Asian Theological Association" dated December 19, 2015. These tendencies culminated in the framework of the research work of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies of the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University in accordance with the scientific theme of the Department "Development of academic theology in the context of educational transformations in Ukraine" (U 0117U004903). All this

made it possible in 2014-2021 to achieve significant innovations in the methodology of dissertation research, which were written at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, or were finalized at this Department and in the specialized council of the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University. A particularly interesting phenomenon was the significant achievements of the Pentecostals, who were traditionally considered too conservative to develop their own theology. The unexpected boom of Pentecostal dissertations in Ukraine was made possible by the systematic use of modern theological methodology, the innovation of which became noticeable and even influenced the study of religion at the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University.

**Purpose and objectives of the article.** Purpose of the research is a comprehensive analysis of the features of methodological innovations proposed in the theological studies of the Pentecostals at the National Pedagogical University from 2016 to 2021.

### **Research methods**

Analysis of the achievements of the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University in the field of religious and theological research has just begun (*Levchenko, 2019; Levchenko, 2020*), and methodological innovations have not found their systematic understanding yet.

### Result and Discussions

A work by Roman Soloviy (*Soloviy, 2016*) was of great importance for the development of theology and religious studies at the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University. This work is distinguished primarily by the fact that it takes into account the context of postmodernism as a state of philosophical and social ideology. This postmodern context was seen not only as a challenge, but also as a methodological opportunity for the theoretical development of theology and the practical development of Christian churches.

Roman Soloviy took as the subject of his analysis the religious movement named Emerging Church in the United States of America. The monograph on the Emerging Church was published in Ukrainian and Russian. This research project is quite large-scale and concerns the mentioned religious movement, which aims to create a new, competitive church in the era of postmodernism.

The Emerging Church movement is practical in nature and minimizes all theoretical preconditions in its activities. It is obvious that in the era of postmodernism the importance of dogma and theology was largely minimized, and Christian practice became more important. The Emerging Church movement is primarily interesting as a kind of experiment in putting postmodern intentions into practice. In its theoretical, sketchy ideas and in practice, Emerging Church largely turned to the Christian tradition. It should be emphasized that all modernizations and postmodernizations of Christianity are characterized by this partial return to tradition. On the example of the Emerging Church, we trace a rather pronounced appeal to tradition, and not only to the Protestant and early Christian part of it, but also to the elements of Catholicism and Orthodoxy. In particular, this applies to Eucharistic practices.

It is extremely important for us that Roman Soloviy, within the framework of his own research, created a large methodological section. In this section, he concludes that the traditional rivalry between liberal and neo-Orthodox schools is a thing of the past. The combination of liberalism and conservatism or liberalism and fundamentalism in theology is a thing of the past, because liberalism and conservatism are, in fact, phenomena of modern theological thinking. Nowadays, these theological schemes look equally scholastic, are outdated to function in modern times, mainly due to their own unrealism. This unrealism lies in the fact that these trends in theology did not take into account the narrative nature of a human, the narrative nature of the human ideology, the individual ideology of believers and the collective ideology of Christian communities.

Taking into account the narrative nature of the religious ideology, from the point of view of theology and religious studies, it is necessary to trace the fact that narrative types of theology replace previous types of modern theology. Conscious perception of the fact that the Christian ideology has a narrative character, contributes to the conscious development of their own theological theories and religious practices within the narrative anthropology, narrative hermeneutics. New types of theology show how communities form or accept certain narratives; how individual narrative concepts are formed or adopted; how within these narratives the poetic imagination, theopoetics develops. Accordingly, new images of

God, man, world, community are formed, which set new guidelines for the lives of individuals and communities.

It is important that individual narratives are able to actualize the normative virtues that must be inherent in believers and communities. The presence of virtues is more important than a purely theoretical confession of faith or recognition of a particular doctrine (which were of paramount importance for the postmodern era).

Note that narrative theology itself is divided into postliberal and postconservative theology. Postliberal theology is characterized by a conscious acceptance of the fundamental meaning of narratives; the fact that communities form these narratives and form themselves under the influence of narratives (a kind of hermeneutic circle is formed between the subject and the narratives). It should be noted that in the narratives themselves there are certain key metaphors, concepts: the cross, salvation, new creation, spiritual birth and others. New types of theology pay considerable attention to the analysis of these concepts.

From the standpoint of religious studies and theology, postliberal thinkers include not only the founders of postliberal theology, but also theologians close to postliberalism on formal grounds. In general, liberal theology was quite subjectivist in nature, focused on the subject, on existence. Postliberal theology pays attention to the individual and his life in the community; refocuses on communities; overcomes subjectivism and is an intersubjectivist model of theology. Postliberal thinking overcomes conservative thinking, for the sake of community consent theory, for the communitarian vision of theology and Christianity of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Postconservatism recognises the things of postliberalism, but also attaches great importance to personal spiritual experience, which, of course, has an individual belonging to the community. This experience gives confidence to the religious ideology of the individual. It should be noted that the absolutisation of experience was characteristic within the framework of modern philosophy. Roman Soloviy also analyses other schools that exist in modern Protestant theology.

The separation of postliberalism and postconservatism allows us to model a kind of "Cartesian coordinate system". Modernism is characterized by the presence of two types of ideology: liberalism and conservatism, or liberalism and fundamentalism, or liberalism and neo-orthodoxy (conservative schools were characterized by such diversity). Postmodern ideology is characterized by postliberalism and postconservatism. It is worth noting that postliberalism and postconservatism can be understood somewhat broader than in the form of schools represented by certain theologians who, in fact, identify themselves as postliberal or postconservative thinkers.

This important methodological distinction has been repeatedly used in various dissertation research conducted on the basis of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Dragomanov University, starting with the works of Serhii Stavrojani (*Stavrojani, 2016*) and Yurii Podorozhnyi (*Podorozhnyi, 2018*). This distinction proved to be efficient and heuristic from the standpoint of religious studies, and not only from the standpoint of modern reflections on the history and theory of theology. This distinction, understanding the specificity of the postmodern and post-metaphysical nature of Christian theology of the early 21st century, allows religious studies to distin-

guish between two main directions in modern theology and give them characteristics.

For the “old” school of religious studies, all modern theology looks homogeneous, hereditary in relation to the previous liberal theology. Representatives of the “old” school of religious studies are surprised that modern theology can adopt a large number of ideas from neo-orthodoxy (from the enclosures that opposed liberal theology), adhering to the division: post-metaphysical or non-scholastic theology - that is, liberal - is a somewhat outdated way for religious studies, which speaks, rather, of a misunderstanding of the principles of modern theology. This non-standard division of theology complicates the procedure of classification of theological directions, certain types of ideology (there is a peculiar situation when – “all cats are grey”).

The methodology of distinguishing postliberalism and postconservatism allows a more nuanced approach to today's “theological landscape”; allows identifying different features that are common to both areas and features that are inherent in each of them. Also, this methodology allows us to see that the previous ideas characteristic for liberalism, fundamentalism have not disappeared, because, as Hans Kyung said, it is very unlikely that certain theological paradigms would disappear without a trace in religion, in theology (the only exception can be Jewish Christianity). Today there are carriers of various theological paradigms of the past. Therefore, it is not surprising that today there are “met” thinkers - liberals, conservatives, fundamentalists, who declare themselves “carriers” of the ideas of the “pure” Gospel, “correct” reading of it. They are, in fact, typical bearers of the cultural paradigm of the modern age and a certain way of reading the Scriptures.

Accordingly, the above methodology has an efficient heuristic nature, in addition to the fact that Roman Soloviy successfully uses it in his dissertation research, providing a detailed analysis of the Emerging Church movement and its own characteristics of this phenomenon. From the standpoint of the methodology of religious studies, a very important section of Roman Soloviy's paper describes the characteristics of modern Christian theology in general, and distinguishes postliberal and postconservative schools in theology in particular.

Mykhailo Mokienko's dissertation on Pentecostalism in the World and Ukrainian Context has the title “Pentecostalism: Peculiarities of Theological and Social Identification” became a significant contribution to modern humanities (Mokienko, 2018). This doctoral dissertation is completed on the border of the history of religion, the history of theology and religious studies. Such interdisciplinarity posed certain difficulties, as it was necessary to move away from historical description, to move to the meanings of all these historical moments, and to carry out a theoretical reflection on the phenomenon of Pentecostalism.

Pentecostalism is one of the Christian movements, so Mykhailo Mokienko faced the task of developing a methodology for analyzing the development of religious movements. As a result, a definition of what a religious movement is has been provided; the regularities of the origin of religious movements are singled out; emphasis is focused on the principal points on which the attention of researchers of religious movements should be focused.

In the process of developing the research methodology, Mykhailo Mokienko turned to modern religious and

theological hermeneutics. It is extremely important that the methodology has been proposed taking into account the fact that all religious movements, especially Pentecostalism, arise and develop in connection with certain narratives.

Mykhailo Mokienko views Pentecostalism as a narrative community that, in addition to its own narratives, has certain virtues that are exemplary and obligatory for all members of the movement. The virtues of the natural and supernatural, moral and spiritual are distinguished. An analysis of how the perception of all these virtues and ways to implement them is changing is conducted. The change in eschatological perceptions in Pentecostal communities is also analyzed.

Continuing the theme of Pentecostalism, it is also worth mentioning the dissertation of Vitalii Hura “Eschatology of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals)” (Hura, 2019). The author of this work examines individual written sources and argues that the eschatological views of Pentecostals, which according to Pentecostal beliefs are original, such as arising from their unique spiritual experience, in fact, were borrowed from certain Baptist sources, influenced by Western theological concepts and were not formed in the context of modern Pentecostalism as the product of a unique supernatural experience. It is worth noting, in terms of the history of ideas, that these Western theological concepts were predominantly Baptist in nature.

In this context, we should mention Oleh Bornovolokov's dissertation “Identity of the Ukrainian Pentecostal Movement”, which is devoted to the development of Pentecostalism in Western Ukraine (Bornovolokov, 2019). It systematically analyses the activities of the largest educational centers; activities of prominent preachers and Pentecostal communities in general (congresses, congress resolutions); the dynamics of the development of Western Pentecostalism from the moment of its emergence after the First World War to the Second World War.

Oleh Bornovolokov concludes that Pentecostalism was a rather underdeveloped phenomenon before the personality of teacher Gustav Schmidt. Schmidt, in fact, organized a Bible school in Danzig (modern Gdansk). In this way, Gustav Schmidt contributed to the institutionalization of Pentecostalism by the congregational type. Also, through the active publishing activities of periodicals, Schmidt realized a significant educational impulse. It was Gustav Schmidt who developed in detail the theological foundations for Western Ukrainian Pentecostal communities.

The above-mentioned dissertation confirms the thesis that the domestic Pentecostal movement was an integral part of the world Pentecostalism. It turns out that the Ukrainian Pentecostal movement is not “rooted” in some Khlystov or other pre-revolutionary sects, and its sources are Western theological thought and Western religious practices.

Oleh Bornovolokov's work resonates with Dmytro Koval's book on Pentecostalism in the Rivne region, which also presents extremely rich material about Gustav Schmidt and his associates (Koval, 2018). Dmytro Koval analyses numerous archival sources, showing the development of Pentecostalism, pointing to the dominant narratives and moods; features of the interaction of Pentecostals with the environment at different stages of movement.

The topic chosen by Petro Kovaliv (*Kovaliv, 2021*) for his dissertation research is important and relevant, he has great knowledge for the development of Ukrainian Protestant theology, and he has significant ecumenical potential. His main factual task was to overcome the one-sided understanding of biblical and patristic soteriology through the prism of later Protestant ideas. Indeed, the historical views that were imposed on the ancient authors of the schemes born under the influence of St. Anselm during the Reformation should have remained on the sidelines of science. However, there are still biblical theologians and theologians-patristologists who try to “read into” in the ancient texts the scheme of Luther, Calvin, various Protestant religions and catechisms. The critical work opened the way for rethinking soteriology from the standpoint of a more adequate immanent to the ancient texts of reading the Bible and patristic. Such a reading led to an ontological soteriology close to Orthodox but still Protestant. Subsequent studies revealed the need for holistic hermeneutics as a basis for soteriology, and this returned the dissertation to the theory of metaphor, which he developed, creating a new theological synthesis in this area. The application of the hermeneutics of metaphor to the analysis of all the basic concepts used in theories of redemption in their historical development has allowed achieving significant scientific results, which are not only new in the Ukrainian context, but are a new word in world Protestant theology. The dissertation is important for religious studies, hermeneutics, history of philosophy, culturology. The created methodology can be the basis for new topical research on various philosophical, theological and religious issues.

Petro Kovaliv's dissertation research is an outstanding achievement of the Protestant theological science of Ukraine and the whole post-Soviet space, which opens new perspectives for biblical studies and patrology, for modern systematic and dogmatic theology, for missionary work.

The dissertation work of Ivan Rusin (*Rusin, 2019*) was the completion of an independent scientific research, which is devoted to one of the topical and important issues for both theoretical theological and practical discourse. Missionary theology of L. Newbigin attracts the attention of modern theologians, as it offers a holistic methodology for the development of Christianity in post-modern times. This methodology is highly effective, especially in the field of interfaith, interreligious dialogue. Discovering the irrational preconditions of rationalism through recourse to the achievements of modern philosophy of science has allowed Newbigin to offer the Christian ideology as a full-fledged alternative, in favor of which many arguments are possible. It is especially important that in Newbigin we find a systematic legitimization of the ideas of open and dialogical Christianity, which would not fall into the extremes of liberalism and fundamentalism. Preservation and renewal of the intellectual and ethical traditions of Christianity, the development of dialogue with the world, rethinking the role of the church in modern culture - all these are important topics for Newbigin. The dissertation provides a new interpretation of Newbigin's ideas, as well as shows the ways of their practical application in Ukraine. We consider that the most important result of the study is the demonstration of the fact that the triadological understanding of mission in the Anglican theologian is open to the tradition of Greek patristics. Also extremely important is the openness to modern Catholic

and Orthodox theology, which considers the purpose of human life to be involved in the communion of the Trinity.

The topic chosen by Radislav Tatsiun (*Tatsiun, 2021*) for the dissertation research is important and relevant. First, the confrontation that exists in Ukrainian society or is introduced into this society from outside is actively speculated on various narratives. Conflict narratives, which we proved in our doctoral dissertation, are often created as well. Second, Christians in Ukraine, realizing the depth of social wounds, are trying to help rather instrumentally like the Samaritans, but they could carry out more ministries related to the integral transformation of Ukrainian society. This requires effective narrative strategies that would be peaceful, would provide a renewed public consciousness for churches and all Ukrainians. Practical strategies are also needed that take into account the enormous importance of narratives and those concepts in narratives exist. All this requires a significant increase in the activity of Christians, especially the evangelical churches. From all of the above, it is clear that the content of the dissertation discusses the key issues associated with the Christian theological vision of reconciliation, with the activities of churches in the practice of reconciliation. And at the same time the dissertation is executed at a high theoretical level. A well-developed author's methodology that develops narratology, at least in our context, is a significant step forward in theoretical terms. The analysis of the state of narratives in Ukraine could be supplemented, as not all problematic “closed narratives” are analyzed, but only some indicative of all narratives. Then the ways of social memory therapy and conflict narrative therapy are analyzed in detail. The use of biblical narratives in these ways of social memory therapy is quite logical for Protestants, but we note that in reality it is important for both Orthodox and Catholics.

### Conclusions

The prospect that the study of Pentecostalism by Ukrainian researchers will efficiently continue in the future looks quite reasonable. Indeed, with the help of religious studies and theological hermeneutics, it is possible to reveal many aspects that have been left without the attention of scientists. Hermeneutics allows one to adequately interpret specific narratives and concepts. An adequate interpretation of historical events, along with the interpretation of the role of various historical figures, provides an objective picture of the development of the Pentecostal movement and allows us to understand the meaning of specific historical events.

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## **МЕТОДОЛОГІЧНІ НОВАЦІЇ В ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯХ П'ЯТИДЕСЯТНИЦЬКИХ БОГОСЛОВІВ В НАЦІОНАЛЬНОМУ ПЕДАГОГІЧНОМУ УНІВЕРСИТЕТІ ІМЕНІ МИХАЙЛА ДРАГОМАНОВА**

В межах співпраці Національного педагогічного університету імені М.П. Драгоманова з протестантськими семінаріями та їх об'єднаннями відбулося більше десяти захистів дисертацій п'ятидесятників. Ці захисти доводять, що п'ятидесятницькі богослови зуміли подолати закритість власної традиції до розвитку богослов'я. Ідейне лідерство протестантського богослов'я в Україні, особливо п'ятидесятницького, стало можливим завдяки засвоєнню та розвитку найкращих методологічних досягнень західного богослов'я розпочатку ХХІ століття. Українські п'ятидесятницькі богослови активно використовують методологію богословської герменевтики, враховуючи досягнення постліберального і постконсервативного західного богослов'я, сучасної біблеїстики, теології місії та есхатології. Центральним моментом для всієї методології стало визнання нарративного характеру релігійного світогляду. Аналіз нарративів доповнюється вивченням ключових нарративних концептів, дослідженням взаємодії нарративної теології та інших постметафізичних методологій. Бачення історії християнства та історії теології як процесів, для яких була характерна періодична зміна парадигм дозволяє концептуалізувати нарративи та описати створити нові нарративи стосовно вже цих історій та відносно перспектив як християнства, так і теології. Особливо великим досягненням стає систематичне представлення історії п'ятидесятницького руху як історії спільнот, що мають особливі нарративи, культивують особливі чесноти та використовують особливі нарративні концепти.

**Ключові слова:** протестантське богослов'я, п'ятидесятницьке богослов'я, герменевтика, постмодерне богослов'я.

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