

The missionary path of Petro Mazanov (1840?–1911) in the context of historical and religious studies

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Abstract.

This article aims to explore the missionary path of Archpriest Petro Mazanov within the framework of the social and spiritual development of the Poltava Diocese during the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. The religious studies analysis focuses on his service in the Saviour, Dormition, and Transfiguration churches in the city of Poltava, his organisation of parish life, initiatives for reforming ecclesiastical governance, efforts to address the socio-domestic challenges of the clergy, and active involvement in charitable societies. Particular attention is given to his work as a city dean and a member of the Poltava Ecclesiastical Guardianship. **Research methodology.** The study is grounded in the principles of historicism, objectivity, system-based analysis, comprehensiveness, multifactoriality, worldview pluralism, and confessional neutrality. These were implemented through the use of a range of general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, comparison) and specialised approaches from the fields of history and religious studies. These include descriptive, chronological, logical, analytical-synthetic, statistical, historical-genetic, socio-confessional, ecclesiastical-profile, biographical, problem-chronological, comparative-historical, retrospective, and generalising methods. The research adopts an interdisciplinary approach that combines methodological tools from church historiography, social history, and the history of everyday life, enabling the missionary activity of P. Mazanov to be examined within a broader socio-cultural context. **Scholarly novelty** lies in the reconstruction of the largely unexplored life and pastoral activity of Petro Mazanov, providing fresh insights into the position of Orthodox clergy during the specified period. For the first time, lesser-known facts concerning P. Mazanov's ecclesiastical, public, and socio-confessional involvement have been systematised and introduced into scholarly discourse. **Conclusions.** The research establishes that Archpriest Petro Mazanov was a proactive initiator of parish renewal, an administrator, and a benefactor. In his ministry, he combined traditional pastoral service with active participation in the socio-ecclesiastical life of the Poltava Diocese in the latter half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. As dean, Mazanov provided pastoral care to parishioners, took part in charitable associations, introduced innovative approaches to clergy-laity relations, and contributed to the development of the region's church infrastructure.

Key words: Archpriest, Charity, Church, Clergy, Dean, Diocesan records, Laity, Ministry, Orthodox Church, Parish, Parish staff, Patronage, Petro Mazanov.

Місіонерський шлях Петра Мазанова (1840?–1911) в контексті історико-релігієзнавчих досліджень

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Анотація.

Метою статті є розкриття місіонерського шляху протоєрея Петра Мазанова в контексті суспільного і духовного розвитку Полтавської єпархії другої половини XIX – початку XX століття. У фокусі релігієзнавчого аналізу знаходиться його служіння у Спаському, Успенському та Преображенському храмах м. Полтава, організація парафіяльного життя, ініціативи щодо реформування церковного устрою, розв'язання соціально-побутових проблем духовенства та активна участь у діяльності доброчинних товариств. З'ясовано зміст діяльності священника як міського благочинного та члена Полтавського духовного опікунства тощо. **Методологія дослідження.** У процесі роботи ми прагнули дотримуватися принципів історизму, об'єктивізму, системності, всебічності, багатофакторності, світоглядного плюралізму, конфесійної нейтральності. Це стало можливим завдяки використанню і поєднанню у статті низки загальнонаукових (аналіз, синтез, індукція, дедукція, порівняння) і спеціальних методів історичної та релігієзнавчої наук. Зокрема, описового, хронологічного, логічного, аналітико-синтетичного, статистичного, історико-генетичного, суспільно-конфесійного, церковно-портретного, біографічного, проблемно-хронологічного, порівняльно-історичного, ретроспективного та узагальнюючого. Дослідження ґрунтується на міждисциплінарному підході, що поєднує методологічні засади церковної історіографії, соціальної історії та історії повсякденності, дозволяючи розглядати місіонерську діяльність П. Мазанова в широкому соціокультурному контексті. **Наукова новизна** полягає у реконструкції малодослідженого життєвого шляху й пастирської діяльності Петра Мазанова, що дозволяє глибше розкрити становище православного духовенства зазначеного періоду. Уперше систематизовано та уведено до наукового обігу маловідомі факти про церковно-громадську та суспільно-конфесійну діяльність П. Мазанова. **Висновки.** У дослідженні встановлено, що протоєрей Петро Мазанов був активним ініціатором модернізації парафіяльного життя, адміністратором та меценатом. У своїй діяльності священник поєднував традиційне пастирське служіння з активною участю в суспільно-церковному житті Полтавської єпархії другої половини XIX – початку XX століття. Будучи благочинним, П. Мазанов здійснював душпастирську опіку над парафіянами, брав участь у благодійних товариствах, впроваджував нові підходи до взаємодії між духовенством і мирянами, сприяв розвитку церковної інфраструктури регіону.

Ключові слова: благочинний, благодійність, віряни, духовенство, єпархіальні відомості, меценатство, парафія, Петро Мазанов, причет, протоєрей, храм, служіння, церква.

Statement of the problem. In modern church-historical science, there is a growing interest in studying local manifestations of religious life, individual dimensions of spiritual practice, which represent the characteristic trends in development and the situation of the Orthodox Church in the late 19th – early 20th centuries. Of particular importance in this context is the study of biographies and missionary paths of representatives of the parish clergy, which, combining pastoral, administrative, charitable and educational activities, played a significant role in the formation of the confessional identity of local communities. Despite the fact that church periodicals contain some fragmentary aspects of the problem under study, the figure of Archpriest P. Mazanov, in general, has not received proper coverage in historical science. Currently, there are no generalised biographical and analytical works, analysis of the missionary, charitable and organisational activities of the priest. All this determines the relevance of a comprehensive study of his church service within the Poltava diocese.

Analysis of recent research and publications problem of the participation of the Orthodox clergy in the charitable, missionary and educational and cultural life of the dioceses during the second half of the 19th – first half of the 20th century did not remain without the attention of scholars. In the modern Ukrainian historiography, there is an increased interest in studying local features of church history, the activities of Orthodox brotherhoods, social initiatives of the clergy and the role of individual priests in the development of religious communities. The development of the Chernihiv diocese, relations with the local clergy and attitude to regional church traditions are carried out in the work of O. Tarasenko. The author made an attempt to study the relationship between the ruling and vicar bishops (Tarasenko, 2024). A general overview of the historiography, which contains an analysis of the cultural and educational activities of the Orthodox brotherhoods of the Volyn province, is carried out in the work of O. Sazhok (Sazhok, 2013, pp. 49–51). Here we see a study of the evolution of approaches to

the study of church history of the late 19th – early 20th centuries. Researcher I. Ermakova analysed, using the example of the Kherson diocese, the features of the development of missionary service as a tool for combating sectarianism and schism. The author focused on the role of Orthodox brotherhoods and state support in their organisation (Ermakova, 2012, No. 1–4, pp. 46–51). In this context, L. Levchenko's study, devoted to the activities of Bible societies in Ukrainian lands at the beginning of the 19th century, also deserves attention (Levchenko, 2024). The author clarified and revealed the activities of numerous branches of the Russian Bible Society in Ukraine (in Zhytomyr, Katerynoslav, Kyiv, Odessa, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Poltava, Kharkiv, Simferopol, Feodosia and Chernihiv). The goal of these organisations was to spread the Holy Scripture in the native language of ethnic groups, regardless of confessional, social or property affiliation.

These works are representative examples of regional studies of spiritual life, which allow a better understanding of the general trends in the development of the Orthodox Church of the corresponding period.

A significant contribution to the study of the religious and social life of Poltava was made by I. Pavlovsky. In his work «To the History of the Poltava Diocese: Historical and Household Essays, Notes and Correspondence. Based on Archive Data», he provided valuable information about the development of education, charity, and church administration (Pavlovsky, 1916). However, information about the activities and life of P. Mazanov was provided by I. Pavlovsky in fragments. V. Buchnevich's work «Notes on Poltava and Its Monuments» contains structured data on the clergy, churches, and cultural heritage of Poltava, and mentions the publications of P. Mazanov himself (Buchnevich, 1902). Some statistical information on the religious infrastructure of the region is given in the «Memorial Book of the Poltava Province for 1865» by P. Bodiansky (Bodiansky, 1865).

It is worth highlighting the work of P. Mazanov himself, «Spasskaya Church in the City of Poltava» (Poltavskie eparhial'nye vedomosti (PEV), 1870, No. 8, pp. 312–322). In it, the priest covered in detail the history of the temple, its architecture, reconstructions, and benefactors.

The article by I. Petrenko and O. Tryhub, «Poltava Church Historical and Archaeological Committee (1906–1917) in the Study and Preservation of Cultural Heritage», highlights the regional nature of the activities of the aforementioned organisation (Petrenko, Tryhub, 2025). The authors argue that the main goal of the committee was to preserve the monuments of the church antiquity of the Poltava region. It is especially valuable that the researchers paid attention to the completion of the funds of the diocesan antiquities repository, which was carried out through the purchase, exchange and donation of items that came from church and monastery sacristies, parishes and private collections. Significant work on filling was carried out by priests, in particular P. Mazanov who was an active participant in the committee at the final stage of his life.

The scientific and theoretical basis of our study is the dissertations of S. Fedorenko, G. Stepanenko, T. Fazan and I. Petrenko (Fedorenko, 2008; Stepanenko, 2002; Fazan, 2020; Petrenko, 2008). They analyse the educational, social, and philanthropic activities of the clergy, the functioning of church-parish schools, etc. However, these studies are of a generalised nature and do not contain data on P. Mazanov.

Thus, even though the problem of charitable, church-public, and social activities of the Orthodox clergy is reflected in modern historical science, the figure of P. Mazanov remains poorly studied. Existing mentions of him in scientific and periodical church publications are fragmentary, which necessitates a comprehensive study of his biography, missionary activities, and contribution to the development of church and religious life in the Poltava region.

The purpose of the article is to reveal the missionary path of Archpriest Petro Mazanov in the context of the social and spiritual development of the Poltava Diocese in the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries.

Presentation of the main material. Petro Mazanov is a recognised expert in theology, church history, and pedagogy. Throughout his professional career, he was repeatedly honoured with official awards. In particular, in 1869 he was awarded a staff, in 1870 – a skufia, in 1880 – the Order of St. Anne, 3rd degree (for twelve years of service in the Poltava spiritual care), and in 1883 he was awarded a pectoral cross. In 1888 he was elevated to the rank of archpriest, in 1892 he was awarded the Order of St. Anna, 2nd degree, and in 1896 he was awarded the Order of St. Volodymyr, 4th degree (PEV, 1869, No. 11, p. 435; PEV, 1870, No. 18, p. 614; PEV, 1880, No. 21, p. 444; PEV, 1883, No. 10, p. 166; PEV, 1888, No. 10, p. 288; PEV, 1892, No. 11, p. 437; PEV, 1896, No. 16, p. 447).

Information about P. Mazanov's education remains unclear. In the lists of graduates of the St. Petersburg Theological Seminary for 1861, the first-rate graduate (graduate with honours) Mazanov Petro Ivanovich is mentioned. However, it was not possible to identify him as the priest Petro Mazanov. In the reports on the activities of the Poltava Diocesan Women's School for the 1899/1900 and 1901/1902 academic years, the priest is mentioned as a student of the theological academy, which was atypical, given his probable age (about 60 years old) (PEV, 1901, No. 17, p. 430;

PEV, 1903, No. 26, p. 582). At that time, higher theological education could be obtained only in the Kiev, Kazan, Moscow or St. Petersburg theological academies. However, P. Mazanov was not found in the lists of graduates of these educational institutions. There is also no information about him in the thematic reports of the aforementioned academies.

Information about the beginning of P. Mazanov's church service as a village parish priest is not confirmed by available sources. Our assumptions that he was born in 1840 and graduated from the theological seminary in 1861 are consistent with the data on the typical age of graduates of an average level of theological education (about 21 years).

According to the testimony of priest K. Hapanovich, during the abbotship of P. Mazanov, the restoration and arrangement of the Spassky Church in Poltava were carried out at the expense of local merchants. Based on the detailed description of the church, compiled by P. Mazanov himself, it can be concluded that the renovation of the church took place in 1863. (PEV, 1870, No. 8, pp. 313–319; PEV, 1909, No. 16, p. 690).

According to the archives of the Poltava Spiritual Consistory, in 1811–1847, the Spasskaya Church was affiliated with the Holy Assumption Cathedral. In 1847–1849, the church had the status of an independent one. Then it became affiliated again, and in 1862–1866 it functioned as a separate parish (PEV, 1870, No. 8, pp. 313–319). Given these data, it can be assumed that the beginning of his professional ministry was the priest P. Mazanov from the Spasskaya Church in Poltava in 1862–1863.

According to the report of the Poltava city dean, archpriest of the Cathedral, D. Butkovsky, for 1864, the parish of the Spasskaya Church consisted of four people. The total number of parishioners was 620 people: 320 men and 300 women. Most of the parishioners were residents of the Pavlenki suburb. After the construction of the new brick Pokrovsk Church in Pavlenki in 1864, part of the income of the Spassky Church was redirected to its maintenance. The annual income of the Spassky Church at that time was 450 rubles.

For comparison: the parish of the Cathedral Church consisted of 21 people, the number of parishioners was 1316 (619 men and 697 women), and the annual income was up to 1175 rubles. In the Stretensky Church, 9 representatives of the clergy served. It had 1030 parishioners (507 men and 523 women) and an annual income of up to 2000 rubles. In the Nikolaev Church, the parish consisted of 8 people, the number of parishioners reached 2382 (1168 men and 1214 women), and the annual income was up to 1000 rubles. The Resurrection Church was served by a parish of 5 people; there were 772 parishioners (369 men and 403 women), and the annual income was 500 rubles (PEV, 1866, No. 15, pp. 597 – 569; PEV, 1866, No. 15, pp. 567–569).

The parish of the Spassky Church under P. Mazanov had no additional sources of income. Among the Poltava churches, only the Cathedral Church owned an old residential building, in which four families lived. The parish of the Pokrovsk Church (on Pavlenki) lived in houses equipped with the efforts of parishioners. Other church ministers, including the parishioners of other churches in the city, lived in their own homes or rented housing. Clerics and palamari, as a rule, lived in watchtowers attached to church buildings.

The Spassky Church did not have any abandoned or abandoned lands in its use. In general, the financial situation of the parish was considered one of the worst in Poltava. The main reasons for the poor financial situation of the parish include high prices for food, fuel and housing. The situation of the clergy of that time worsened after the transfer of the Ilyinsky Fair to Poltava in 1852.

The issue of improving the material support of the clergy was considered by the Poltava provincial authorities. In particular, an appeal was sent to the Poltava City Duma with a request to provide support to the parishes of the Cathedral, the Spassky Church and the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The document, in particular, stated: «...The significance of the Church of the Saviour of the Not-Made-by-Hands Image and the low attendance of the Nativity-Theotokos Podolsk Church inspire hope that the Poltava City Society will pay due attention to the needs of these churches and the parish that serves them...» (PEV, 1866, No. 15, p. 572).

Despite limited financial resources, the Spassky Church under P. Mazanov repeatedly made charitable contributions. In particular, in 1865, they donated 3 rubles and 1 ruble annually for the establishment and maintenance of a women's theological school, 3 rubles and 30 kopecks from the parish and 1 ruble and 20 kopecks from the church elder, 2 rubles and 1 ruble and 6 kopecks from the church (PEV, 1865, No. 12, p. 419).

During 1866–1875, the Spassky Church had the status of a church assigned to the Assumption Cathedral (Buchnevich, 1902, p. 179). This meant that P. Mazanov formally belonged to the cathedral clergy, but he performed the duties of the rector of the assigned church. Divine services in the Spassky Church were held according to the schedule or on the days of major church holidays. The believers of the Spassky Church belonged to the Assumption Parish. All sacraments (baptism, wedding or funeral) performed by P. Mazanov in the Spassky Church were officially registered in the metric books of the Assumption Cathedral. Thus, the clergy and psalmists performed divine services part-time.

In early 1868, priest P. Mazanov raised the issue of the need to regulate the territorial distribution of parishes in the city of Poltava. The urgency of this problem was due to the significant number of courtyards not included in the confessional records, the remoteness and dispersion of parishes. In particular, in the confessional records of the city's six parish churches, only 864 courtyards were listed: in the Cathedral Parish – 274, in the Stritsensky Parish – 108, in the Mykolaiv Parish – 254, in the Voskresensky Parish – 90, in the Pavlenkivsky Parish – 107, in the Podilsky Parish – 40. At the same time, there were about two thousand courtyards in the city registers. That is, a significant part of the community's residents remained outside the parish records (PEV, 1868, No. 5, p. 164). According to P. Mazanov, this indicated insufficient coverage of the population with spiritual care, which was especially dangerous in the «pernicious spirit of the time.» He emphasised that the existing parishes were «too scattered and geographically distant from the churches, so a significant part of the faithful rarely attended services or completely avoided participation in parish life, preferring churches located closer to their place of residence. This, in turn, led to the loss of the «last crumbs» necessary for their existence by the parishes (PEV, 1868, No. 5, p. 165). The priest also noted a tendency to reduce church attendance on the days of great Christian holidays, in particular on Easter. Even those who were preparing for confession and communion were increasingly turning to home churches, avoiding services in parish churches. As a result, parish priests lost the opportunity to exercise a spiritual influence on the faithful through confession. In particular, P. Mazanov emphasised that due to the dispersion of the courtyards, parishioners often invited priests from other parishes to perform services, which caused misunderstandings among the clergy themselves.

Taking into account the above facts, P. Mazanov emphasised the need to review and streamline the parish system «to eliminate unfavourable conditions in the life of Christians and communion» (PEV, 1868, No. 5, p. 165, pp. 165–166).

In May 1867, the «Russian Society for the Care of Wounded and Sick Soldiers» (since 1879, the Red Cross) was founded in St. Petersburg. According to the organisation's Charter, its main goal was «to assist in the military administration in caring for wounded and sick soldiers» (PEV, 1868, No. 2, pp. 43–44). The financing of the society's activities was carried out through annual contributions from representatives of all social classes and one-time donations in the form of money, things or property. A significant role in filling the budget was played by the Orthodox Church, whose authority had a great influence. In agreement with the spiritual department, special «clubs» were established near the temples to collect donations under the supervision of clergy.

The society included: honorary members (representatives of the imperial family, influential secular and religious figures), charitable members (persons who made significant donations), full members (those who paid at least 3 rubles annually, or made a one-time contribution of at least 50 rubles), as well as members who made smaller contributions - competitors (PEV, 1868, No. 2, pp. 44–47).

Local branches of the society were formed from 8–10 people, who were elected for a two-year term. They included: the chairman, his deputy, the treasurer and the candidate. If necessary, clerks and clerics could be involved.

On March 4, 1868, at a meeting of the Poltava city branch of the society, issues related to organisational, personnel and financial aspects of activity were considered. In particular, the recall of the treasurer of the management and the petition of P. Mazanov, regarding granting him the status of a «founding member» of the local branch. The priest's appeal was approved by a corresponding resolution.

In 1823, guardianships of the poor of the clergy were established to care for low-income priests, widows and orphans of clergy, and sick clergy. These were state institutions that operated on the territory of all dioceses. Their composition was formed from several honoured clergymen, who were elected by the diocesan leadership.

The financial base of the guardianship was provided at the expense of the so-called «clubs' fees» in churches, voluntary donations, part of church income (directed to the treatment of clergy in zemstvo hospitals), interest on capital, as well as fines imposed on representatives of the clergy of the diocese. According to the decree of 1868, it was forbidden to use the collected funds for other church needs, except in certain cases permitted by the Holy Synod.

Among the functions of the society was also the guardianship of orphans of the clergy who did not belong to the hereditary nobility. In such cases, the guardians were obliged to submit reports on their activities to the guardianship bodies through the dean, which ensured control over the fulfilment of duties towards the wards.

On April 9, 1869, P. Mazanov, by election of the clergy of the city of Poltava, was approved as a member of the Poltava Guardianship of the Poor of the Clergy. He took this position instead of Archpriest D. Butovsky. The list of persons who, based on the Society's Charter, were provided with a one-time financial assistance from the temporary capital in 1879, included the freelance Archpriest A.

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Romashkevych. He passed under the authority of P. Mazanov, who was already a dean at that time, and received 163 rubles. 72 kopecks. (PEV, 1881, No. 4, p. 88). In 1880, through the mediation of the deanery of the district of P. Mazanov, 9 people received financial assistance in the total amount of 211 rubles. In particular, the widow of the archpriest of the Stritenskaya church, T. Kondratovicheva, with her daughter – 50 rubles., the widow of the deacon of the same church, K. Diatelovich, with two children – 30 rubles., the widow of the priest M. Pushkov – 8 rubles., etc. (PEV, 1881, No. 11, pp. 222–223). Subsequently, by § 6 of the Charter of the society, a one-time assistance of 166 rubles. 22 kopecks. Was received by the widow of the deacon of the Elizabethan church, E. Barybin. P. Mazanov's contribution to the trusteeship fund amounted to 120 rubles. 44 kopecks. (PEV, 1881, No. 24, p. 520, 535).

In 1881, the society's treasury received 120 rubles 46 kopecks from P. Mazanov's district, of which one-time assistance was given to one person. In 1882, 130 rubles 44 kopecks were collected (PEV, 1882, No. 19, p. 387). For comparison, in the same year, 35 rubles 8 kopecks were received from the Poltava Cathedral, 90 rubles 46 kopecks from Archpriest G. Rybalkin, and 75 rubles 36 kopecks from priest V. Kurdynovsky. Among the benefactors of the fifteen counties of the Poltava Diocese, only the Kremenchuk priest L. Bilyavsky donated a larger amount – 135 rubles 66 kopecks. (PEV, 1882, No. 19, p. 387; PEV, 1883, No. 24, p. 539–541).

In 1883, according to the charitable district of P. Mazanov, 13 low-income families received material assistance for a total of 235 rubles. (PEV, 1884, No. 9, p. 174). P. Mazanov's contribution to the orphaned and lay clergy of the Poltava diocese amounted to 145 rubles. 42 kopecks. Of the total amount of income in the Poltava district, 535 rubles. 212 kopecks, which were collected from 11 benefactors, his contribution was one of the largest (PEV, 1884, No. 23, p. 661).

Thus, in the absence of a developed state system of support for the clergy, donations from clergy to the society's treasury played an important role in ensuring their social protection. P. Mazanov continued to regularly make appropriate charitable contributions. For his part, the diocesan leadership noted P. Mazanov's contribution to the field of guardianship, awarding him the Order of St. Anne of the third degree (PEV, 1880, No. 21, p. 444). (Given the limited scope of the article, detailed information by year, targeted personal support and the amount of financial assistance corresponding to the categories of clergy are not provided.)

On April 9, 1870, P. Mazanov participated in an interesting Orthodox rite – the ceremony of washing the feet. This ritual is traditionally performed by the bishop on Holy Thursday, in co-service with twelve clergy or monks. This is a kind of symbolic recreation of the evangelical event of Jesus Christ washing the feet of the apostles on the eve of the Last Supper. In Poltava, this rite was not performed often: the last time was in 1830 and 1850.

The Divine Liturgy and the rite of washing the feet were performed by His Eminence John, Bishop of Poltava and Pereyaslavl, in the Poltava Cathedral Assumption Cathedral. The service began at 10 am and ended around one o'clock in the afternoon. Certain persons participated in the rite. In addition to P. Mazanov, the bishop was served by: the abbot of the Poltava Holy Cross Monastery, Archimandrite Polyeuktus, Cathedral Archpriest D. Butovsky, former Cathedral Archpriest P. Pavlovsky, the keymaster of the cathedral, Archpriest I. Diatelovich, Archpriest O. Kapustiansky and others.

«The festive ceremony was attended by many believers. The church, in particular the choirs of the cathedral, was filled with parishioners. They concentrated mainly near the specially equipped area in front of the iconostasis of the main altar. Believers sought to see this touching church ceremony with their own eyes at least once in their lives. Without a doubt, many of those present took away from the church a deep spiritual impression of the magnificent example of humility – a virtue that is of paramount importance for the salvation of the Christian soul» (PEV, 1870, No. 9, pp. 380–381).

On December 18, 1870, on the territory of the so-called «New Bazaar» in Poltava, the construction of the stone Transfiguration Church was completed for the residents of Novoselivka, which was built in the Gothic style and crowned with five heads. The financing of the construction was provided by the titular councillor M. Danchych, the collegiate councillor P. Tregubov and the merchant of the first guild S. Panasenko» (Buchnevich, 1902, p. 251). By the order of Bishop John, to «ensure the proper functioning of the single-clergy parish,» priest P. Mazanov, who had previously served in the Assumption Cathedral, was transferred to the newly built church (PEV, 1871, No. 1, p. 22).

The consecration of the church took place on December 19, 1870 (the day of the Transfiguration of the Lord) with the direct participation of the Most Reverend John and six clergymen of the city, including P. Mazanov. Despite the weekday market day, the church was crowded with believers. During the Divine Liturgy, the newly appointed abbot delivered a sermon that made a positive impression on those present.

The architectural image of the church was perceived aesthetically. However, the general impression was spoiled by the disorderly surrounding area. «Numerous market stalls, shops, boxes and temporary canopies covered the altar part of the church.» The interior decoration of the church at

the time of consecration did not correspond to the level of its exterior, since it was not fully provided with the necessary church utensils. It was under such conditions that P. Mazanov continued his pastoral activity (PEV, 1871, No. 1, pp. 22–24).

The reforms of the 1860s in the Russian Empire led to a weakening of the sole power of the deaneries in church and administrative management. In a number of dioceses, including Poltava, during this period, the activities of deanery councils were initiated. According to the new procedure, candidates for the position of deanery were elected by voting among the clergy of the corresponding district, after which the elected candidate was approved by the ruling bishop. However, in 1881, the Holy Synod abolished the election of deaneries, renewing the practice of their appointment.

The deanery council functioned as a collegial governing body within the district. It consisted of the chairman-deanery and two of his assistants, who were elected by the clergy of the district through a ballot and approved by the diocesan leadership. In terms of the content of their activities, the councils partially duplicated the powers of the deanery. They resolved conflict issues between members of the clergy, applied disciplinary sanctions, including fines, and also made proposals for rewarding clerics.

On October 26, 1875, the Poltava diocese approved a new composition of the city deanery council for a term of six years. In particular, it included the priest of the Striten Church, M. Kuznetsky and the priest of the Transfiguration Church, P. Mazanov. The priest of the Pokrovsk Church at the Poltava God-pleasing Institution, F. Lebedynsky, was elected city deanery, replacing the keymaster of the Assumption Cathedral, Archpriest Y. Diatlovich (PEV, 1875, No. 22, p. 592).

Until 1869, there were no documentary references to elections to the deanery council in the Poltava diocese. It is likely that it was in this year that its initial formation as an institution of collegial management at the diocese level took place.

Being the rector of the Transfiguration Church, P. Mazanov initiated a number of important initiatives that significantly influenced the spiritual and material development of the parish. With his direct participation, the cold church was converted into a warm one, and a side altar was arranged in honour of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called. Five unique kiosks appeared in the church, a stone fence with iron chains was built, and church utensils were replenished. The priest contributed to the arrangement of the sacristy, the church library, and the maintenance of a high level of liturgical singing. Already in the first years after the consecration of the church, a church choir operated under it, which had a profound influence on the parishioners (PEV, 1879, No. 7, p. 334).

On January 9, 1879, by order of the diocesan leadership, P. Mazanov was transferred to the position of a law teacher at the Poltava Institute of Noble Maidens (PEV, 1879, No. 3, p. 52). This appointment became the next stage in his professional activity. The priest perceived the transition to a new place of service with deep spiritual emotion. Saying goodbye to the parishioners, P. Mazanov expressed sincere wishes for their spiritual growth. He drew attention to the need to be confirmed in the faith and love of Christ, constant prayer and tireless care in the spiritual field. In his farewell speech, the priest emphasised that the prayerful memory of the parishioners would remain his constant sacred duty. At the same time, P. Mazanov expressed the hope that «the parishioners will also keep a good memory of him and will not forget him in their prayers» (PEV, 1879, No. 7, p. 334).

On April 9, 1880, P. Mazanov was approved as the Poltava city dean (PEV, 1880, No. 9, p. 153; PEV, 1884, No. 10, p. 586). Being in a new position for him, he immediately focused on the conscientious fulfilment of the duties assigned to him. His sphere of competence included issues of caring for the purity of the Orthodox faith and ensuring proper church-moral education, monitoring the correct and reverent performance of divine services, maintaining order in churches, and appropriate to the state of church preaching. Dean P. Mazanov monitored the implementation of the resolutions and orders of the diocesan leadership, considered and prevented conflicts between the clergy and laity, made regular donations in favour of charitable societies, participated in congresses of the diocesan clergy, etc.

During P. Mazanov's tenure as dean, changes occurred in the leadership of the diocese. On March 30, 1884, by decree of the Holy Synod, Archimandrite Hilarion was appointed Bishop of Pryluky, Vicar of the Poltava Diocese. Before that, he held the position of Vicar of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

The arrival of the new vicar in Poltava was an important event in the life of the diocesan community. The city dean, P. Mazanov, was also involved in organising Hilarion's meeting. On the evening of May 13, 1884, the vicar arrived from Kharkov to Poltava by mail train. At the station, the bishop was met by the economist of the bishop's house, Archimandrite Feodosii, the city dean Archpriest P. Mazanov, and two secretaries of the spiritual consistory. Given the late hour, an official meeting was not held in the cathedral. Bishop Hilarion went to the Exaltation of the Holy Cross Monastery, which was designated as his place of residence. At the entrance to the main temple of the monastery, he was solemnly met by the brethren. The abbot of the monastery, Nathanael, addressed the bishop with a word of welcome, to which the latter responded with a short pastoral address and

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went to the altar. After the traditional litany and the proclamation of the long anniversary, the bishop addressed those present with a touching speech that made a positive impression on those present.

The documents inform us that «accompanied by the abbot, the brethren, the protodeacon, and the bishop's choir, the bishop went to his chambers, where he blessed the monastery brethren and expressed gratitude to the singers. After that, Hilarion had a short meeting with Archimandrite Theodosius, Archpriest P. Mazanov, the princes of Yelets, and Abbot Nafanail. The half-hour conversation over tea was the bishop's first rest in a new place and the beginning of his acquaintance with the church life of the diocese» (PEV, 1884, No. 10, pp. 586–588).

The next day (May 14), at 10:30, the newly appointed bishop was introduced to the city clergy, representatives of theological educational institutions, and law teachers at the residence of His Eminence John. After that, Bishop Hilarion addressed those present with a short speech in which he asked for support, trust, and affection. At about 11:30, Archbishop John accompanied the vicar to the cathedral, where both archpastors blessed the clergy and believers present. In the evening, Bishop Hilarion «prayed at the All-Night Vigil in the Exaltation of the Holy Cross Monastery, and the next day he celebrated the first liturgy in the cathedral» (PEV, 1884, No. 10, pp. 586–588).

By the order of the diocesan leadership under No. 2211 of May 4, 1885, priest P. Mazanov was relieved of his duties as dean and deprived of the corresponding title. Further management of the city deanery was entrusted to a representative of another district, G. Rybalkin (PEV, 1885, No. 11, pp. 204, 208). Such personnel changes were because in October 1885, P. Mazanov transferred to the service of the spiritual consistory and became its non-staff member (PEV, 1885, No. 21, p. 489).

By decree of the Holy Synod of January 30, 1887, No. 283, changes were made to the composition of the Poltava Spiritual Consistory. The Vicar of the Poltava Diocese, Hilarion, was officially notified that Priest P. Mazanov was appointed its full-time member (PEV, 1887, No. 5, p. 115).

In 1888, on the eve of Easter, by order of the Holy Synod, P. Mazanov was awarded the rank of archpriest (PEV, 1888, No. 10, p. 288). This title was given to clerics of the white clergy and was not a separate degree of priesthood. It served as an honorary distinction for long and conscientious service or special merits before the church. Usually, this title was awarded after 15–20 years of service in the rank of priest.

In 1886, due to the illness of Archbishop John, the administration of the Poltava diocese was entrusted to Bishop Hilarion (PEV, 1886, No. 13, p. 402). On November 14, 1887, he was officially confirmed as Bishop of Poltava and Pereyaslavl (PEV, 1887, No. 23, p. 784).

After Hilarion headed the department, he launched active reform activities. One of the priority areas was the introduction of a system of extra-liturgical readings and instructive conversations in urban and rural parishes. These activities had a distinctly catechetical nature and were aimed at a deeper assimilation by believers of the dogmatic foundations of the Orthodox faith and the moral and ethical principles of Christian life.

In 1889, at the initiative of Bishop Hilarion, a draft statute of the St. Macarius Diocesan Brotherhood was prepared - an organisation designed to promote religious education, strengthen parish life and implement the social and missionary tasks of the church.

The draft statute of the St. Macarius Diocesan Brotherhood was supported by representatives of the clergy. Among the signatories of the document are the rector of the Poltava Seminary, Archpriest M. Gavrylkov, the cathedral archpriest F. Lebedynsky, members of the spiritual consistory: Archpriest O. Kapustiansky, priest M. Uralov, Archpriest P. Mazanov and teachers of the Poltava Theological Seminary.

The Poltava Diocesan Brotherhood of Saint Macarius was officially established on April 29, 1890, at the Poltava Theological Seminary. Its trustee was Archbishop Hilarion of Poltava and Pereyaslavl.

Archpriest P. Mazanov consistently supported the activities of the Poltava Diocesan Brotherhood of Saint Macarius. From the very beginning of its foundation, significant activity was observed among the members, which affected the organisation of financial collections. In particular, from January to April 1891, the brotherhood received 522 rubles from 731 people. A significant part of these funds was donations of 3 rubles from individual members, among whom was Archpriest P. Mazanov (PEV, 1891, No. 11, pp. 351–406).

In the first year of its activity, the brotherhood included 30 honorary members, 14 lifelong members and 645 active members and competitors. P. Mazanov belonged to the latter category – the numerical majority of the brotherhood organisation (PEV, 1891, No. 12, pp. 455, 533).

Further analysis of the dynamics of the brotherhood's composition demonstrates the preservation of a stable contingent of its participants. In 1896, 35 people were honorary members, 15 were lifelong members, and 115 remained active and competitors within the Poltava district (PEV, 1897, No. 30, p. 782). In 1897, according to the Poltava dean priest P. Mikhailovsky, 60 rubles

17 kopecks were contributed to the brotherhood's treasury. In particular, 2 rubles from P. Mazanova (PEV, 1898, No. 26, p. 685).

In 1897, 178 new people joined the brotherhood, and 545 members renewed their contributions. The total number of the brotherhood was 723 people (PEV, 1898, No. 7, p. 162). At the same time, starting from the end of the 1890s, we observe a slight decrease in contributions, a decrease in the personal participation of the clergy in the activities of the society. The last documentary mention of P. Mazanova's participation in the brotherhood dates back to 1899 (PEV, 1900, No. 31, p. 817). The Brotherhood finally ceased its activities in 1918, which was due to general political transformations in the Russian Empire.

Thus, P. Mazanov's participation in the work of the St. Macarius Brotherhood shows his consistent involvement in the processes of church and public life of the diocese, support for Orthodox education and charity.

On July 15, 1888, at the initiative of Bishop Hilarion, the diocesan committee of the All-Russian Missionary Society was formed in Poltava. It acted as a centre of the Moscow Society, which had existed since 1869. The main task of the committee was to promote the activities of Orthodox missions aimed at converting non-believers living in the territory of the state to the Orthodox Church.

Among the people who supported the initiative to create the Poltava branch of the Orthodox Missionary Society were representatives of the clergy, city and provincial administration, and intelligentsia. In particular, the Poltava governor, Major General E. Yankovsky, Archpriest P. Hapanovich, Archpriest P. Mazanov, state councillor V. Vodolagin, director of the psychiatric hospital O. Maltsev, Poltava merchant V. Taranushenko, etc.

According to the signature letters, 106 people declared their desire to join the society. The total amount of voluntary contributions sent for the needs of society was 808 rubles. (PEV, 1888, No. 19, p. 585).

According to the Statute, the diocesan committee collected membership fees and donations, provided for the material needs of missionaries and institutions subordinate to them, and provided comprehensive support in the implementation of missionary activities. The committee was obliged to annually send a report on its activities to the Council of the society and report on extraordinary events in the diocese. In terms of the size of the budget and the number of members, the organisation occupied one of the leading places in the state.

As of 1900, 1,374 people had paid membership fees to the missionary society. Most of these were donations of 3 rubles each. 29 people from the Poltava community contributed money to the society's treasury, including P. Mazanov (PEV, 1900, No. 23, p. 582).

P. Mazanov also played a significant role in deciding the fate of the St. John the Theologian Church in the village of Machukhi. The fact is that in 1879, the former parish priest, Matchenko, raised the issue with the diocesan leadership about moving the St. John the Theologian Church to another place. As a result, the church was closed in 1881. «Hard times came for the parishioners: the church remained empty, services were not held in it... The faithful, like orphans without their shepherd, looked sadly at the devastated church and were forced to visit other parishes» (PEV, 1901, No. 23–24, p. 1084). Disagreements arose in the community. Residents living near the church, in particular the residents of the village of Machukhi, categorically disagreed with the idea of moving the church to a considerable distance. Parishioners of the Kalashnikov farms, on the contrary, supported the proposal to move the church to their area.

Priest Matchenko actively supported the latter. He addressed His Eminence Bishop John with a message «about the too old building and the financial inability of the residents of the surrounding areas to maintain the church». In response to numerous requests from parishioners to leave the church in its previous place, the obligation to make repairs there, an official investigation was launched. A commission consisting of representatives of the diocesan and city authorities arrived at the site. Its members came to different conclusions: the diocesan commission recognised the church as completely unusable, the city commission – that the church could exist provided that repairs were carried out.

Bishop John made a decision to move the church to the Kalashnikov farms and build a new church there. The newly built church was consecrated not in honour of John the Theologian, as before, but in honour of the Holy Trinity. For the residents of Machukhi, this event was painful. The old church remained closed for almost eight years. Some of the faithful were forced to move to the newly created parish in Kalashnikovo. The rest of the neighbouring parishes. However, the majority of parishioners did not lose hope for the «restoration of their native church» (PEV, 1901, No. 23–24, p. 1085).

Parishioners repeatedly gathered near the closed church, for which they received the nickname "parishioners". They repeatedly applied for the transfer of the church to a more convenient place within the village of Machukhi. However, these appeals to the diocesan leadership remained unconsidered for a long time.

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In the end, Bishop Hilarion agreed to satisfy the parishioners' request. For this, they were given a mandatory condition - to ensure financing for the construction of a new church and the maintenance of the church communion. Significant assistance in this matter was provided by a member of the consistory, Archpriest P. Mazanov. The priest gave advice and actively supported the initiative of the parishioners. After that, benefactors also joined the cause. In particular, a wealthy parishioner I. Tkachenko donated 2,100 rubles for the construction of the church and 10 acres of land for the needs of the communion.

Given this, in 1889, Bishop Hilarion allowed the construction of a new church in Machuchy. On September 20, 1890, the church was built, and five days later it was consecrated by Archpriest P. Mazanov and Dean I. Osipov. However, the newly built church never received the status of an independent parish, since the financing of the sacrament and the church land remained with the parish in Kalashnikov. Temporary spiritual care for the community was carried out by the priest of the neighbouring parish, Father Tunytsky (PEV, 1901, No. 23–24, p. 1086).

That is, thanks to the efforts and perseverance of the faithful, the active participation and position of P. Mazanov, significant changes occurred in the restoration of the spiritual life of the community.

The activities of Archpriest P. Mazanov were not limited to participation in church and public initiatives at the level of a separate parish. He was an active participant in the implementation of projects at the diocesan scale. In particular, the priest was involved in resolving the urgent issue of establishing a candle factory. As a member of the specially authorised department established by the VIII diocesan congress of the clergy in 1902, P. Mazanov participated in the search for a suitable land plot for the construction of a factory and a wax bleaching workshop. Thanks to his systematic work, together with other members of the commission, a thorough inspection of more than twenty land plots near the city of Poltava was carried out. As a result, the Deykalyvka farm was purchased, which met all the requirements for this type of infrastructure development (the land plot was purchased in 1892 for the white clergy of the Poltava diocese for 10 thousand rubles) (PEV, 1902, No. 23, pp. 1037–1040).

Candle production at the factory in Poltava began on February 22, 1892. Already on February 24, the first products were solemnly presented to His Eminence, which marked the actual beginning of the factory's activities. The factory operated in Poltava for only a year, because in 1893 it was moved outside the city to the Deykalyvka farm (PEV, 1902, No. 24, 1054–1062).

The last place of service of P. Mazanov was the Elizabethan home church at the Institute of Noble Maidens, from which he resigned at his request on September 20, 1900. The vacant position, by the order of the diocesan leadership, was appointed to the vacant position by the priest of the Pokrovsk Church of the city of Kobelyaka, O. Chernyashevsky (PEV, 1900, No. 30, p. 768).

The final period of P.'s life, Mazanova (1900–1911), was characterised by retirement and a reduction in his church and administrative activity. At the same time, the priest remained involved in the educational and religious sphere, focusing on charitable and cultural and educational activities. His pension was 18 rubles. Per month, which indicated a modest level of material well-being (PEV, 1903, No. 32, p. 804; PEV, 1904, No. 31, p. 692; PEV, 1905, No. 28, p. 672; PEV, 1908, No. 4, p. 108; PEV, 1908, No. 19, p. 355; PEV, 1909, No. 35, p. 931; PEV, 1910, No. 30, p. 1960; PEV, 1912, No. 20–21, p. 1283).

Conclusions. Thus, the missionary path of Archpriest Petro Mazanov is a real example of the integration of a clergyman into a multidimensional space: socio-spiritual, church, educational, social and administrative life of the Poltava diocese of the second half of the 19th – first half of the 20th century. The beginning of his sacred ministry coincided with the functioning of individual low-income parish centres. However, it was in this context that his ability to effectively manage and implement effective initiatives for the arrangement of parishes was revealed. As the rector of the Spassky and later the Preobrazhensky churches of Poltava, P. Mazanov fulfilled his pastoral functions at a high level: he was engaged in the organisational and economic arrangement of parishes, developed church infrastructure, carried out educational work, etc. Being a city dean, a member of the deanery council and the Poltava spiritual consistory, P. Mazanov managed to expand the sphere of his own influence from the local parish level to the general diocesan level. His many years of activity in the field of charity, support of spiritual educational institutions, participation in brotherhoods and missionary societies, and guardianships appear as a systematic and purposeful implementation of the missionary function of a priest.

An important component of P. Mazanov's activity is the administrative and economic aspect. It includes the priest's participation in the restoration of the functioning of the parish of the village of Machukhi and the organisation of the work of a wax factory to meet the needs of the white clergy. These facts demonstrate the strategic plans of the archpriest, his readiness to implement innovative solutions in a traditional church environment.

P. Mazanov's missionary path was accompanied by several awards that reflected the official recognition of his contribution in the field of pastoral, administrative and public activities.

It should be noted that currently, the figure of Archpriest P. Mazanova is little studied in modern historical and religious sciences. Questions related to the time of his birth, education and activities in the last period of his life remain unclear. We see a comprehensive religious analysis of his teachings, graveside sermons and obituaries, the study of administrative powers and duties before the Poltava Spiritual Consistory as a promising direction for further research.

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