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**Summary**  
**of PH.D. Dissertation**

**Elements of Sándor Csikesz's Pastoral Ideal in Ministry and Theological Education**

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Sándor Csikesz is an outstanding figure: a Church organizer and practical theologian of the Hungarian Reformed Church in the 20th century. The thesis deals with his oeuvre as a kind of repayment, by focusing on his pastoral ideals. Csikesz does not only reconstructed and interpreted his pastoral ideals, but placing it into the context of that era, he has a critical dialogue with the material and formulates the messages that are still relevant.

From a methodological point of view, the thesis is based on archival and manuscript research and, in this respect, is also a source-based work since there was few published documents after Csikesz. The material discovered in a large volume of manuscripts was first grouped horizontally into the structure of practical theological disciplines, and then the framework of Csikesz's pastoral ideals could be built up from each element, and their interpretation could be made and the conclusions could be drawn.

In the first great part of the thesis, the notion of pastoral ideal is presented, which is not a utopian and subjective ideal, but a harmony of theological, professional and human qualities built on biblical and confessional basis. In addition, three areas, in which the elements of the pastoral ideal can be deduced, are defined. Thus, the area of personal pastoral life, specific professional activities and community life of the pastor are introduced. It is also indicated that especially paradigm shifts and change of eras require the reconsideration of the pastoral ideal.

The contemporary context of Csikesz's pastoral ideal is introduced in three ways. Firstly, according to history of theology's viewpoint, the line, along which Csikesz is orientated, is drawn from Schleiermacher to Barth. Secondly, we can read about the contemporary search for a pastoral ideal. Thirdly, the period between the two World Wars is presented in Csikesz's interpretation. In this larger unit, the presentation of Csikesz's theological development, which starts from rationalism and liberalism and is heading toward ideology. We introduce his theological way of thinking which is deeply biblical, confessional, value-oriented, and integrative and is above the different denominational trends; it is open to Protestant ecumenism and has a distinctive Hungarian character. We examine Csikesz's practical theology, which branching into disciplines, constitutes the setting of the pastoral ideal's elements.

In the second great section of the dissertation, Sándor Csiksz's life is introduced and analyzed. Starting from his family background through his childhood and theological student years, we get to his active ministry, in which two major periods are presented in detail. On the one hand, it is the period of his rural ministry and, on the other, his professorship in Debrecen. Meanwhile, it is proven what impact his course of life has on his pastoral ideals and how the elements of the pastoral ideal affect his service as a pastor. Indeed, it is also true that the impacts of the various segments of life: such as private, spiritual, theological, ecclesiastical, historical, political, economic, social matters or everyday happenings shape the identity of the pastoral ideal. The development and the course of ministry basically depend on the conceptual and practical elements summed up in the ideals that determine the direction of everyday activities.

Some elements of the pastoral ideal are presented through the reconstruction of Csiksz's practical theology in the third major part of the thesis. The pastoral ideal can set the criteria, which are the most basic conditions of pastoral life, in three basic major areas.

Thus, the presentation of elements of the pastoral ideals starts with the description of the qualities that characterize the individual and private life of the servants of the Church. This is not only because the personal life of the Church's servants has always been in the forefront of attention, but because of the fact that the Church is judged on the basis of the official servants and other workers of the Church, even though it is erroneous, but still done in a consensual manner. Moreover, the ministry is probably the only profession in which the link between service and private life is a basic external and internal expectation. The proclamation of the word of God is a broader concept than preaching in Csiksz's pastoral ideals. According to it, everything in the Reformed pastors' life – both in the individual and private one as well – must be a preaching. The starting point for these two is the spirituality of the pastor rooted in rebirth.

Regarding the pastoral existence, all these are not enough to ministry unless the miracle of the inner calling, which is also a basic criterion for theological studies, is added to it. The spirituality of the pastor is expressed in the individual worship which has two great areas: Bible reading and prayer life. It is the individual worship that can make any pastoral task fruitful. Moreover, the consequence of this beside credibility is "availability", which means unceasing openness to Christ. The area of preparedness also belongs to the individual characteristics of pastoral existence. This, in addition to the theological and theoretical knowledge of a high quality and material, it requires high level of literacy and language skills, and it also presupposes a wide perspective on the world.

In relation to the private life of a pastor, Csiksz's pastoral work orientates the pastors with regard to their home, because in most cases, the ministers' home is also their workplace in Hungary. In his ideal image, family life, marriage and child raising are a major factor, which were the source of blessings or scandals in almost every era. It is considered unique the way in which Csiksz urges the education of the pastors' wives in order to prepare them for this special lifestyle. But his ideal describes the pastor's general manner, character, attitudes, but it does not uniformize but offers a useful alternative. Finally, his pastoral ideal deals with the pastor's relation to finances, which should also become a kind of testimony.

Another major area of the pastoral ideal is setting the basic criteria for the professional existence of the pastor in the rhythm of the subdivisions of Practical Theology, with the basic assumption that every service branch makes sense when it comes to preaching. Thus, the ideal pastor is an ideal preacher. His sermon, starting from Jesus' preaching, will be created and will become what it should be with the comprehensive and critical knowledge of History of Homiletics. That is: beside ideal values and healing and teaching words, and the call to believe and stay in faith, beside Christian personality formation, and preparation for church life – the most important is the proclamation of Christ! Csiksz's reconstructed pastoral ideology in the context of homiletics lists the images and symbols that can describe the secret of preaching. But he also deals with the formative, contentual issues and the genre of the preaching, emphasizing the role of the Word of God, and the connection between the textus and sermon in an up-to-date manner.

Going beyond the professional aspects of the pastoral ideals, Csiksz also shows the pastor as an ideal liturgist. He is able to approach and determine the purpose of worship as a liturgical historian with the broad spectrum of theological disciplines. The ideal pastor is a liturgist so that the worship services he leads gain genuine Reformed Characteristics. He does not merely know the forms and the spiritual and theological elements of worship but also understands the underlying theological reasons and motives. Likewise, the ideal pastor is an excellent religious educator who has theological, pedagogical and methodological knowledge, and makes every occasion and stage of religious teaching a worship, although he does not merely share information about Christ but preaches the word of God.

Finally, the ideal pastor is also a missionary and Church builder. He knows and makes good use of the possibilities of these eras. Csiksz does not stop at the four major areas of Practical Theology, but he also makes recommendations that break the framework of classical

sub disciplines in his reconstructed ideals. For example, he speaks about optimizing the use of time, fellowship, community formation and shaping public opinion. He teaches practical things such as issues of administration, and management of related areas like church office organization, or cemetery matters. His pastoral ideal defines all the professional requirements, lays down all the principles, thoroughly covers all the areas that may make the pastor prepared to practice his vocation. Csikesz outlines all this by breaking down the inherited false Practical Theological syllogisms of his time but points to the future. It is proven that there are hardly any claims whose relevance disappeared as time went by.

The third major area of pastoral idealism examines the life of the pastor on the basis of what place and attitude it occupies in different communities. For a pastoral ideal must necessarily describe the pastor's contacts. A pastor is more than a sociable human being. In all aspects of his life, he is not only a representative of his community but the Church of Christ. The outlined pastoral ideal, narrowing the circle, presents the pastor in his wider social environment, and sums up the possible ways of approaching Christian communities outside his Church. Then the emphasis of the pastor's placement in the ecclesiastic reality of his own Church is highlighted, emphasizing the necessity and limits of critical vision. Finally, the ideal pastor is depicted in his relations with his fellow workers in a current way.

At the end of the dissertation, there are some summary conclusions that have been proved in the study of Csikesz's oeuvre. Some examples:

- The Church of Christ needs a stable pastoral ideal especially during a change of era;
- the theological approach to the formation of an ideal picture can only be based on biblical and reformed grounds;
- the elaboration of a pastoral ideal presents generations with specific theology;
- a pastoral ideal is based on variable elements rooted in the context of the current era;
- the way of life and ideals interact with each other;
- the pastoral ideal has an identity-determining normative nature, and power to liberate as well;
- The formation of an ideal image can have significant influence on the life of the whole Church, congregation and on the pastor's relationships
- Theological education cannot be done without a pastoral ideal.

Imre Szabó puts the following question to the pastors: "Are not our pastoral ideals so weakened because we have neglected to preserve and keep it up to date or to revive the features that shine in the simple life of a Hungarian pastor as Christlike characteristics?" His question is always right to be asked.

This dissertation was written so that – along Sándor Csiksz’s pastoral ideals – both author and reader would think of ministry by looking to Christ.