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ECCLESIASTICAL VISITATIONS OF SLOVAK EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONS IN BAČKA, SREM, AND BANAT IN 1835 AND 1836*¹

Abstract: The first ecclesiastical visitation of Evangelicals in Bačka-Srem and Banat Seniorates took place in 1798, after which followed visitations in 1810 and in 1818. This paper will focus on subsequent visitations of Slovak Evangelical congregations in these regions conducted by superintendent Ján Seberíni during the years 1835 and 1836. These two Evangelical seniorates were part of the Banský dištrikt/superintendature based in Banská Bystrica and had approximately the same number of Slovak and German congregations. The visitation returns provide a great deal of information that has not been fully made use of in the historiography. This paper will analyze only Slovak Evangelical congregations.

Keywords: Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, Slovaks, Banský dištrikt/superintendancy, Bačka-Srem Seniorat, Banat Seniorat, ecclesiastical visitation, confessional schools.

The Slovaks began settling in the region that is now modern-day Vojvodina during Empress Maria Theresa's planned colonization in the 1740s, first Bačka in the Futog Estate (in Petrovec in 1745), Kulpín around the same time,¹ and later Kysáč in 1773, and in other settlements), then Srem (Stará Pazova in 1770) and Banat (Aradáč in 1786, Kovačica in 1802, and Padina in 1806).² Until the 1781 Patent of Toleration (*Toleranzpatent*) was issued, the Evangelicals in these areas were not permitted to establish

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¹ The returns from this visitation states that the first Slovaks arrived in Petrovec in 1740, which was inhabited by Serbs, and in Kulpín around 1743.

² The dates given come from the returns from this visitation. For more on the immigration of Slovaks to Bačka, Banat and Srem see Ján Sirácky (1980).

congregations or parishes and were under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church.³

In 1779, Evangelical Slovaks in Petrovec were first permitted a school teacher for their religion in the school, in addition to the Roman Catholic teacher (1779), who also performed the duty of a chaplain who led prayers and could perform some religious rites, including baptism and burial. The first pastor came in 1783. The first school teacher came to Kysáč in 1785, and the first pastor in 1788.⁴ Until parishes were established, some settlements only had prayer halls that were most often in the school (Petrovec, Kysáč, Kulpín). After parishes were established, the first Evangelical churches were built in Petrovec in 1783, in Kysáč in 1795, in Stará Pazova in 1786–1792, etc.

Visitation returns were created as ecclesiastical documents primarily to fulfill the needs of the church. The higher church authorities who inspected congregations in their area kept detailed records that are of special importance for church history. However, they also are of much broader value because they offer detailed information about the state of religious buildings, church inventories, the parishioners, church officials, and the population in general, schools, teachers, cemeteries, church holidays, and customs. As primary sources, they often also contain important information about the parishioners' morality and daily life, social and economic relations, farm yields, grain prices, and construction work on church and secular buildings.

In the Bačka–Srem Seniorat, there were Slovak Evangelical congregations in the towns and villages of Bajša, Hložany, Kysáč, Kulpín, Lalit', Nový Sad, Petrovec, Pivnica, Selenča, Silbaš, and Stará Pazova, and in the Banat Seniorat in Aradáč, Butín, Hajdušica, Kovačica, Padina and Vuková. Both of these seniorats were part of the Banský dištrikt centered in Banská Bystrica.⁵ A review and brief analysis of the records of the 1836 visitation to the Banat Seniorat was compiled by György Kurutz.⁶

As part of the preparations for the ecclesiastical visitation of 1835/1836, the Banská superintendancy sent all the pastors of these two seniorats a survey with questions to be answered within a formal document. The compiled report was submitted to the superintendent Ján Seberíni (1780–1857) and the committee conducting the visitation.⁷ All documentation, visitation returns, survey answers from individual pastors, and the commission's remarks were written in Latin. These records are kept at the Lutheran Central Archives in Budapest (EOL)⁸ and are available online.⁹ Some records also included

³ The first registries for the Slovaks in Petrovec and Kysáč were kept by the Roman Catholic parish in Futog.

⁴ The register of marriages in Petrovec lists group weddings Kysáč performed by the pastor from the main parish in Petrovec.

⁵ This was a territorial and administrative unit created based on a 1734 imperial resolution. From the time they were established, the Bačka-Srem and Banat seniorats were part of the Banský Dištrikt.

⁶ Kurucz 2010: 193–208.

⁷ The full title of the document is *Schema Visitationis Canonicae Anno 1835 per Inclitum ac Venerabilem Senioratum Bacs-Sirmiensem instituendae* and is transcribed in the book *Protocollum Intimatorum et Curentialium Ecclesiae A. C. Addictorum Vetero-Pazoviensis ab Anno 1826. Volume VIII* in the Central Archives of the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession based in Stará Pazova.

⁸ Evangélicus Országos Levéltár, Budapest

⁹ The minutes of the Bačka-Srem Seniorate are available on the website:

https://library.hungaricana.hu/en/view/Banyai_04_1835_Bacs_Szerem/?query=1835%20B%C3%A1cs-Szer%C3%A9mi%20egy%C3%A1lzmegy&pg=0&layout=s

vocators, or contracts written in Slovak,¹⁰ Latin, and German between congregations and pastors and teachers regarding their remuneration, which were.

In this paper, we will review the questions from the 1835/1836 ecclesiastical visitation of the Slovak Evangelical congregations. Since the 18th century, the content of these questions was very similar to those of canonical visitations conducted by Roman and Greek Catholics in this region.¹¹ Surviving returns from canonical visitation to some parishes in the Archbishopric of Karlovci in the mid-18th century are very short and usually only provide information about the number of pastors and their names, funds paid by congregations to the diocese, the number of congregants, names of church tutors and teachers, if there were schools in the village, and the number of students.¹²

Drawing from our analysis of the visitation returns from these Slovak congregations and the attached responses from the pastors, we will present and then interpret their content. We focused particularly on what was previously unknown in the historiography of the Slovaks in this area, which will allow us to contribute to and correct current understandings and perspectives. We will also look at the similarities and differences in the congregations' responses.

The visitation was planned ahead of time with an exact date set for the commissions visit to each individual congregation. As an introduction, a motto from the Holy Bible was proposed to set the theme for the sermon at the service that would begin the visitation. The Questions (*Schema Visitationis Canonicae*) has eleven chapters marked with roman numerals¹³ and is divided into sections marked with arabic numerals and uppercase and lowercase Latin letters. Following The local pastors gave their answers to The Questions in the return. Some of the returns had between twelve and eighteen handwritten pages, depending on how detailed the answers were and on the document itself.

The beginning of each report contains general information about the congregation,

The minutes of the Banat Seniorate are available on the website: https://library.hungaricana.hu/en/view/Banyai_05_1836_Bansag/?query=1936%20b%C3%A1ns%C3%A1gi&pg=0&layout=s

¹⁰ *Biblická čeština* (Biblical Czech) was a standardized variant of the Czech language. It was officially recognized and accepted as the liturgical (and official) language of the Slovak Evangelical Church in Hungary by the decision of the Evangelical Synod, the legislative and highest body of the Evangelical Church in 1610 and 1614. For more see: Obšust, Kuzmanović: 2019: 74–76). In the region of Vojvodina, the lexis and grammar of the language was influenced by Slovak, as was its pronunciation, and it took on the softness and accent of the local Slovak dialects. As a result, some authors refer to it as the biblical Slovak language (Botík 2016: 68).

¹¹ In the 1830s, canonical visitations of Catholic parishes in Vojvodina were performed by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Đakovo (1833) and the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Križevci (1838). For the canonical visitation of their congregations, the Diocese of Đakovo sent a forty-seven-page survey with space next to each question where answers could be written (Šršan 2007: XV–XVI). The returns of the 1838 canonical visitation by Greek Catholics in Bačka and Srem contains reports for three congregations in Bačka (Krstur, Kucura, Nový Sad) and two in Srem (Šid and Petrovci). In addition to the questions, short answers were immediately written in the record. Only the appendix to the record of the parish in Krstur (now Ruski Krstur) contains more information about the financial state of the parish and the school (Ramač 2020).

¹² Ninković 2019: 19–49; Ninković 2020: 53–86.

¹³ Records in all Evangelical Church communities were structured according to the following: I. Congregation, II. Political and economic situation of the congregation, III. Internal, moral, and religious condition of the congregation, IV. Priestly duty, V. School, VI. Midwives, VII. Gravediggers, VIII. Charitable institutions, IX. Annual devotions, X. Notes and complaints, XI. Proposal to eliminate specific bad habits.

including how and when it was founded, which is mostly known in the historiography of Slovaks in this area and found in monographs about Slovak villages in Vojvodina and in other literature.¹⁴ Next, the most significant changes in the congregation since the last visitation in 1818 were listed, which most often involved the arrival of new pastors or schoolteachers. The records, presented in Table 1, provide basic statistics about the parishes and their affiliate congregations; the number of congregants, their gender and confirmation status; and the number of people born, deceased, married, and confirmed in the previous year.

Congregation (year founded)	Congregants	Confirmed	Confirmed in 1834	Married couples	Mixed marriages	Births	Marriages	Deaths
Bajša (1786)	1245	450		295	2	63	12	38
Hložany (1785)	1537	990	30	366	2	152	33	111
*Čelarevo affiliate	203	133		52	2			
*Palanka affiliate	311	190		71	2			
*Begeč affiliate	114	69		24				
*Congregants on the other side of the Danube	247			60				
Kysáč (1788)	2060	1118	70	489		129	38	69
*Rumenka affiliate	107							
Kulpín (1818)	1100	656	32	263	1	60	14	66
Lalič (1817)	880	402	27	165	1	27	16	16
Nový Sad (1812)	513	252	13	119	32	27	9	39
Petrovec (1783)	5031	2500	114	1106	2	290	84	277
Pivnica (1792)	1635	956	39	323	2	103	26	80
Selenča (1768/1787)	1149	693	61	269	1	74	21	72
Silbaš (1786)	450							
Stará Pazova (1770)	2631	896	53	629	5	145	62	136
Aradáč ¹⁵ (1786)	1738	110	56	371	7	84	26	67
Butín (1814)	714	472	27	163	4	39	13	41
Hajdušica (1829)	536	358	21	151	0	30	11	22
Kovačica (1802)	2160	1365	82	470	1	116	22	107
Padina (1806)	2525	1605	63	542	1	112	40	70
Vuková (1832)	350	242		84		10		6
Affiliates: Dragšina, Veľký Keveš, Buziáš, Dragoest, Netzkefalva, Vermeš, Blažova, Topolovetz, Teš, Lukarec, Szinerseg, Bolduš, Magyar Szákos, Barbotz, Lugoš, Ferdinandsberg, Rusberg, Karansebeš. Number of congregants in Vuková including its affiliates: 836.								

Table 1: Statistics for the congregations and their branches.

¹⁴ Čaplovič 1928; Sirácky 1980; Botík 2011; Sklabinská, Mosnáková 2012; Vereš 1930; Vojničová-Feldyová 2017.

¹⁵ Together with congregants from Elemir, Bečej, and Melenci.

Pastors provided this information based on registry books and lists of congregants. There were few mixed marriages among Evangelicals (0.052%), and only with the Reformed or with Roman Catholics. The records do not state if Evangelical men or women were more likely to enter into mixed marriages.¹⁶ There is no information regarding apostates. There are some reports of deaths during the 1831 cholera epidemic, including the deaths of ninety-five congregants and a pastor named Juraj Rohoň in Hložany,¹⁷ 390 people in Petrovec, and 130 in Aradáč. There was a serious drought in Aradáč in 1794, which was recorded as a “hungry year,” during which grain harvests and wine production throughout Banat were very poor.

Information about the construction of churches and their external and internal appearances is given in detail. Some records relate the enthusiasm congregants had for building new churches and how generously they donated money, goods, and their own work. Smaller congregations sometimes turned to the upper classes and the wealthy, such as landowners, for assistance. In 1820, the congregation in Bajša sent delegates to other seniorats who then sent assistance. These included the landowners Georgije Zako, who was Orthodox, and Matija Vojnić, who was Catholic, who provided funds for the construction of an Evangelical church. In 1824, Vasilije Stratimirović, a landowner from Kulpín, left 20,000 baked bricks in his will for the construction of a church. In Aradáč, some county officials and wealthy people also contributed to the construction of an Evangelical church. As a rule, congregations with a larger number of congregants also had larger churches, as measured in *hvats* (hv):¹⁸ Petrovec, 25x11x25 hv.; Kovačica, 22x9.5 hv; Stará Pazova, 20x6 hv. and one foot. Inscriptions or chronograms were sometimes placed above the front door or inside the church.

Lists of church inventory most often included religious items such as cups, bowls, ciboria, cruets, candlesticks, altar cloths and covers, albs, altar knives, bells, etc. Cups and other items were usually gold- or silver-plated and engraved with the name of the congregation, the year of purchase, and sometimes the name of the donor. The books most commonly used in the church were the Bible, Kreuzberg’s *Meditations*,¹⁹ Palumbini’s book of prayers,²⁰ and Plachý’s *Agenda* (official Slovak liturgy).²¹ In Petrovec, in addition these, there were also

¹⁶ Among the Ruthenians in Bačka and Srem during this period, more women than men entered into mixed marriages, mostly with Orthodox Serbs, much more often than men - Ramač 2007: 255–270.

¹⁷ Other variants: Rohoni, Rohony, Rohoniy.

¹⁸ The *hvat* is an ancient measurement of length equal to 1.896 m; The smaller measurements used were the foot (32cm) and the thumb (2.6 cm).

¹⁹ Kreuzberg, Amadeus: *Pobožná Přemyslowánj na každý den celého Roku, w njchž se wěrný Ewangelický Křestanskze nábožné rozgimánj vybraných Řečj Pjsma Sw. a vraucý Modlitbu probuzuge a potěssuge. Z Nemeckého Gazyka w Slowenský preložena skrze Balthazare Pongrátz. V Presspurku 1783. V Frant. Aug. Patzko.*

²⁰ Palumbini Ondre: *Nowý Modlitebnj Poklad k službám Chrámowým Wssednjm, Nedělnjm a Swátečnjm, y ke wssem celého roku, a gakowéhokoli losu lidského, potřebám, co neypřjhodněgi, gakož gedenkaždý pastýř wěřjčjch, genž mocj pomázánj swého modlitebnjkem gestiit, pořádati může, přiměřený, skrze Dwogctihodného... wětšjím djlem wypracowaný a na swětlo wydaný. W Pessti 1823. Pjsmem Jana Tomáše Trattnera z Petróce.*

²¹ Plachý, Ondrej: *Agenda Ecclesiastica Slavonica August. Conf. addictorum In extractu Propter majorem V. D. Ministros rum harmoniam. Accedit Brevi-Extractus Ritualis Hungarici et Germanici. Neosolii MDCCCLXXXIX. Typis Joannis Jos. Tumleri.*

Sartori's *Biblický denník*²² and *Postilla*,²³ Plachý's *Kochánj v Bohu*²⁴, *Poklad modlitebný* by Jakobaei,²⁵ Blaho's *Kázne*,²⁶ Kollár's *Kázne*,²⁷ and Tranovský's *Knihá spevov*.²⁸

When churches were initially built, the bell towers were sometimes made of wood and were often built next to the church or were built sometime later. For example, the church in Bajša was built in 1820 followed by the bell tower in 1827. At the church in Petrovec, there is a balcony with an iron fence on the bell tower under the clock. Two, three, or (rarely) four bells of different weights or sizes were hung in or on the bell tower. The bells were usually inscribed with engravings stating when and how the bell was procured and who cast it. The bell casters mentioned are, among others, Heinrich Eberhard and Johann Kohl of Budapest, Michael Joseph Egardner of Timisoara, and Therezia Scheichelin of Vienna.

Revenues were collected in a similar way in all congregations: during services with a bell, as charitable donations on yearly holidays or voluntary contributions, and for ringing bells at funerals. In addition, lectical donations were collected from married couples in cash or in dues in kind according to certain stipulations. For example, each married couple in Bajša gave thirty kreuzers a year; in Kulpín one forint and twenty-one kreuzers for the salaries of pastors and teachers; in Kysáč every married couple and everyone who used a quarter of a land *sessio* contributed a third of a Pest grain measure.²⁹ Some congregations had different annual revenues,

²² Sartorius, Daniel: *Diarium Biblicum aneb Hystorye Biblické Starého y Nowého Zákona, wedle Počtu Dnů celého roku vybrané a napařád trogim sumownjm Včenjm a rytmownim Přemyslowánjm wyswětlené, gak k rozsřfenj Sláwy Boha Neywysřho tak Mládeži Křestanské a Lidu sprostěgssjmu k vřitečnému wzdělánj, s wěrnau bedliwostj sepsané a s Přjdwkem Hystorye o konečné Zkáze Města Geruzalema na swětlo wydané*. B. m. Wytisstené L. P. 1744.

²³ Sartorius, Daniel: *Summownj Postylka na wssecky Dny Nedělnj y Swátečnj w Roce, dwogjm Kázanjm Ewangelickým y Epistolickým k Rannj y Nesspornj Nábožnosti Domownj zaopatřená: w njžto Každý zpořádaný Text po dwogj kratičké Předmluwě na tři Částky rozdělený, we wssj vpřimné Sprostosti se wyswětluge a k tomu Spasytedlné Naučenj, Horliwé Naprawenj a Pronikawé Potěssenj, wssudy napařad se připoguge: K Sláwě Neyswětěgssjho Gmena Božjho a Dussj po Slowu geho srdečné taužicých prospessnému Wzdělánj na swětlo wydaná od ——. B. m. 1746. Dwa Djly.*

²⁴ Sturm, Christoph Christian: *Kochánj s Bohem w Rannjch Hodinách, na každý den w Roku od - - sepsané. A skrze Ondřege Plachý z nemecké Rěči k wsseobecnému wzdělánj, podlé nowé naprawené Edýcyi, přeložené. Dwa díly*. W B. Bystricy 1790. Wytisstené v J. Jozefa Tumlera, král. přiv. Kněhotiskár (translated by Ondrej Plachý).

²⁵ Jakobaei, Pavel: *We Gmeno Trogice Swaté! Duchownjch Modliteb Poklad, obsahugjcy w sobě Modlitby Křestanské horliwé a nábožné gak Swátečnj, Nedělnj, Wssednj, tak též y k wsselikému Času a k rozličným Potřebám obecným y obzwlásstnjm slaužjcy. K sláwě Božj a k wzdělánj Cyrkwe, z mnohých Modlitebných Knižek shromaždený a na swětlo wydaný od ——. W Žitawě 1732. Wytisstené nákladem Wáclawa Kleycha u Michala Hartmanna.*

²⁶ Blaho, Matúš: *Nábožná Kázanj na wssecky Neděle a ewangelické Swátky celého cýrkewnjho roku, z částky z ewangelických, z částky z epistolických obyčegnjch Textů wypracowána, a na žádost mnohých ku wsseobecnému wzdelánj wydána. Dwa díly*. W Lewoči 1828. Wytisstená v Jana Werthmüllera.

²⁷ Kollár, Ján: *Nábožné Kázanj při Slawnostech Welikonočnjch roku 1826 s připogenu modlitbau, držané we chrámě ewang. Cjrkwe Pesstansko-Budjnské*. Wydané od Poslucháčů. W Pessti 1826. Pjsmem Matěge Trattnera z Petroce.

²⁸ Tranovský, Juraj: *Cithara sanctorum. Pjsně Duchownj Staré y Nowé, křerychž Cýrkew Křestianská při Wýročnjch Slawnostech a Památkách, Gakož y we Wsselikých Potřebách swých obecných y obzwlásstnjch s mnohým prospěchem vřjwá: K njmž přidaný gsau Pjsně Dra Martina Lutherá wssecky z Německé Řeči do nassj Slowenské přeložené. Od Kněze Gřjčka Tranowského, Služebnjka Páně, při Cýrkwi Swato-Mikulassské w Liptowě*. Wytisstené w Lewoči 1638.

²⁹ A Pest measure is 94 liters.

depending on the number of members and established quotas for giving. For example, in Petrovec, the revenue in 1834 was 4085 forints and nine kreuzers with expenses totaling 4,053 forints and five kreuzers in Viennese currency. In Kysáč in 1834, 965 forints were spent and 4,152 forints remained in the coffers. In Padina, the income in 1835 was 10,000 forints in conventional currency with 2,000 forints in expenditures. The church authorities required the pastors to keep in order the archives, church books, documents, registries, inventory and accounting records, and protocol registers. In their remarks, the visitation commission alerted parishes about perceived shortcomings and gave strict instructions for these be rectified. In the parish archive in Petrovec, in addition to the usual documents, older documents have been preserved that describe the beginnings of the congregation and the construction of the church. The chronicle was kept by a pastor named Ján Stehlo.³⁰

Particular attention was given to the state of the cemetery—whether it was fenced off to keep out livestock, who made use of the grass cut from it, and who took care of it and how. If the cemetery had no more room for burial plots, the commission would recommend that the congregation secure a new space for burials. In accordance with general sanitation regulations in the Habsburg Monarchy, Evangelical cemeteries were always located outside the settlement, as was also the case for other denominations.

In Kulpín, money from the sale of cemetery grass went to the congregation's treasury. In Kysáč, the cemetery grass was used by the sexton, who also protected the cemetery from roving livestock. In Petrovec, revenue from the grass from one cemetery went to the bell ringer, and that from the other cemetery went to the congregation. Only Kysáč had an official gravedigger who was also the bell ringer. In other Evangelical communities, graves were dug by friends or relatives of the deceased according to the prescribed depth and sequence.

Specific questions were asked about the affiliate congregations: Did they have a prayer hall? A school? How was the school attendance? and so on. Only a few parishes had official affiliate congregations, and each had a certain number of congregants nearby or in the wider surroundings. The parish in Hložany had affiliates in Čelarevo (203 congregants), Palanka (311 congregants), and Begeč (114 congregants), along with a considerable number of congregants scattered across several settlements across the Danube in Srem (Čerević, Banoštor, Grabar, Sviloš, Susek, Neštin, Ilok, and others). According to incomplete data from local notaries, there were a total of 247 Evangelical Slovaks and sixty married couples in these settlements. There was an Evangelical cemetery in Palanka, and in Čelarevo and Begeč the cemetery was shared with Orthodox Serbs. The congregation in Vuková (Temeš-Vukovár) had eighteen affiliates, the most in the region. The main congregation in Vuková had 350 congregants and 486 more in the affiliates, of which fifteen Vuková, and fifty-six in the branches were nobles.

The Slovak Evangelical community in Silbaš was an affiliate of the German parish of Buljkes³¹ and had a prayer hall and a confessional school. Bajša had an affiliate in Topola, which was mostly inhabited by Germans who were said to be rather demoralized due to frequent relocations and, furthermore, were considerably intolerant of the Hungarian villagers.

³⁰ Sztchlo, Joannes: *Historia Ecclesiae Aug. Evang. Petováz Statistico-Ecclesiastica*. 1818. Ján Stehlo, an Evangelical pastor, kept this chronicle from 1818–1862. The manuscript has 320 pages of text and a four-page index. It is kept in the Archives of the Evangelical Church in Báčsky Petrovec.

³¹ Maglič after 1949.

The Evangelical Community in Kulpín was an affiliate of Petrovec from 1783 to 1821, when it became a parish. Kysáč had an affiliate in Novi Piroš.³² The Evangelical Community in Lalič was initially an affiliate of the Selenča parish, but from 1817 it was an independent parish. The parish in Aradáč did not have any affiliates, but it had congregants in Turkish Bečej/Franjevo,³³ Melenci, and Elemir. Stará Pazova had an affiliate in Nova Pazova, where there were Germans, until it became independent in 1821.

Another chapter dealt with the congregation's political and economic circumstances. Congregations in Bačka did not officially have an inspector to monitor their revenue and expenses, but in the Military Frontier, this carried out by the Frontier authorities.³⁴ As in other religious congregations, Evangelical congregations' revenues and expenses were managed by a steward, a layman chosen by the community for a period of one year. His obligations were also to collect lectical donations from congregants in money and dues in kind. Despite his many duties, the steward's salary was usually small. It could be a pair of new, as in Hložany and Lalič, or one pair of new shoes and one pair of and repaired ones, as in Pivnica, or sometimes a sheepskin coat and pants, as in Kysáč. In Kysáč, Petrovec, and Pivnica, in accordance with the dispensations granted to congregations and the clergy, the steward and the sexton, were exempt from unpaid labor (*robot*), transporting goods for the landowner, and lectical donations. In Petrovec, the steward and the sexton were paid 30 kreuzers per workday, and they would receive a salary of five forints a year. Since the steward was not usually well-enough educated, the communities' revenues and expenses were entered in the account register by the local pastor. Money was kept in a lockbox on the parish grounds and was usually secured with two locks and two keys, one of which was kept by the steward and the other by the sexton. In addition to daily bell ringing, ringing for Sunday services and prayer, announcing a death, and ringing for the funeral,³⁵ the bell ringers had other duties such as, for example, serving as the night watchman (Hložany).

As a rule, each congregation had a constituted presbytery.³⁶ According to established practice, the presbytery was required to meet at the very beginning of January to review the congregation's revenues and expenditures, and if necessary, other prominent members of the congregation would often also be invited to the meeting. In smaller congregations, all adult men could attend such meetings. This practice demonstrates the important role Evangelical congregants had in overseeing the congregation's income and expenditures. Some communities, however, did not have an elected presbytery. One example is Stará Pazova, which had only assessors, a total of 30, who were appointed by the congregation, and invited to a meeting, if necessary. In Aradáč, the presbytery also acted as the village magistrate because only Evangelicals lived in the village.

Unlike the provinces, in the Military Frontier, there were different rules and practices for ordering public and social life. The authorities in the Military Frontier were responsible for everything, including auditing congregations' finances. The revenues and expenditures

³² Rumenka after 1922.

³³ Novi Bečej after 1952.

³⁴ Štefan Leška, a pastor in Stará Pazova, was active as a publicist, and among other things he published newspaper articles about the life of the Slovak population in the Military Frontier - Leška 1843: 77–93.

³⁵ More about ringing in Kysáč: Surový 2013: 263–269.

³⁶ An executive body consisting of spiritual and elected lay representatives of the congregation.

of all congregations, including the Evangelical communities, were managed by the regiment and its military company. In Stará Pazova, the Evangelical congregation's lockbox was kept with the regiment's lockbox, but the congregation's accounts were kept both by the steward and the pastor. Money was kept in a lockbox with three locks and one key held by the steward, another by the military company, and the third by the company commander. This congregation had two sextons who assisted the pastor in the church, maintained the church and the churchyard, readied the organ, led singing in church and at funerals in the absence of a schoolteacher, cultivated parish land, prepared the Host, and in autumn used their own cart to collect lectical income in grain and other forms from the congregants. Each year they received twenty-five Viennese forints, a pair of shoes, and an assigned basket for donations from congregants that was passed around in church during important holidays. In Kovačica, the Frontier authorities served as inspectors and audited the Evangelical congregation's finances. This was the same in Padina, where the regiment fulfilled the duties of the inspector and one of the officers managed the Evangelical congregation's revenues, kept accounting records, and secured the safe. The steward, sexton, and presbytery oversaw everything else related to the congregation's wellbeing.

The third chapter dealt with the congregation's morality and religious observance: how often congregants attended services and participated in other rites, if any congregants avoided taking Communion, were there people who openly opposed the faith and the rites or were openly engaging in sinful behavior, etc. In general, local pastors commented that religious services and prayers were well attended, more women attended than men, and that attendance was higher when there was less work to do in the fields. However, there are some differences in the description of the situation in certain congregations. In Pivnica, it was recorded that some congregants did not attend Sunday services and were profaning the Sabbath by weighing and selling coal. In Kysáč, Hložany, Kulpín, and Petrovec, some pastors reported that young people roamed around at night and were thus becoming morally corrupt, and that admonishing them made no difference because the pastors had no support from the children's parents.

In the returns, the pastors reported on whether their congregants were literate and if they were willing to purchase religious texts such as *Tranoscius*,³⁷ the Bible, and the Gospels, and whether parents regularly sent their children to school. Answers to these questions differed from one congregation to another. Many people in Hložany were illiterate and rarely bought religious texts, and parents were reluctant to send their children to school. Many in Bajša were also illiterate. In Kysáč, on the other hand, with the exception of a small number of the elderly, most congregants were literate, and almost everyone could make use of ecclesiastical and religious works. Laliť and Selenča were similar in this regard. In Banat in Aradáč, Kovačica, and Padina, the majority of congregants were also literate and bought religious texts, and parents dutifully sent their children to school.

Each report also included an account by each pastor regarding their congregants' morality: if particular bad habits or behaviors were common, if there were any illegitimate children, if there had been divorces, if anyone from the congregation was in prison, etc. In general, no one was openly engaging in sinful behavior or was an outright opponent of the faith.

³⁷ The basic book of church songs.

In almost all congregations, however, there were widespread superstitions related to witchcraft, accidents, and household calamities caused by the evil eye, folk healing, etc., and the pastors' efforts to stamp out these "weaknesses" among their congregants were usually ineffective.

In Stará Pazova, drunkenness, arrogance, and lack of self-awareness were mentioned as bad habits among the inhabitants of the Military Frontier and this congregation. The pastor rebuked the congregants for not habitually donating to the church. In Petrovec, a pastor reported that one woman was in prison for killing her child during childbirth (which had probably been conceived out of wedlock, because her husband, a soldier at the time, had been absent). Additionally, young men avoided services and instead went to taverns where they danced to music, drank, and played cards, often staying out until dawn.

Having children out of wedlock was considered a serious moral failing, but such cases were rare. In Stará Pazova, according to the returns, out of 1,775 births there were fifteen illegitimate children conceived with outsiders. In Kovačica, in 1834 there were only two illegitimate children among the 2,160 congregants. In the previous year, no illegitimate children were born to any of the 1,149 congregants in Selenča, 2,525 congregants in Padina, and 1,835 congregants in Aradáč. Divorce was also considered a moral failing, but it was relatively rare in Evangelical congregations. In their returns, pastors sometimes explained their attempts to somehow reunite divorced couples.

Different answers were given regarding what the pastor and the presbytery were doing to correct and move beyond these shortcomings and to what extent the civil authorities were assisting them. In Bajša, boys, or young men who behaved inappropriately in church were publicly punished in the town square. The local pastor in Kulpín noted that, recently, some Evangelicals were following the example of Orthodox Serbs, and were not so zealous about attending services³⁸ In Bajša, the congregants' most serious vices included decadent celebrations, swearing, and debauchery. In Selenča, there were reports of intemperance, theft, quarrels, and gossip. The pastors would attempt to remedy these, but if they were unsuccessful on their own, they reported the culprits to the civil authorities. Superstition was also quite widespread, with people visiting conjurers, and the like. The pastor in Kovačica stated that whenever he noticed abuses or offenses, he would first give his congregants a warning, and if that failed to remedy the situation or if it were a more serious offense, he would hand the matter over to the military authorities. However, he also emphasized his congregants' good qualities. For example, they had built the church with their own hands, which in his opinion was the best evidence of their devotion to the church.

Pastors in some congregations had very different evaluations of their congregants' readiness to make donations for the needs of the church and the congregation and to support Evangelical grammar schools. Records from Selenča, Hložany, and Pivnica show that congregants did not regularly make donations to the church and were reluctant donate to the Senioral School in Novi Vrbas.³⁹ In Kulpín, congregants donated according to their means

³⁸ Čelovský misinterpreted the original and stated that was not due to Serbian influence of (1996: 82).

³⁹ Bierbrunner 1902: 63 states that, at the general convention of the Bačka Seniorat in Novi Vrbas, on October 10, 1822, a decision was made to classify the Evangelical church communities of this seniorat into five groups according to their number of congregants and to pay for the Senior School according to the following: Group I, 25 forints and five Pest measures of wheat (These were Petrovec, Crvenka, Stará Pazova, and Novi Vrbas); Group II, 15 f. and 4 measures of wheat; Group III, 10 f. and 3 measures of wheat; Group IV, 2 f. and 2

and circumstances, and more often when there was an illness or a more serious misfortune in the family, but they rarely left anything to the church in their wills. Every year, the congregation gave fifteen forints from the church treasury to the grammar school in Upper Hungary but gave nothing to the Senior School in Novi Vrbas. The parish pastor in Petrovec stated that the willingness of congregants to donate for the needs of the church had been recently declining, but there were still individuals who bequeathed larger sums after their deaths. The congregation allocated 25 f. for the Senior School in Novi Vrbas per year, 30 f. for a school in Bratislava and for other schools. In addition, voluntary contributions were collected from congregants to support candidates and students.

The returns provide quite detailed information about local pastors and their performance of their pastoral duties. A short biography was included with information about their parents and their education. Most of the local pastors were from the Upper Lands. They were most often graduates of secondary schools and grammar schools in Modra, Mezöberény, Trenčín, and Banská Bystrica, and had studied philosophy and theology in Bratislava, Sopron, Banská Štiavnica, Wittenberg, and Halle. These pastors were usually the sons of pastors and teachers or less often of a clerk or craftsman. They all spoke at least three languages—German, Latin, and Slovak—and often also Hungarian and Serbian. Some also stated they spoke Romanian and French. The church authorities required pastors, and especially the younger ones, to write sermons, but were permitted to interpret them freely in church. During the visitation, the commission reviewed the written sermons. The older ones often only wrote in theses. Pastors were also required to mention the sovereign in church during their sermons and to instruct congregants to respect the secular authorities. Pastors mainly held Catechism classes from the first Sunday of St. Trinity until Advent. The basic literature they worked from was Luther's *Small Catechism* and Herder's *Catechism*.⁴⁰ According to reports, young people, and especially boys, were careless about attending Catechism classes and did not attend regularly, which was considered the fault of parents who were not overly concerned with their children's spiritual life.

In most congregations, catechumens were prepared for confirmation during Lent, and the Rite of Confirmation was performed in front of the congregation on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday. Only in Petrovec and Kulpín were these lessons held during Advent and the rite performed on Christmas Eve. In the reports, the pastors mostly mentioned that the rites of baptisms, weddings, funerals, and the distribution of the Eucharist were carried out according to accepted practice and in accordance with laws and regulations.

In all congregations, services were held on Sundays and before noon on holidays, and prayers were led in the afternoon. Morning prayers were recited on weekdays. Pastors

measures of wheat. He further states that, depending on the size of the congregation, pastors and teachers also paid. Franz Hamm 1960: 26–27 took this information from Bierbrunner. Ján Stehlo also states in his History of the Evangelical Church in Petrovec that the congregation there gave 25 f. and 5 Pest measures of wheat per year for the Senior School (Sztehlo 1818: 20).

⁴⁰ Herder, Johann Gottfried: *Katechismus doktora M. Luthera, s obssjrným Katechetyckým Výkladem Wysoce oswjceného Doktora Jana Gottrieda Herdera, ... k prospěchu sskol ewangelických z nemeckého od Jana Ğryssy, někdegssjho Sl. B. K. Pezynského, přeloženým. Wydal na swůg náklad, toto Slowenské přeloženj ponaprawiw, Ğiřj Palkowič. W Presspurku 1809. Pjsmem Ssimona Petra Webera.*

mostly commended congregants' attendance at services and prayers, but they reprimanded young people, especially boys, who did not attend regularly or behaved inappropriately while in church. The commission noted that there were considerable differences in the way services were held in certain congregations, so it proposed a way to unify them for ten Slovak and ten German congregations.

The reports noted there was still not enough trust in doctors, and there were no doctors in many settlements or the nearby surroundings. Pastors tried to raise awareness among congregants of the need for inoculations, as did the secular authorities.

When performing marriages, pastors followed royal decree and did not marry girls younger than sixteen or boys younger than eighteen. In the settlements in the Military Frontier, anyone who wished to marry had to obtain permission from the military authorities. The order not to bury the deceased until forty-eight hours had passed from the time of death was also respected.

As inspectors of local confessional schools, pastors were mostly positive about the schools and teachers operated, but they also noted that some students did not attend school due to a lack of concern from parents. Evangelical congregations had autonomy in terms of finding, signing contracts with, and firing pastors and teachers. Compensation for teachers and pastors consisted of a fixed amount in cash, goods, grain (wheat, maslin, oats), wine (in wine-producing regions), firewood, and both usually received a rooster once a year from each household. In addition, communities received land from landowners for pastors (whole or $\frac{3}{4}$ of a *sessio*) and teachers (half of a *sessio*).⁴¹ In some communities, congregants cultivated the land without compensation, while in others it was cultivated by the pastors and teachers themselves. It is difficult to precisely calculate incomes for pastors and teachers because they received part of their salary as dues in kind, and the prices of these, especially grain, fluctuated from year to year and even within the same year.⁴² Grain donations were made in Pest or Požun/Prešpork measures,⁴³ and cash donations were made in Viennese currency (hereafter: V. c.) or conventional currency (hereafter: c. c.),⁴⁴ but which one was sometimes not specified in the reports. Furthermore, there were always congregants who were in arrears, so pastors and teachers were owed debts that were difficult to collect.

The pastor in Petrovec received 200 forints in c. c. and 100 Pest wheat measures.⁴⁵ Since this parish had more than 5,000 congregants, the stolar income⁴⁶ was no less than 300 forints a year in c. c. Thus, he received about 1000 forints a year in c. c. in cash, and the value of the cereals received that year was about 1000 f. in V. c. The pastor in Lalič, which had 880 congregants, received 100 forints in cash per year in c. c., in grain about 800 f. in V. c., and about 50–60 f. in c. c. of stolar income. In Pivnica, with 1635 congregants, the stolar income

⁴¹ A *sessio* was an urbarial (peasant) plot, which in Bačka was equal to 32 acres of arable land, 22 acres of meadow, and an acre of homestead. An acre was equal to 1100–1200 sq. hvats (sq. hvat = 3,59 m²).

⁴² Stehlo 1818: passim; Kmeť 1981: 42.

⁴³ Pest measure – 94 liters, Požun/Prešpork (Bratislava) measure – 62.52 liters.

⁴⁴ The forint of a conventional currency at that time was 2–2.5 times stronger than the paper forint of Viennese currency.

⁴⁵ Sztehlo 1818: 148.

⁴⁶ Stolar income (stola) was a tax congregants paid to the pastor (and sometimes a teacher) for performing rites such as baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc.

was about 100 f. in c. c., and the value of the collected grain donation was about 1000 f. in V. c.; in Selenča, there were 1149 congregants and cash revenues were 270 f. in V. c., grain revenues were about 1200 f. in V. c. and about 150 f. in c. c. in stolar income. In Stará Pazova, with 2631 congregants, the annual revenue in cash was 158 f. in V. c., in money from married couples about 630 f. in V. c., about 700 f. in V. c. in grain, and about 120 f. in V. c. in stolar income. In Aradáč, the pastor had about 1000 f. in grain in V. c., about 100 f. in V. c. in stolar income and about 1000 f. in V. c. from Coleda (donations collected for Christmas caroling, a third of which went to the congregation's schoolteacher).⁴⁷ Of course, revenue varied, and could be higher or lower depending on the price of grain, from which a significant part of their wages came. The records sometimes do not specify whether the amount was in Viennese or conventional currency, which makes comparisons difficult because hard currency was worth two or two and half times more. The superintendent required that pastors not ask for payment only in hard currency if it was not specified in their contract.

Wages for Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic priests and teachers in the confessional schools in Bačka and Srem at that time were similar, and they were similarly structured. The Greek Catholic parish pastor in Krstur (now Ruski Krstur) had an annual income of about 2,000 forints, the chaplain about 700 forints, and the schoolteacher about 450–500 forints.⁴⁸ Roman Catholic priests in Srem earned approximately 1000 forints, and teachers approximately 400 forints.⁴⁹ Although Ján Stehlo, the pastor in Petrovec, noted he had a large parish and a great deal of work but earned a small income and was unable to hire a chaplain.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, as he recorded in the Petrovec Chronicle, he managed to secure scholarships to schools in Upper Hungary for his five sons and five daughters.⁵¹ Other Evangelical pastors, and often teachers, sent their children to secondary and higher schools in Upper Hungary.

Schoolteachers in Slovak Evangelical confessional schools were paid two to three times less than the pastors. Teachers were always given a free apartment and usually received half a cession of land and use of the garden. They also received a portion collected from Coleda and donations collected on three big annual holidays—Christmas (sometimes on New Year's Eve), Easter (sometimes on *Kvetná nedel'a* [Palm Sunday]), and *Turice* (Pentecost).⁵² They also received a portion of the stolar income for the rites he participated in with the pastor, along with part of the money from confirmations. Sometimes, teachers were paid a *didacta*, or tuition fee, from each student. They usually received a rooster and a few eggs from each family, and the grain he received for his own needs was also milled for him without charge.

Teachers' wages included around 100 forints in c. c. and around 500 forints V. c. in grain. He also received a portion of the Coleda and the stolar income. The teacher in Stará

⁴⁷ During the period between Christmas Eve (*Štedrý večer*, December 24) and Epiphany (January 6), school children visited houses, sang Christmas carols, and received gifts, usually of money and cakes. The children were usually accompanied by a teacher who recorded the number of family members for the church records. The pastor also visited congregants' homes and blessed them. In exchange, the congregants made voluntary or pre-determined donations, as in Aradáč (1 coin [groschen] or 3 kreuzers).

⁴⁸ Ramač 2020: 110–147.

⁴⁹ Sršan 2008.

⁵⁰ Sztehlo 1818: 51–52.

⁵¹ Sztehlo 1818: 201, 298; Kmeť 1981: 44.

⁵² Voluntary donations collected after services for the church.

Pazova, who was both a cantor and an organist, received 170 forints in V. c. and about 500 forints in V. c. worth of grain; in Aradáč, the teacher received 25 forints from the municipal treasury in c. c., about 130 forints in V. c. from his pupils parents, and a third of the Coleda, which was around 330 forints in V. c.

The year each congregation was established, the names of the pastors and teachers at the time of the visitation, the year the church was built, when the school was opened, and the number of students is listed by town in Table 2.

There is a great deal of information about confessional schools in the records. According to the 1777 school law *Ratio educationis*, attending school was mandatory for children aged six to twelve. However, the number of children who actually attended was much smaller than the total number of eligible school-age children, and the number who passed their annual exams and went on to the next grade was even smaller. The school year was supposed to run from September 1 to the end of June, but it was often noted that the school year began later in either October or November, and after exams, which were usually held right after Easter, most children would stop coming to school. The records list numerous reasons for children's erratic attendance, including parental neglect, lack of clothing (especially in the winter), household chores, service, and caring for younger siblings. In Stará Pazova, more than half of school-aged children did not attend school due to a lack of concern from the head of their household, who did not buy them books and instead sent them to look after the livestock. A pastor in Stará Pazova stated children living in the Military Frontier were not required to attend school. However, according to records from Kovačica and Padina, the Frontier authorities took steps to ensure all children attended school. Clearly, the position of the military authorities regarding compulsory schooling varied from one part of the Military Frontier to another.

The visitor also recorded his opinion and assessment of the pastor's moral character, and these were usually positive. In Bajša, the pastor Ján Šimšálek was reported to be well-educated, smart, and mild-mannered; in Kulpín, Daniel Koléni, a honorable man, was well-educated and a good pastor and preacher; in Stará Pazova, Štefan Leška, was good-natured, modest, performed services well, preached well, and lived modestly; in Padina, Peter Kramár was good and worthy of the vocation, faithfully performed services, was a conscientious and experienced preacher, and an exceptional catechist; in Petrovec, the pastor Ján Stehlo was decent, well-educated, and noble but was elderly; in Aradáč, Daniel Abaffy had a good education, was a good and pious preacher, was conscientious in his ministry but overly sensitive; in Lalič, Michal Borovský was young and had more to learn, but he was a good orator and preacher and performed his pastoral duties well; in Selenča, Juraj Plachý was elderly and his son Daniel, the chaplain, was not educated enough but conducted himself decently. However, not all observations were positive. The record from Hložany states that the pastor Ján Rohoň was the unworthy son of a worthy father—hypocritical, avaricious, and at odds with his congregation. In Kysáč, Juraj Jesenský was poorly educated but haughty, as a pastor he was neglectful and unapproachable, and his library was covered in dust. In Pivnica, Samuel Borovský was ambitious and greedy, in dispute with the congregation, and poorly educated. The pastor Josef Spannagel from Buljkes, who would also go to the affiliate community in Silbaš, was said to be a good man but a poor orator, hard to hear, and not well-liked by his congregants. Some pastors could boast of wonderful libraries which, alongside religious and theological works also contained those written in Slovak by Pavel Jozef Šafárik, Ján Kollár and others.

Congregation (year founded)	Pastor	Year church was built	Teacher	Year school was founded	Number of eligible students required to attend	Number of students enrolled (M+F)
Bajša (1786)	Ján Šimšálek	1820	Daniel Martinek		150	115 (70+45)
Hložany (1785)	Ján Rohoň	1772– 1797	Juraj Rohoň		235	150
Kysáč (1788)	Juraj Jesenský	1795– 1799	Samuel Michalovič	1785		257
Kulpín (1818)	Daniel Koléni	1875	Juraj Turčáni	1789		
Laliť (1817)	Michal Borovský	1802	Jozef Godra	1791		132
Nový Sad (1812)	Samuel Hajnáci	1822	Štefan Čepčáni	1830		19
Petrovec (1783)	Ján Stehlo	1783	Benjamín Reisz Eudovít Zvaríni	1779		596 (322+274)
Pivnica (1792)	Samuel Borovský	1824– 1826	Ján Tychon	1796		242
Selenča (1768/1787)	Juraj Plachý	1790	Ignác Ručkay	1768		164
Silbaš (1786)	Jozef Spannagel	had a prayer hall	Karol Bohúni	had a school		50
Stará Pazova (1770)	Štefan Leška	1786– 87	Ján Kutlík		400	220
Aradáč (1786)	Daniel Abaffy	–	Alexander Bako			136
Butín (1814)	Jozef Vodár	1817	Pavel Daruľa	1834	56	
Hajdušica (1829)	Štefan Jestrebíni	no prayer hall	Teachers’ duties carried out by the bell ringer.	no school		32
Kovačica (1802)	No pastor at the time	1828	Jakub Lauf			265
Padina (1806)	Peter Kramár	1834	Andrej Vozár			300
Vuková (1832)	Ján Salmovský	School premis es used for this	Jakob Imrich			36

Table 2: Pastors, teachers, and the number of students in Slovak Evangelical congregations during the 1835/1836 ecclesiastical visitation.

For most congregations, the returns provide detailed information about the confessional school and began with a brief biography of the teacher. Most teachers came from the Upper Lands, such as Jozef Godra, a teacher in Laliť, Ján Kutlík in Stará Pazova, Ján Tychon in Pivnica, Andrej Vozár in Padina, and Ignác Ručkay in Selenča. However, some came from the Lower Lands, such as Ján Blázi, a teacher in Kulpín, and Juraj Rohoň, a teacher in Hložany. Teachers most often completed their schooling in the Upper Lands in Bratislava, Mezőberény, Szarvas, Schemnitz (now Banská Štiavnica), Kežmarok, Modra, Pápa, Trenčín, Prešov, Aszód, and Pest, and in the Lower Lands in Novi Vrbas, Nový Sad, Sremski Karlovci. Some teachers often changed postings. Schools usually had one teacher, but larger congregations had two: a head teacher and an assistant, as in Kovačica, or one for the boys and the other for the girls, as in Petrovec.

As the local school inspectors, pastors provided descriptions of the teachers' moral character and their pedagogical work. Their opinions were usually positive. However, the visitation commission sometimes had serious objections to the teachers' moral character, behavior, and pedagogical work. The teachers were either reprimanded or were made aware of their shortcomings and instructed to correct them in the future, as was the case with J. Rohoň in Hložany, D. Martinek in Bajša, and J. Tychon in Pivnica.

Special attention was given to teaching methodology and the subjects taught. In addition to reading and writing in Slovak and Hungarian, arithmetic, religious instruction, Bible history, natural history, and the geography of Hungary, some congregation schools also taught the history of the Reformation, civics, dietetics, Hungarian history, choral singing, penmanship, and in terms of physics they were taught "what was appropriate to the students' intellectual abilities and to eradicate folk superstitions."⁵³ Teachers employed catechetical, analytical, ex cathedra, and Bell-Lancaster methods of instruction. The reports list only two textbooks used by both teachers and students: Kollár's *Textbook* and Luther's *Little Catechism*. Teaching aids are not mentioned. Teachers also made use of Herder's Catechism,⁵⁴ Luther's *Little Catechism*, Hübner's *Biblical History*,⁵⁵ Bartholomaeide's

⁵³ In the 1820s, the deacons of the Evangelical schools in the Bačka-Srem Seniorate prepared instructions for teachers called *Úprava pre učiteľov evanjelických a. v. school of the Bács-Srijem seniorát*. It describes twenty-four items, among which were how the teacher was hired and remunerated, educational goals, disciplinary measures in cases of non-compliance with regulations, the teacher's approach to students, etc. Item 7 of these instructions referred to the curriculum and teaching content. It was recommended that young people be taught everything they needed for day-to-day life, which included making calculations in one's head, penmanship, several areas of the natural sciences, catechism of religious instruction, catechism of health, selections from Bible history, geography, civics, and in physics, above all, natural phenomena to eradicate superstition - Čelovský 1996: 85–86. It appears the teachers followed these instructions because the visitation returns also state some of these.

⁵⁴ Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), German poet and writer, General Superintendent of Weimar. *Katechismus doktora M. Luthera, s obssjrným Katechetyckým Výkladem Výsoce oswjceného Doktora Jana Gottrieda Herdera, k prospěchu sskol ewangelických z nemeckého od Jana Čryssy, někedgssjho Sl. B. K. Pezynského, přeloženým. Wydal na swiug náklad, toto Slowenské přeloženj ponaprawiw, Giřj Palkowič. W Presspurku 1809. Pjsem Ssimona Petra Webera*. They most likely used the fourth unchanged edition, which was printed in Bratislava in 1825 in the printing house "Karla K. Snjžka."

⁵⁵ Johann Hübner (1668–1731, German pedagogue). *Biblické Hystorye, w Počtu Sto a čtyry, po Padesáte a dwau, gednak ze Starého gednak z Nowého Zákona, wybrané od J. H., Škol Hamburských Rektora, Nyni pak k dobrému Slowenské Mládeže, která se Augsspurského wyznánj přidržj, w domácy Gazyk přelumočené. W Presspurku a w Pessti 1834. U Ludwjka Landerera, urozeného z Fűskutu*.

Geography,⁵⁶ Palkovič's *Geography*,⁵⁷ Michalko's *Physics*,⁵⁸ Kollár's *Textbook*, Leška's *Catechism*, the *Gospels of the New Testament*, and students also learned from *The Natural History*, *The History of Hungary*, as well as prayer and funeral songs.

In the larger and more affluent congregations, the school buildings and teachers' apartments were in good condition. In Petrovec, the school building was relatively new, spacious, built of good material, and was shingled. It had two classrooms and apartments for two teachers. Each apartment had three rooms, an entryway, and a pantry. In Stará Pazova and Kysáč, the school building with the teacher's apartment was quite spacious. In Pivnica, the school was new, but there were no rooms for a teacher. In Aradáč, the classroom was quite large, made of mud and straw, and also served as a prayer hall. The teacher's apartment was in very poor condition. According to the records, some school buildings in other congregations, such as Hložany, were in very poor condition with a shortage of inventory that was often insufficient to accommodate all school-aged children. Not one Slovak Evangelical school in the Bačka-Srem and Banat seniorats had its own foundation. In Padina, it was noted that Evangelical schools in the Military Frontier did not receive any financial support from the Chamber.

In confessional schools, according to Evangelical practice, the inspector was the local pastor. The annual examination was held in the presence of the deacon, the local pastor, and the congregants. The practice in the Military Frontier, however, was different. School principals for Orthodox and Roman Catholic schools were elected. The Evangelicals did not have their own principal, and their schools were under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic principal. The congregation in Padina appealed to the principle of freedom of religion and requested they be removed from the influence of the Roman Catholic principal. In Stará Pazova, the inspector of the Evangelical school was an imperial official and a local pastor. As a rule, the deacon suggested the content of the teaching material and chaired the annual exams.

Each congregation had its own midwives, and usually two or three. Only in some communities were they examined by a county surgeon and required to take an oath of diligent service. Midwives knew the baptism ritual and had permission to baptize a newborn infant if necessary. They were paid fifteen to thirty kreuzers per birth, one loaf of bread, and in some municipalities, they were exempt from unpaid labor (*robot*) or transporting goods for the landlord.

Although no congregation had an official charitable institution or home for the widows of pastors or teachers, congregations led by local pastors found ways to help orphans and the poor (from voluntary contributions, with the help of landowners, etc.).

The annual rites and ceremonies differed only slightly from one congregation to the next. The Eucharistic service was held after the harvest in Bajša, Hložany, Kulpín, Kysáč,

⁵⁶ Bartholomaeides, Ladislav (1754–1825, Evangelical priest). *Geograffia aneb Wypsanj Okrsslku Zemského s sesti Mappami vlastnj Rukau geho wyrýtými*. W Baňské Bistřicy 1798. Wytisštěné v Jána Sstefániho.

⁵⁷ Palkovič, Juraj (1769–1850, professor of Czechoslovak language and literature at the Evangelical Lyceum in Bratislava). *Známost Wlasti. Neywcj pro sskoly Slowenské w Vhřjch sepsal a na swüg náklad wydal J. P. Oddělení Prwnj. Známost geografická*. W Presspürku v Symona Petra Webera 1804.

⁵⁸ Michalko, Pavel (1752–1825, teacher in Piliš). *Fizyka, aneb Včenj o Přirozenj (Nature) k prospěchu, gak celého Národu, a pěkného Vměnj žadostiwého sepsané*. W Budjne 1819. Wytisštěné Literámi Anny Landererky.

Lalič, Petrovec, Pivnica, Stará Pazova, Padina, and Kovačica, In Aradáč, it was performed after the harvest and after the wine grapes had been picked. Mentioning the sovereign during services was an accepted practice in Evangelical churches, and prayers were usually said for him on his birthday. It was not a custom among Evangelicals to hold large celebrations marking Pentecost and Reformation Day. In some congregations, a rite of inauguration was held for members of the new local government, who were called on to conscientiously perform the service that had been entrusted to them. In Padina, there was a military magistrate who did not take an oath in the church.

A section of the return dealt with complaints and appeals lodged by pastors, teachers, and members of the congregation. In Bajša, the teacher and the pastor raised objections against parents who were not sending their children to school as required. In Hložany, the congregation were displeased with the Rohoň brothers, who were the teacher and the pastor, with whom they were in the middle of a lawsuit.⁵⁹

At the end of this section, the pastor gave his opinion about what should be changed or done away with as part of church life. Proposals included doing away with the Christmas Eve service and children singing under windows, the custom of throwing water at people on Easter, and big feasts at baptisms, weddings, and funerals that did not befit the principle of Christian temperance.

The key part of the visitation return was the commission's conclusion, in which they made remarks, reprimands, orders, and requests—essentially everything that needed to be changed or implemented within the congregations' everyday life and religious practice. For example, in Bajša this included breaking the habit of arriving late for services, and in Bajša, Hložany, Kulpín, and Pivnica, school-age children need to be dutifully sent to school and catechesis, and adults should also attend catechesis. In Petrovec, the instructions were to ban the “ugly custom” of congregants dousing each other with water on Easter because it desecrated the solemn atmosphere of the holiday, and besides, soaking people in cold water during this time of year at this time of year was harmful to their health. In Bajša, Kysáč, Hložany, Lalič, Petrovec, and Pivnica, congregants were told to keep the chalices and other Communion ware cleaner, and that they needed to be gold-plated and engraved with the year and name of the town. Congregants in Bajša were also told to pay their taxes for supporting the pastor and teacher in a timely manner. In Bajša and Kysáč, they were instructed to use the best flour when baking the Communion bread. Pastors were required to follow protocol more diligently and to copy circulars and reports from the conventions. The pastor in Petrovec was warned not to make announcements from the pulpit about lost items and the like. The teacher in Pivnica was told to refrain from stirring up ill will toward the pastor and to be more conscientious in teaching his pupils. The pastors were also asked to formally hold confirmations in the church and in the presence of other congregants. Congregants were reminded they were obligated to provide transportation for pastors to seniorial conventions. In Pivnica, where there were Slovak and Hungarian Evangelicals,

⁵⁹ After the visitation, in his ceremonial address in Vrbas, superintendent Ján Seberini mentioned had received numerous verbal complaints from congregants about the teachers' work and moral character. Thus, in his instructions, the Bačka-Srem senior Ján Stehlo wrote special regulations calling on teachers and deans to set a positive example through their own behavior for congregants and especially for their students (Maliak 2000: 7–8; Čelovský 1996: 88).

pastors and teachers were required to teach catechesis in both languages. The commission also called upon pastors to refrain from collecting debts from congregants forcefully or through civil authorities as this could sow antipathy and mistrust toward the clergy among the congregants. One of the commissions more interesting remarks was that Aleksandar Stanković, the judge for Torontál county, had praised the Slovaks from Aradáč for being good and obedient, and that they served as an example for those of other faiths.

At the end of the visitation, the visitor, superintendent Ján Seberini, called on the pastors of these two seniorates to cultivate good relations in the spirit of Christian fellowship with the Orthodox clergy and their dignitaries, and mentioned that he and his retinue had been exceptionally well received by the Orthodox bishop of Bačka at his residence in Nový Sad.

Conclusion

We were unable to locate records of any visitations that preceded that of 1835–1836, or from the 1847 visitation, which would have enabled us to compare statistical data and other information. However, on the basis of existing literature and relevant sources (church chronicles and registries) we can conclude that, during this period, the number of congregants in Slovak Evangelical congregations increased due to natural growth and the arrival of new colonists. Economic stabilization and population growth provided bigger opportunities for improvements within the congregations. New churches were constructed, and some were expanded, renovated, or repaired. New school buildings and housing for teachers were also built. Most school-aged children who were required to attend school did so, and most of the Slovak population was literate. Many of them purchased church and religious books. Pastors mostly came from the Upper Lands where they completed their secondary education and studied philosophy and theology. Teachers also generally had the necessary qualifications, and most often had graduated from schools in the Upper Lands. Liturgy, religious texts, and schoolbooks were also procured from the Upper Lands. Thus, the Evangelical creed, religious connections with their compatriots in their place of origin, and written works significantly contributed to cultivating and preserving a sense of unity with the Slovaks in the Upper Lands and protected them from assimilating into the multiethnic and multi-confessional environment in Bačka, Srem, and Banat. Having churches and confessional schools that taught in the mother tongue were able to preserve congregants' morals in the broadest sense of the word, to improve general health and the civic culture, to maintain Evangelical secondary schools and colleges, and to build up their own intelligentsia.

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ЈАНКО РАМАЧ

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КАНОНСКЕ ВИЗИТАЦИЈЕ СЛОВАЧКИХ ЕВАНГЕЛИЧКИХ ЦРКВЕНИХ ЗАЈЕДНИЦА У БАЧКОЈ, СРЕМУ И БАНАТУ 1835. И 1836. ГОДИНЕ

Резиме

Записници о канонској визитацији словачких евангеличких/лутеранских црквених заједница у Бачко-сремском и Банатском сениорату коју је комисијски обавио суперинтендант Банског округа Јан Себерињи 1835. и 1836. године су изузетно значајан извор за историју Словака на Доњој земљи, јер пружају обиље података који још нису довољно коришћени у историографији. Анализом записника 17 словачких евангеличких заједница (Арадац, Бајша, Бутин, Вукова, Гложан, Кисач, Ковачица, Кулпин, Лалић, Нови Сад, Падина, Петровац, Пивнице, Селенча, Силбаш, Стара Пазова, Хајдучица) настојали смо да, следећи образац са постављеним питањима, на која је сваки свештеник требало да да писмене одговоре у форми документа, укажемо целу палету одговора на бројна питања формулисана у 11 поглавља.

На почетку записника дају се основни подаци о времену и околностима у време досељавања Словака у конкретно насеље, о организовању евангеличке заједнице, о оснивању конфесионалне школе и парохије. Следе статистички подаци о броју верника за претходну годину. У записницима се дају доста детаљни описи о првим школским зградама које су у почетку често служиле и као молитвени домови, о првим учитељима и свештеницима, о подизању храмова, понекад са детаљним описом екстеријера и ентеријера као и описом каснијих доградњи или репарација. Посебно се описују црквене утвари и књиге које се користе на богослужењима и молитвама, као и црквена звона са навођењем угравираних натписа на њима.

У записницима има доста података о финансијским и имовинским приликама у црквеној заједници: о приходима и начину њиховог прикупљања, о расходима, о управљању иметком заједнице. Поглавље о религијско-духовним и моралним приликама у заједници пружа веома интересантне податке о верницима, о лицу и наличју њиховог верског и друштвеног живота, о разним облицима сујеверја, о неким моралним «слабостима» заједнице или појединаца.

Поглавље посвећено свештеницима садржи податке о њиховом пореклу и школовању и евентуалном претходном службовању. Ту је описана и укупна делатност свештеника у заједници: богослужења; да ли свештеник пише проповеди; када и како врши катехизацију и припремање катехумена за конфирмацију; да ли све обреде обавља сагласно пракси евангелика и државним прописима. Суперинтендант је као визитатор давао кратку примедбу о духовном и моралном лику сваког свештеника.

Доста су детаљни подаци о учитељу, о његовом пореклу, школама које је похађао, као и подаци о конфесионалној школи: у каквом је стању школска зграда, колико има деце за школу, да ли је редовно похађају. Наводе се предмети који се уче у школи, методе рада, школске књиге и слично.

У извештајима се дају подаци и о бабицама у црквеној заједници, о њиховим платама, о гробарима, о издржавању сиромашних и сирочади.

На крају, у додатку комисија канонске визитације даје своје примедбе, препоруке или наредбе шта треба да се уради, промени, исправи. Понекад су ту и доста озбиљне опомене или упозорења упућена верницима, свештеницима или учитељима.

Записници ове канонске визитације пружају аутентичну слику црквених заједница, њиховог верско-религијског, али и шире, друштвеног и привредног живота, и у значајној мери могу да допринесу стварању прецизније и комплексније слике о животу Словака у овим крајевима тридесетих година XIX века.

Кључне речи: Евангеличка црква аугзбуршке вероисповести, Словаци, Бански округ/суперинтендантура, Бачко-сремски сениорат, Банатски сениорат, канонска визитација, конфесионалне школе.