

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

The Origins of the Baptist Movement among the Hungarians

A History of the Baptists in the Kingdom of Hungary from 1846 to 1893

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I have for some time been living with people in my head who passed from the earth decades ago and are, outside of certain circumscribed circles, generally unknown. And yet I find them fascinating. It took patience from several people to let me slowly work through the process of integrating their stories into my thought world and then committing it all to paper.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
BWA	Baptist World Alliance
NBSS	National Bible Society of Scotland
PEIL	<i>Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap</i> [Protestant Church and School Paper]
VKM	Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi Minisztérium [Ministry of Religion and Public Education]

Chapter 1

On the Historiography of the Baptist Movement Among the Hungarians

An Introduction to a New Study of Hungarian Baptist Origins

When reading a contemporary history of the Baptist movement, one will find much space devoted to the origins of the Baptist movement in England and its subsequent history in the Anglo-Saxon world, predominantly in Great Britain and the United States.¹ This is no doubt to be expected. Turning away from this focus, one finds the Baptist movement in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America viewed primarily through the prism of the missionary endeavors of various British and American mission societies. When one turns to the continental European Baptist movement, much mention is made of Gerhard Oncken and his role as the father of the movement. The story moves in concentric circles from Hamburg outward. The farther one moves away from Hamburg, the briefer the narrative becomes. This is particularly true of the East European Baptist movements, with the exception of the story of the Russian Baptists. Among English-language works, one must rely on the pioneering efforts of J.H. Rushbrooke to get a more in-depth account of the continental movement.² While an important early work, Rushbrooke wrote in the spirit of a contemporary observer retelling recent history. In terms of genre the work could best be viewed as a mix of historiography and devotional missionary literature, with the aim being both to inform and inspire the English-speaking Baptist world. In regards to his treatment of the Baptist movement in Hungary, the broad outlines are given, but the full story of the triumphs and tensions of the movement remain untold.³

¹ See for example the formidable work of Southern Baptist scholar H. Leon McBeth, who admits to the deficiency of his treatment of East European Baptists due to language and primary source difficulties in his preface. McBeth, H. Leon. The Baptist Heritage. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987. Note also the same emphasis in the standard work by Torbet. Torbet, Robert G. A History of the Baptists. Third ed. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1963.

² Rushbrooke, J.H. The Baptist Movement in the Continent of Europe. Second Issue: Revised and Re-written. London: The Kingsgate Press, 1923.

³ Rushbrooke's work, however, has this advantage over the recent popular level introduction to the subject of the history of the continental Baptist movement by Ian Randall, in it he was often recounting

The aim of this study is to unfold the fascinating story of the origins of the Baptist movement among the Hungarians in greater depth than has hitherto been given to it, and to ask and answer some questions which naturally arise from the narrative. While I hope the narrative will be inspiring, my first aim is to give a critical historiographical examination of the movement that seeks to place it within the broader context of its times.

In the historiography of the Hungarian Baptist movement, a very definite periodization of the origins of the movement has been followed by succeeding scholars with only minor variations. This periodization is attributed by Olivér Szebeni to Imre Somogyi, whom he characterizes as the first of the “scientific” historians of the Baptist movement.⁴ In his overview of the first 125 years of the Hungarian Baptist mission, Jenő Bányai summarizes Somogyi’s three-fold periodization of the origins of the movement:

“the **first** was the Anabaptist period which began in the sixteenth century;⁵ the **second** began at the dawn of the war of independence.⁶ This was the period of Rottmayer and his brothers in faith; while the **third** began with the arrival in our homeland in 1873 of Heinrich Meyer and remains til our present day.”⁷

Bányai comments about this first period that no organic link between the Anabaptists and

narratives that he had heard first hand from the men involved in the Baptist missions. This was especially the case with the Hungarian Baptist mission, as Rushbrooke played a significant role in the Committee of the Baptist World Alliance mediating between the two sides into which the Hungarian movement had split following the recognition of the Magyar lead mission in 1905. Randall, Ian M. Communities of Conviction. Schwarzenfeld, Germany: Neufeld Verlag, 2009. 137–46.

⁴ Szebeni, Olivér. A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church]. Tanulmányi anyag a Baptista Teológiai Szeminárium számára [Instructional material for the Baptist Theological Seminary]. Budapest: Baptista Teológiai Szeminárium, 1967. 10–11.

⁵ Several Hungarian Baptists historians have devoted attention to this period, one of the earliest and most significant being A. Bertalan Kirner. See his major work, as much an apology for the Baptist faith as historical inquiry. Kirner, A. Bertalan. Baptista krónika [Baptist Chronicles]. Budapest: Privately published, 1935.

⁶ By this Bányai is referring to the Revolution of 1848. Johann Rottmayer and his compatriots arrived in Hungary from Hamburg in 1846.

⁷ Bányai, Jenő. “A 125 éves magyarországi baptista misszió korszakainak áttekintése [An Overview of 125 Years of Hungarian Baptist Mission].” Emléklapok 3. Budapest: Magyarországi Baptista Egyház, 1972. 20.

the modern Baptist movement exists.⁸ Rather, he continues, “we honor them as predecessors in the faith and esteem them openly.”⁹

This study will pick up the story at the second period, with the arrival of Rottmayer and his compatriots in Hungary in 1846. We will follow the story into the third period, with 1893 serving as the end date of our narrative. This date, as I will explain, is not arbitrary.

This study is concerned with the origin of the Baptist movement among the Hungarians. But from what has been said so far, it is evident that it is impossible to limit this study to ethnic Hungarians only, although that will remain the focus of the study. Still, when the acknowledged father of the Hungarian Baptist movement, Heinrich Meyer, was a German citizen who despite forty odd years in Budapest never managed to learn Hungarian, it is obvious that attention must also be given to the interconnection between the outreach to the ethnic Germans of Hungary and the origins of the movement among the ethnic Hungarians. The outreach to Hungary, and especially to the Germans of Hungary, was first attempted when Gerhard Oncken sent Rottmayer and his compatriots back to Hungary in 1846 from Hamburg. It received a fresh start with the arrival of Heinrich Meyer in Budapest in 1873. At the same time, the ethnic diversity of greater Hungary under the period of examination, and the outreach of the Hungarian Baptists to their minorities, particularly the success of the Romanian mission in Transylvania, requires that some attention also be given to the minority missions.

Given these parameters, I wish to give an overview to the structure and content of the study. Again I first turn to how Hungarian Baptists have characterized their own history. One of the early leaders of the movement, Attila Csopják, gave a descriptive

⁸ According to Bányai, the last of the Anabaptist groups was forced to emigrate from southern Transylvania by Maria Theresia towards the end of the 1770's. The steady persecution of the remnants of the Anabaptists ceased only when they were forced back into the Catholic church, except for a small minority which sought refuge in the Lutheran church. A brief account of the fate of the Hungarian and Transylvanian Anabaptists is also given by William Estep. Estep identifies these people more precisely as Hutterites driven out of Moravia. According to him Jesuits were sent under the authority of the Empress. Their first attack was against the Hutterites in Hungary. As he describes it, those who were not martyred were forced to reconvert. A similar fate awaited those in Transylvania, although a small remnant escaped to Wallachia and eventually Russia. Estep dates what he calls the Jesuit “*Blitzkrieg*” on the four Hungarian Hutterite *Brüderhöfe* to 1759-62, while the attack against the Transylvanian Hutterites followed shortly upon the success of the Hungarian Jesuit mission. See Estep, William R. *The Anabaptist Story*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975. 105–07.

⁹ Bányai, “A 125 éves magyarországi baptista misszió korszakainak áttekintése [An Overview of 125 Years of Hungarian Baptist Mission],” 20.

history of the movement.¹⁰ The focus was not so much on the narrative story, but upon the important personalities. Thus the first chapter detailing the “first steps” of the movement, gives the story of Johann Rottmayer, concluding with a brief account of his friend and fellow worker Antal Novák. The second chapter on the beginning of the movement in a continuous sense picks up the story with the arrival of Heinrich Meyer in Budapest in 1873, and gives the story of the leading early personalities of the movement. Among the other people described are Mihály Kornya, Lajos Balogh and András Udvarnoki. Balogh and Udvarnoki were two young peasant boys who were the first Hungarians to study at the Baptist Seminary in Hamburg, and went on to break with Meyer in the interest of the Hungarian-speaking converts who wanted independent Hungarian churches. The third chapter gives accounts of the opposition the young movement faced. Several fascinating accounts of trials overcome despite the opposition of local religious and government personalities are retold. The fourth and longest chapter gives numerous personal portraits of the “pioneers” of the movement, biographies in miniature summarizing the faithful service each rendered for the cause of their Baptist faith. The final chapter gives a brief account of various ministries of the movement (e.g. social ministries, the seminary), in addition to a summary of the great war and post-war experiences of the church. Since Csopják was himself an important early leader of the movement, it is understandable that his work is less historical narrative and more hagiography and anecdotes drawn from personal remembrances and conversations with fellow Baptists.

The efforts of contemporary historians return to an emphasis upon narrative and attempt to outline an interpretive periodization of the movement. Bányai, for example, in his brief summary of the history of the movement in celebration of its 125th anniversary (dated from the return from Hamburg in 1846 of Rottmayer, Woyka, and Scharschmidt to Hungary), denotes five periods. Here we are only interested in the first two. The first period of “ploughing and seed-sowing” extends from 1846 to 1880. This extension of the first period until 1880 is interesting in that 1873, the date of Henrik Meyer’s arrival in Budapest, is often given as the second beginning date of the movement. The only apparent reason for this cut-off date is so that the second period, described as the period of becoming a denomination, might extend a 25 year period from 1881 to 1905. Bányai alone also gives 1905 as the transition between one period and another, but here he is on

¹⁰ Csopják, Attila. Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission]. Budapest: Magyarországi Baptisták Könyvkereskedés, 1928.

solid ground. He describes the period of 1905 to 1919 as the “period of crisis”, which it indeed was. In 1905 the split between the recognized and unrecognized wing of the church took place. This breach was only healed in 1920, which begins the fourth period for Bányai. The fifth period began in 1945 and extended into the time of his writing.

An alternative periodization, and probably the standard one for Hungarian Baptists, is the one shared by Szebeni, Mészáros, and, with one small variation, the latest and most comprehensive effort to date on the history of the Hungarian Baptist movement, Krisztusért járva követségben¹¹, a collaborative effort celebrating the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Hungarian Baptist movement.¹² It is this periodization that I will follow in this study, because it captures better the true turning points in the narrative of the development of the Baptist movement in Hungary. Again we are only interested in the first two periods.

The first period is that of the appearance of the Baptist mission in Hungary, which extends from 1846 to 1873. This traditional periodization commences with the year Rottmayer, Woyka, and Scharschmidt arrived in Hungary, and ends with the year Meyer arrived in Budapest and founded the first Baptist church in Hungary. Most attention is given to the work of Rottmayer, not only to his early work in Budapest, but also to his move to Kolozsvár in 1865 and subsequent work there. In addition to the life and work of Rottmayer, the ministry of his friend and co-worker Antal Novák is described. Less space is given to Johann Woyka, who arrived with Rottmayer and proceeded on to his hometown of Pécs with Orders, a German from Hamburg Gerhard Oncken had sent to aid in the work. The reason for this is that due to the severe opposition they faced from Catholic clerics and from Woyka’s own family, they were forced to abandon the work, and Woyka eventually ended up living in Scotland, from where he continued to support the work in his homeland as best he could. The first part of my study will follow this precedent in tracing the origins of the movement from its roots in Hamburg, and following the story through to the end of the lives of the first pioneers of the movement.

¹¹ The title is taken from II Cor. 5:19-20, the translation of which is We are Christ’s Ambassadors.

¹² Again the anniversary is dated from 1846. The small variation in periodization between 1846 and 1920 is the dating of the second period from 1894, when some of the ethnic Magyar churches declared their independence from Meyer’s Budapest church and formed the Hungarian Baptist Union, rather than from 1893, when Udvarnoki and Balogh arrived back in Hungary after their studies in Hamburg. Gerzsenyi, László. “A baptista misszió önállósulása (1894–1920) [The Baptist Mission Achieves Independence (1894–1920)].” ”Krisztusért járva követségben”: Tanulmányok a magyar baptista misszió 150 éves történetéből [“We Are Christ’s Ambassadors”: Studies from the 150 Year History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission]. Ed. Lajos Bereczki. Budapest: Baptista Kiadó, 1996. 95–134.

Behind this first section lies the question of why the Baptist movement did not take hold during this period.

The second period is the “heroic period” of the movement, starting in 1873 and continuing until 1893. This period includes the arrival in Budapest of Henrik Meyer and his early work there, expanding out to other villages and towns where he preached. It also includes the conversion and early work of Mihály Kornya and Mihály Tóth in Transylvania. With the expansion of the work, attention is given to its early organization and the pioneers in different regions of Hungary. Also of interest is the early attempt of Meyer to achieve state recognition for his church in the late 1870’s in view of the rough treatment he and his co-workers often received at the hands of local officials in their mission work. The second part of my study will deal with these issues. Of interest here are the conditions in contrast to those of the first period that allowed for the success of the Baptist mission.

The third period is what Szebeni and Mészáros call the “period of crisis”. It begins in 1893 with the arrival back from Hamburg of Lajos Balogh and András Udvarnoki, the first Hungarians to study at the Baptist Seminary there. Their return marked the beginning of a rising younger generation of Hungarian leaders who began to chafe under the leadership of Meyer (in contrast to older Meyer loyalists such as Kornya and Tóth). During the early development of the work the various churches were regarded as stations of Meyer’s church, and he was the “pastor of the Baptists of Hungary”.¹³ This was perhaps viable when the movement was young, but not when it had grown considerably and the Germans were in the minority. Thus the organization of the growing work became an issue. This happened at the same time the Hungarian people experienced a growing self-confidence, which expressed itself through nationalistic fervor, a time when Hungarian society was starting to assert itself against Vienna, especially as the millennium celebration of the Hungarian tribes’ entrance to the Carpathian Basin approached in 1896, to be followed closely by the turn of the century. Apart from Meyer’s own personal shortcomings, this no doubt added to the growing friction between the two parties.

Gerzsenyi dates the second period from 1894, when under the leadership of Csopják, Udvarnoki and Balogh, several of the ethnic Magyar churches declared their

¹³ Rushbrooke, 153.

independence and formed a Magyar-oriented mission.¹⁴ Another sign of the growing division were the separate ministries the two parties began. One example was the growing educational work undertaken by Udvarnoki and Balogh, competing with the less formal instruction given by Meyer. From Udvarnoki and Balogh's work came the founding of the seminary shortly after state recognition of the denomination was achieved. Literary work was also undertaken along parallel lines, with Udvarnoki associated with the founding of the standard Hungarian Baptist literary effort, the Békehírnök in 1895, followed closely by the appearance of Igazság tanuja by Meyer's ally Lajos Bodoky.¹⁵ With state recognition in 1905 the growing split became formal. Baptist World Alliance representatives attempted to mediate the split, but their efforts proved unsuccessful.

Then the First World War intervened, bringing new trials to the work. Many social ministries begun before the war, such as the orphanage and the retirement home, became increasingly overburdened during the war and post-war years. With the passing of some of the staunchest antagonists in the last years before 1920 and the looming dismemberment of greater Hungary approaching, reconciliation and reunification was at last achieved in 1920. With reunification and Trianon, a period of crisis came to a close and new realities and new challenges awaited the Hungarian Baptists.

This periodization gives structure and direction to the study of the formative era of the Hungarian Baptist movement. I will end my study in 1893, the year in which Udvarnoki and Balogh return to Hungary from the Baptist seminary in Hamburg. While the third period from 1894 to 1920 is fascinating, and can justly be described as the period in which an autonomous Magyar Baptist mission emerged, it lies beyond the scope of the primary question I wish to address, which is why did the Baptist mission under Heinrich Meyer mark the beginning of the first sustained Baptist mission in Hungary, while the first attempt under Johann Rottmayer failed to become firmly implanted in Hungary? Related to this is the question of what is the relationship between these two periods? Are there any organic links? To what extent can the first period be understood as

¹⁴ Gerzsényi gives this period a different designation, characterizing it as the period of the Baptist mission becoming self-dependent, especially in terms of moving away from Meyer's German-oriented mission towards a Magyar-led and oriented mission. Gerzsényi, "A baptista misszió önállósulása (1894–1920) [The Baptist Mission Achieves Independence (1894–1920)]," 97–98.

¹⁵ It is not surprising that Igazság tanuja is the Hungarian translation of the German Baptist magazine title Der Wahrheitszeuge. What is somewhat surprising, given the desire of Udvarnoki to break free of Heinrich Meyer's authority to allow for indigenous Magyar leadership of the Baptist movement in Hungary, is that Békehírnök is the Hungarian equivalent of another German Baptist publication title, Der Friedensbote.

preparing the way for the success of the second period? Heinrich Meyer believed himself to be the sole father of the Hungarian Baptist movement, and not someone who built upon the work of others. I will argue that this is not at all the case. While Heinrich Meyer is the father of the movement, he became so based upon the labors of others who prepared the soil for the harvest Meyer reaped.

Chapter 2

From the Reform Period to Dualism

Hungary from the 1840's to the 1890's

1. Hungary and Modernity

When in 1846 Rottmayer and his fellow Baptists arrived in Hungary, little did they know that their beloved homeland was about to embark upon the most turbulent period in its long history. The Reform Era initiated two decades previously was rapidly rushing towards a revolutionary climax in 1848. This would be followed in 1849 by a period of absolutist repression in which nevertheless many of the radical reforms of the March Laws of 1848 were carried out, beginning Hungary on the transformative road from feudal society to a modern bourgeois society. Yet the Habsburg emperor was constrained to give up on his dream of a unitary empire and in the Compromise of 1867, the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary was established. This period of relative political stability ushered in a truly dynamic socio-economic transformation in Hungary, as it made rapid strides from a predominantly agrarian and rural society to one with a growing industrial, urban, and bourgeois sector. However, vexing problems were not adequately addressed, particularly the nationalities question, which had tragic consequences. With the Hungarian half of the empire dragged into the Habsburgs' expansionist drive into the Balkans, Hungary had no choice but to enter into the Great War on the axis side in 1914. While public opinion naively supported the war, it would prove the most costly in Hungarian history. A thoroughly exhausted and demoralized Hungary emerged in 1918. The Dual Monarchy was dead. And in 1920 the Treaty of Trianon meant the historic Kingdom of Hungary was dead as well, and a much smaller Hungary was left to face an uncertain future.

This dynamic period in Hungarian history provides the background to the growth of the Baptist movement in Hungary. Baptist growth, kept to a minimum before the Compromise, exploded once the shackles of Habsburg repression were removed, and continued until the tragic events of the Great War and its consequences for Austria-Hungary. In this chapter I wish to give an overview of Hungarian history from the Reform

Era through the Dualist Compromise to place the growth of the Baptist movement in its historical perspective.

2. The Reform Era in Hungary: From Awakening to Revolution

Hungary's long and painful birth as a modern nation can properly be assigned its Terminus A Quo during the Reform Era, generally dated from the Diet of 1825-1827, which ended a long period of extra-parliamentary rule by Francis I. Whether it has yet to reach its Terminus Ad Quem is a question very much debated now following the transformation of 1989¹. What differed during this period from previous times of struggle against Habsburg imperial encroachment against Hungarian liberties was the rising general impression that Hungary was on the wrong course and if a reversal did not come soon, she would forfeit her ability to preserve her historic freedoms and integrity.

Previous to the Reform generation, there was no widespread perception among the nobility that their country was backward or paled in comparison to the West with its more materially abundant lifestyle. Nor was there a widespread perception of Hungary in the West as belonging to the oriental East, a more primitive cultural sphere.

Rather, they saw each other's countries as separate and mildly exotic parts of the world, different, but not inferior or superior to one another. If Hungarians expressed any value judgments about this difference, it tended to be in favor of their own country and its heroic or bucolic qualities. Indeed, according to the popular motto of the nobility - *Extra Hungariam non est vita, si est vita, non est ita* - there was no life outside the boundaries of the country, or if there was, it certainly was not worth living.²

It was only after the collapse of an economic boom period for agriculture during the Napoleonic wars that voices to the contrary gained wide currency.

But above all, it was the experience of the lesser nobility, the Hungarian gentry, as it tried to emulate the lifestyle of its compatriots in the West that added to this perception. During this period a portion of the gentry increasingly impoverished itself as it strove to keep up with the rising standard of living of its social peers in the West. Yet in the West this rising standard of living was an integral part of an organic process of industrial

¹ See the essay "The Making of Modern Hungary" in Gerő, András. Modern Hungarian Society in the Making: The Unfinished Experience. Trans. James Patterson and Enikő Koncz. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995. 3-18.

² Janos, Andrew C. The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1982. 46.

development, whereas in Hungary it was grafted upon a relatively underdeveloped feudal economy. The gentry's "deprivations, in other words, were purely relative to the rising standards of social classes in the Occident with whom they readily identified. But in a rapidly changing world, standing still, or not moving fast enough, is sufficient to turn one into a *declassé*".³ They were increasingly squeezed between the need to increase consumption to maintain the bare necessities of civilized life on the one hand, and their diminished ability to invest in their estates to increase productivity in order to pay for that lifestyle on the other hand. During this period Hungary developed a severe negative balance of trade and an increasing number of gentry began to lose their estates due to too much debt. The better part of the aristocracy, those magnates whose large estates provided enough leeway to absorb the cost of increased consumption, were content to limit any conflict between the Crown and the estates to the limitation of royal absolutism and the preservation of their ancient constitutional liberties and noble privileges. But for the increasingly squeezed gentry, feudalistic solutions to their plight and the plight of their nation increasingly appeared insufficient.

For the gentry, as well as for the more progressive magnates, their problems were symptomatic of a far greater peril to the nation.⁴ Gerő summarized the problem confronted, and the consequent desire among the more progressive elements of the Hungarian nobility, both gentry and magnate, for a program of modernization and industrial development, very pointedly:

These concrete realizations were a reflection of the interiorization of a truth regarding Hungary's current situation, namely that it was now or never as far as its national development was concerned. At the heart of the matter were Hungary's relations with Austria: failure to create an

³ Janos, 42.

⁴ Janos made the interesting observation: "The impulse to reform and to modernize, however, cannot be solely understood in terms of these frustrations and fears. It must also be sought within the broader context of a collective crisis of identity, brought on by the technological advances of the Occident that culminated in the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century. These technological advances not only produced higher levels of nutrition and comfort, and hence a new, and constantly rising standard of living against which the majority of mankind could measure its own misery, but they also gave the technologically more sophisticated nations a critical edge in warfare over the 'less developed' nations of the global periphery. If hitherto economically primitive, but morally and physically determined bands of nomads - like the Huns, the Mongols, or the Hungarians themselves in their day - could harass, plunder, and subjugate their more civilized neighbors, now, for the first time in history, even plundering required technology, along with a complex economy capable of sustaining and replacing it... Technology, in other words, became a key to both national power and popular welfare, and, as such, an object universally desired by elites anxious to maintain their integrity, and by masses of people keen on improving the condition of their daily lives." Janos, 44-45.

independent national economy would endanger the very existence of the Hungarian nation. At this period the question of industrialization was little short of a “matter of life and death”. “Our nation is beyond redemption unless it develops a sound and flourishing industry”.⁵

It was this realization that pushed the more forward-looking elements among the Hungarian nobility to move beyond the traditional feudal politics of grievances, formulated solely in terms of defending ancient Hungarian constitutional liberties against the absolutistic encroachments of the Emperor, to a realization that feudalism in Hungary was in itself part of the problem and that a program of modernization must be undertaken if the nation were to survive. Thus it was that the Reform Era marked the rise of Hungarian liberalism, the formative political force in Hungary for the remainder of the century.

Hungarian liberalism and the program of modernization took a very different course than the liberalism of the West, because in Hungary the strength of feudalism and the monopoly on political power by the ruling noble classes meant that a revolution from below was impossible. What was required was revolution from above, the removal of feudal constraints by its beneficiaries! Gerő aptly states: “It is only one of the many paradoxes which characterizes this period that the victory of liberalism was thus dependent on state intervention”.⁶ Peaceful change required that the nobility take the lead in advocating modernization, in dismantling a political and economic order that equated the nobility with the nation, so that “by setting themselves up as the agents of modernization they might be able to preserve their role in society”.⁷

The first major voice to articulate this call to reform came from a young progressive magnate, Count István Széchenyi. It was with the publication in 1830 of Széchenyi’s work, *Hitel (On Credit)*, that the argument for economic reform was made cogently, passionately, and most importantly, from one of such high birth that it could not be ignored. The book ignited a firestorm of controversy. An excellent summary of his argument is given by Barany:

The Hungarian landowner was condemned to starvation despite his herds, grain stores, fertile lands, and tax exemption. He was sunk in debt though he carried none of the burdens of the country while many hands worked for him without being paid. The cause of this sad situation was the lack of

⁵ Gerő, 22.

⁶ Gerő, 3.

⁷ Gerő, 4.

credit. The lack of credit was due to the antiquated legal system, which gave no security to the creditor. Outmoded farming methods and feudal institutions prevented the landowner from modernizing his farm and laying the foundation for his spiritual and material well-being.⁸

Other problems contributed to this general malaise, such as the lack of a transportational infrastructure to facilitate trade and the consequent low level of trade, bureaucratic obstruction of commerce, low domestic consumption, and a host of other evils. Not to blame, however, was Hungary's geographic situation or Austrian tariff policy. Széchenyi proposed a host of measures to improve the abysmal situation, but "above all, the sanctity of credit." He was counting on foreign capital to finance the modernization of Hungarian agriculture, which would happen only if the shackles of feudalism were removed. He also believed that the modernization of Hungarian agriculture must be primary, and that industrial development could only realistically flow from Hungary's agricultural strength. This put the burden upon the noble landowners to take the lead in Hungary's modernization. Széchenyi's program of reform was radical because he "openly advocated the rights of the creditor, the financier, and the merchant in a country where tradition, law, and national pride had always been on the side of the debtor of noble blood. Stressing the importance of a money-based rather than a subsistence economy, his work prepared the way for capitalism in feudal Hungary".⁹

Széchenyi ended *Hitel* with a response to the accusations that would undoubtedly deluge him. Far from being a traitor to his peers and his fatherland, he defended himself as a true patriot. He called upon his peers to move beyond a naive admiration of their nation's past glories to squarely face the future:

The *Past* has slipped from our grasp forever, but we are masters of the *Future*. Let us not bother, then, with futile reminiscences but let us awaken our dear fatherland through purposeful patriotism and loyal unity to a brighter dawn. Many think: "Hungary *has been*"; I like to believe: she *will be!*¹⁰

Barany correctly observed that "*On Credit* proves that Széchenyi the nationalist cannot be

⁸ Barany, George. "The Age of Royal Absolutism, 1790–1848." *A History of Hungary*. Gen. ed. Peter F. Sugar, Assoc. Ed. Péter Hanák, Ed. Assis. Tibor Frank. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1990. 191–92.

⁹ Barany, 192.

¹⁰ Barany, 193.

separated from Széchenyi the reformer”.¹¹ The question was in which order were the goals of Hungarian patriots to be achieved. Kontler argued that Széchenyi believed “that neither modernization, nor even a powerful civic consciousness inevitably depended upon full political sovereignty, and the latter was only desirable when accompanied by the former.”¹² In other words, he realized that economic reform and modernization was a pre-condition of political reform and the ability of Hungary to reassert itself in its union with Habsburg Austria.¹³ Széchenyi followed Hitel with several other works that sought to further develop his program of modernization.¹⁴ His work began a national debate. Macartney described the impact of Széchenyi’s writing as follows: “it may fairly be said that with, and in large part thanks to, their appearance the period of Hungarian history known as the ‘Reform Era’, began”.¹⁵

Széchenyi proved himself to be a man of deeds as well as words, throwing himself into various efforts to further his ideas. The most important projects, undertaken under government auspices, were designed to give Hungary a transportation infrastructure, such as the construction of the Chain Bridge¹⁶ linking Buda with Pest, and the regulation of the Danube and later the Tisza River.¹⁷ Széchenyi also managed to attract a circle of

¹¹ Barany, 192.

¹² Kontler, László. A History of Hungary: Millennium in Central Europe. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. 232.

¹³ As Janos noted, Vienna at first viewed Széchenyi with some alarm as “a dangerous firebrand, later he was recognized for being what he was, an economic progressive and political conservative.” In fact, in a secret report to the emperor, the Hungarian Chancellor Reviczky assuaged the emperor that Széchenyi was by no means bewitched by the “demagogic liberalism of the present age”, but merely wanted “to transform Hungary into a second England.” Janos, 55.

¹⁴ His next work, Világ (Light), published in 1831, intended in his words “to show the public Hungary’s backwardness in everything,” for only in this manner could progress be made. Later Széchenyi entered into a bitter dispute with Lajos Kossuth over what he perceived as the dangerous divisiveness of the latter’s radical national liberal agenda expressed through his journalistic work with the Pesti Hírlap, publishing in 1841 A Kelet Népe (People of the Orient). Széchenyi hoped to preserve his more pragmatic path of liberal economic reform, while warning of the dangers to Magyar freedom of Kossuth’s aggressive nationalistic liberalism inviting repression from Vienna and rebellion from her minorities. Unfortunately, prominent liberals moderate and radical, such as Deák and Eötvös, found Széchenyi’s polemic too divisive to the liberal cause, while conservatives continued to distrust him. Barany, 193,200.

¹⁵ Macartney, C.A. Hungary: A Short History. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1962. 137.

¹⁶ Known today also as the Széchenyi Bridge.

¹⁷ Barany, 198.

progressive young magnates around him for a time, to champion economic reform at the Diet. But Széchenyi's most important proposed reforms for agriculture were never implemented by the Diet.¹⁸ This is because economic pressures turned the aristocracy towards Vienna and away from reform, and also because it feared the increasing radicalism of the gentry as detrimental to its interests, viewing it as an uprising from below. Széchenyi the magnate and patriot was positioned by birth and by conviction to begin the national debate on reform and the fate of Hungary, yet ultimately the leadership of the reform movement passed from his hands and his class to the gentry.

Széchenyi's epiphany about the backwardness of Hungary and the need for reform came from his broad reading and wide travels, not so among the gentry. "Unlike Széchenyi's reform initiatives, those of the gentry grew out of an ongoing movement of protest against arbitrary government and recurrent imperial attempts to curtail the powers of the Hungarian parliament".¹⁹ In other words, the movements for reform among the gentry had their roots in the feudal politics of grievances, yet during the reform era a transformation had occurred which changed the character of the gentry's demands. In the language of Hungarian feudalism the *natio Hungarica* denoted a political community, that of freemen, irregardless of their ethnicity or mother tongue. Under the influence of French liberal thought, the idea of the Hungarian nation was transformed into political and ethnic community. This was problematic in that the entire old bourgeoisie and half the aristocracy was not ethnic Magyar, while only one-fifth of the common nobility was not Magyar. Yet the aspirations of the liberal gentry did not consist of stripping political representation from these non-Magyar elements as in extending it to commoners so that all Hungarians could participate in their national life.²⁰

¹⁸ Laws proposing the reform of the relationship between lord and peasant were discussed in the Diets of 1832-36 and 1839-40, but opposition from the Upper Chamber and the Crown watered down the bills until they were of little effect. Also of importance to the liberals was legislation granting religious equality to Protestants. This too was blocked in the Upper Chamber by the Catholic hierarchy. Barany, 198.

¹⁹ Janos, 60.

²⁰ This in itself would prove problematic to the liberals, given that the Magyars were not quite a majority in their own country. In contrast to the Italian and German national movements, where the desire was to unite the nation, defined ethnically, into one state, the national unification desired by Hungarian liberals - the reincorporation of Transylvania, Croatia-Slavonia, and the Military Frontier within the Kingdom of Hungary, forming one state comprising the historical Crown lands of Saint István - would result in a multi-national kingdom within the larger Habsburg empire. Hungarian liberals were left with their own version of the problem of German liberals. An ethnically homogeneous *Klein-Ungarn* solution would have entailed the loss of much of the historic Crown lands of Saint István, and would likely have left large pockets of Magyar population, notably in Transylvania, outside the Hungarian state. The *Gross-Ungarn*

The temptation in describing the liberalism of the gentry in contrast to that of Széchenyi is to reduce it to a comparison of Széchenyi and Kossuth. As Macartney put it:

Széchenyi and Kossuth are the most picturesque and most publicized figures of the Reform Era, and it is fashionable to describe its course in the terms of a duel between the two men and their respective principles: evolution or revolution, with Austria or against it - the more tempting because a bitter personal antagonism developed between them. But this is to over-simplify the picture. Even among those who found themselves forced to accept the necessity of political struggle, there were almost as many ideas on what Hungary needed as there were reformers.²¹

Even so a distinction was recognized amongst degrees of opposition, a distinction between the moderates, epitomized by Ferenc Deák, and the radicals, lead by Lajos Kossuth.

The leadership of the moderates was assumed by the local squirearchy who traditionally played a leading role in county affairs and in the Lower Table of the Diet. Ferenc Deák, a prosperous member of the gentry from Zala County, was the leader of the reform-minded deputies in the Chamber of Deputies.²² Gerő named Deák as the quintessential exponent in Reform Era liberalism of a “law-based approach” influenced by the French Enlightenment and ideas of natural law and social contract. This is described as a “trend towards the accomplishment of classical liberalism with a sense of justice, this being fundamentally best able to call into question feudal structures and promote their transformation”.²³ Deák was much esteemed by his peers for “his complete rectitude, his unfailing good sense, his encyclopedic legal knowledge and his unequaled legal acumen”.²⁴ Moderates such as Deák preferred evolutionary to revolutionary change in part because their estates were sufficiently prosperous that a path of interest-

solution which the Hungarian liberals chose left them with the dilemma of reconciling Western liberal ideas about the nation-state with their own multi-national reality. The result was a formulation at odds with the other national movements, one that assigned historical primacy to the state over the nation, while in fact encouraging Magyarization as the answer to the Hungarian liberal dilemma.

²¹ Macartney, 140.

²² Macartney makes the salient point that Kossuth was not a deputy until 1847, before that his power came from his journalistic endeavors as an observer of Dietal proceedings.

²³ Gerő, 72.

²⁴ Macartney, 140.

reconciliation seemed most prudent; they were equally concerned not to alienate the Crown as well as to not risk social unrest through giving false hopes to commoners.²⁵: The moderates dominated the early reform Diets, not until the Diet of 1839 did the radicals overtake moderate presence at the Diet.

What separated the radicals from the moderates was their impatience with the gradualism and consensus-building approach of the moderates. A contemporary political player, Count Aurél Dessewffy,²⁶ described the social composition of the radicals as follows:

The radical faction is weaker than its voice seems to indicate. The clergy, the aristocracy and even the substantial [common] nobility stay away from it and ... in view of this the leading role in the party is played by 1) the magistracy of the county, i.e. those who, by virtue of their office are always present at the assemblies; 2) those landowners who aspire to gain public office; 3) nobles whose livelihood is already provided by public office; 4) the lawyers; 5) the gallery, i.e. the youth of the county.²⁷

The majority of the radicals active in political life thus came from the landless nobility, men who had to find their living in government work, the professions, or other intellectual pursuits. Thus their rejection of the methods of the moderates is easily comprehended.

Széchenyi had hoped for “silent reform”, the rise of the radicals put an end to this hope. From the Diet of 1839 the tenor of Hungarian political life changed, and political debate became more rancorous.²⁸ Still the Crown and the conservatives used the very effective tools of money and patronage to assuage or coopt their opponents. They even resorted to what the liberals referred to as the *bunkókrácia* during the Dietal elections of

²⁵ Concerning this difficult path the moderates were attempting to traverse, Janos wrote: “Steeped in the traditions of feudal constitutionalism, these leaders...never ceased to warn that the purpose of reforms was ‘not to destroy the nobility, but to elevate the masses,’ that the ‘new laws should combine the interests of all estates,’ and that they should not merely reflect numerical majorities but also a consensus among the parties to the original social contract, the Crown, the aristocracy, and the common nobility.” Janos, 70.

²⁶ Desewffy was the leader of the “Progressive Conservatives” in the Upper Chamber until his premature death in 1842, after which Count György Apponyi took over leadership of the group and worked closely with Metternich to assure conservative control of the Diet and county government, while at the same time pursuing some economic reform. Macartney, 151–52.

²⁷ Janos, 72.

²⁸ Metternich was shocked to observe that the “old opposition [had] almost completely disappeared” and that “the lunatic opposition [had] gained tremendous momentum ... and was now the most numerous of all parliamentary factions.” Janos, 57.

1843-1844.²⁹ By intimidating the electorate of the counties with their bludgeon-wielding lumpen-nobility, the magnates broke liberal leadership and assured a more compliant Lower Table was elected to the Diet.

The leaders of the radicals, the rising noble intelligentsia, did not possess such weapons, so they used the only weapon they had at their command, the pen. Kossuth, for example, first came to prominence through the Országgyűlési tudósítások (Dietal Reports), unofficial transcripts of Dietal proceedings he dictated to his helpers from among the “Dietal Youth”,³⁰ which these students then distributed in their home counties. The reports were a partisan effort designed to further the cause of reform at the Diet. After his release from prison,³¹ Kossuth was allowed to become the editor of the Pesti Hírlap (The Pest News Herald), perhaps because Vienna hoped he would split the opposition. Instead, under Kossuth’s leadership, the Pesti Hírlap became the most effective force for mobilizing support for the radical’s cause during the Reform Era. Within six months of its appearance in January of 1841, “its readership constituted about one-fourth of the estimated 200,000 Hungarians who read newspapers at the time”.³² Moreover, with Magyar political and literary leaders converging upon Pest, a center for Magyar national revival and the creation of a national public opinion was being forged.

Notable in the literary field as well as in politics was Baron József Eötvös, whose works such as The Notary of the Village and Hungary in 1514³³ were extensions of the

²⁹ *Bunkó* is the Hungarian word for a cudgel-like club, which was wielded by the paid petty-nobility agents of the magnates. The *bunkókrácia* was the result of an alliance initiated by Metternich and Apponyi, a satisfactory expedient until the formal alliance between the Crown and the magnates was solidified by the formation of a Conservative party in 1846 which hoped to further conservative electoral hegemony. Janos, 58, 74.

³⁰ The Dietal Youth were law students who wanted to become acquainted with the workings of the Diet. Barany states that “In most cases, they were hired by the counties or, less often, by members of the Upper Chamber to copy official documents and to prepare the records of the proceedings. Often, they represented absent magnates or their widows and had a right to sit in the Chamber of Deputies. Although such a substitute could not vote and would very seldom take the floor, he was still a member of the Diet and enjoyed certain privileges.” Barany, 195. Kossuth himself was a representative of two absent magnates, and under his leadership the Dietal Youth became the very vocal foot-soldiers of the radical liberal cause at the Diet and back in the counties from where they were sent.

³¹ In the late 1830’s Vienna cracked down upon the Dietal Youth, sending many of its leaders to prison. At the conclusion of the productive Diet of 1840, as a gesture of political good will, Vienna issued an amnesty to many of the imprisoned Dietal Youth. Kossuth was among those released.

³² Barany, 199.

³³ The Notary of the Village was a sarcastic portrayal of the backward public institutions of county

liberal political causes for which he fought in his many pamphlets and in the Diet. Adding to the political and literary ferment in Pest was the “Pilvax Club”, which gathered in the mid-1840’s around one of the greatest Hungarian poets ever, Sándor Petőfi, who was also an ardent Magyar nationalist and of revolutionary bent. This group of radical intellectuals called themselves “Young Hungary” (inspired by Mazzini’s Young Italy movement). Drawn from disparate social backgrounds, they were more consistently radical than Kossuth - but then Kossuth was a politician at heart. Petőfi, on the other hand, believed that “if the people dominate poetry, they will be close to dominating politics as well”.³⁴ Admirers of the French Revolution, they equated a free Hungary with emancipation for the masses. Ever since the founding of the Hungarian Academy at the beginning of the Reform Era, Hungarian national opinion was profoundly influenced by poets and writers.³⁵ This was certainly true as the reform movement came to a climax, and at the center of this was Petőfi, who “shared the romantic idea that poets were leaders of their nations and had a prophetic mission to fulfill.”³⁶ Radicals such as Petőfi and Kossuth were not merely trying to sway public opinion through their efforts, they were attempting to create a national public opinion. Through their many publications and public meetings they sought to create a power-base they could use to influence the political process.

In the political realm, the counterpoint to the gradualism of Széchenyi was provided by Lajos Kossuth. Kossuth was the *de facto* leader of the radicals, and eventually of the liberal reform cause, despite certain rivalries,³⁷ and one of the seminal

government that Eötvös saw as central to the many ills from which Hungary suffered. Hungary in 1514 was a look back at Hungary’s greatest peasant rebellion lead by György Dozsa, and the inhumanely vindictive response by the aristocracy when the revolt was crushed. It was published in 1847 shortly after the peasant rebellion in neighboring Galicia. It came out at a time when the Hungarian nobility was very apprehensive of peasant unrest spreading to their estates. Janos comments that “Eötvös’ novels may well be regarded as forerunners of Chernyshevsky’s “critical realism,” if not the “socialist realism” of an even later day. As in the latter, the characters are neatly divided between the good and evil, and if the good are not always flawless...they are victims of an unjust social order that leaves them with few real choices in life.” Janos, 73.

³⁴ Barany, 207.

³⁵ Barany, 190.

³⁶ Barany, 207.

³⁷ In addition to his rivalry with the “great patriot”, Széchenyi, and also with Count Lajos Batthyány, a leading liberal magnate, ideological rivalry among the radicals was provided by Baron József Eötvös. Eötvös was the leader of a small faction dubbed the “centralists”, or “doctrinaires”, because of their

figures of Hungarian history. Macartney described Kossuth as “a member of that dangerous class which possesses birth and brains, but no means”.³⁸ Born into a Protestant noble family in north-eastern Hungary, Kossuth was from that section of the gentry that had to rely on its natural abilities, lacking land or wealth. Having qualified as a lawyer, Kossuth began his career managing the estate of a magnate’s widow in the region of his birth. According to tradition, the widows of magnates were allowed to send proxies to the Lower Chamber of the Diet. Kossuth was sent to the Diet in 1832 as such, but was frustrated that proxies were not allowed to speak. This in turn led to his idea of issuing unofficial transcripts of dietal proceedings. Thus began his career in journalism and politics that catapulted him into the preeminent position within the liberal reform movement.

If Széchenyi fell within the tradition of English utilitarian liberalism, and Deák French law-based classical liberalism, Kossuth, according to Gerő, is the preeminent example of German national liberalism:

The key to German liberalism was the nation: liberalism was necessary in order to improve the overall condition of the nation, and so it had to assume the lineaments of a nationwide program and a force beyond the circles of the privileged. This orientation potentially went beyond the principal demands of liberalism because it was also directed at the creation of a modern public opinion; that is, of a wider public discourse.³⁹

The concept of the nation was what both united and divided these three trends within Hungarian liberalism, with national liberalism the least constrained of the three. All three envisioned national development moving Hungary along the trajectory from feudal society to civil society, with the goal of seeing “the *Hungarian nobleman* replaced by the

opposition to the counties as bastions of “medieval barbarism”. They argued for a strong central government with a corresponding modernized administrative bureaucracy as the prerequisite to reform. Kossuth and most liberals considered the counties as the traditional bulwark of constitutionalism and national freedom against imperial absolutism, and would not consider the centralists’ reform ideas until the larger issues with Austria had been settled first. Eötvös and his faction remained alienated from their radical peers because of this position and their rejection on principle of the nationalism of the majority of liberals which equated the national state with Magyar supremacy. Macartney, 140–41. Janos, 75–77.

³⁸ Macartney, 138.

³⁹ Gerő, 74.

noble Hungarian”.⁴⁰ Yet the emphasis upon national self-determination within national liberalism made it politically and socially more open, and inevitably in conflict with Austrian imperial interests.

Kossuth was much influenced in this regard by the publication in 1841 of Friedrich List’s Das Nationale System der Politischen Oekonomie. List replaced the autonomous individual of traditional liberal economic theory with the nation. Linking economic progress with national freedom and self-determination, List rejected free trade for his “ ‘Holy Trinity’ -(1) the nation; (2) the closely intertwined development of industry and agriculture; and (3) a system of protective custom duties”.⁴¹ Industrial development and national self-determination now came to the forefront of Kossuth’s program, drawing upon List’s paradigm which “centered on the *nation as the “teleological” agent of economic activity*”.⁴² Therefore, when Kossuth, among others, authored a liberal memorandum giving their economic program, which they submitted to the Commercial Commission of the Diet of 1843, it placed the blame for Hungary’s economic backwardness upon “colonial dependence” upon Austria, coupled with social and political institutions inimical to industrial development.⁴³ The proposed solutions demonstrated the need for the state to be actively involved in promoting capitalist transformation and industrial development through providing relief from feudal fiscal and legal obstructions, as well as for providing financial and technical support for development.

The Diet of 1843-44 produced mixed results. On the positive side for the cause of Magyar national revival, the Diet successfully passed legislation that replaced Latin with the Magyar vernacular as the official language of all authorities, courts and schools within the kingdom. The national minorities were not pleased with Vienna’s concession on this point. Hungarian liberals were also able to push through modest liberalization of the laws governing mixed marriages and conversions among Catholics and Protestants to address long-standing Protestant grievances, although the victory was only partial and came after extremely bitter objections from the Catholic side. However, the liberals met with defeat in their attempts to improve the position of Jews within the kingdom, while all parties

⁴⁰ Gerő, 75.

⁴¹ Gerő, 24–25.

⁴² Gerő, 25.

⁴³ Janos, 67.

ignored the plight of the Orthodox minorities in the kingdom.⁴⁴ Vienna, however, was unwilling to grant economic concessions concerning the internal tariffs between Hungary and the other Habsburg lands. As a result, the liberal Chamber of Deputies voted on a resolution supporting the recently formed *Országos Védegylet* (National Protective Association), headed by Kossuth. With a campaign of “Buy Hungarian!”, the goal was to boycott Austrian manufacturing products in favor of domestic products, an unofficial trade barrier set up at the doorsteps of patriotic Hungarians. The effort was more successful politically than economically.

Circumstances though pushed Vienna to reevaluate its position on its internal market and tariff system.⁴⁵ What was needed was a way to push through economic reforms against liberal opposition at the county level and in the Lower Table of the next Diet, slated for 1847-48. Metternich allied himself with the neo-conservative program of strong central control over county administration and the Diet, coupled with economic modernization to gain support for conservative reform.⁴⁶ Count Apponyi was named head of the Hungarian Chancellery and through various means gained administrative control of the counties. He also brought Széchenyi into the government and strongly supported his work to modernize Hungary’s transportation system, in order to weaken liberal support by proving conservative reform was possible.

With the battle for control of the next Diet proving to be a hotly contested one, the conservatives formed their political party in 1846 and issued a party platform that presented their program of conservative reform. Later in June 1847, the “Opposition Manifesto” originally penned by Kossuth, but carefully edited by Deák, was published. It was loyal while sharply criticizing Vienna’s absolutism, it promoted Magyar interests

⁴⁴ On the issue of the plight of the Orthodox at the Diet of 1843-44, see the interesting discussion by Bárány on the internal and international politics at play during and after the Diet. Bárány, George. “The Liberal Challenge and Its Limitations: The Religious Question at the Diet of 1843 - 1844.” *Hungary and European Civilization*. Ed. György Ránki. Indiana University Studies on Hungary 3. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989. 60–65.

⁴⁵ The Prussian-led *Zollverein* was squeezing Austrian products in traditional German markets, while British competition was fierce in the wider global market. Moreover, population growth in the empire was such that it could absorb the influx of Hungarian agricultural products that would result from the elimination of tariff barriers. However, other sources of revenue would be required to offset the loss from tariffs. The difficulty was in trying to achieve these goals when the internal situation in Hungary was increasingly hostile with the conversion of Kossuth and the majority of liberals from the traditional liberal free-trade position to List’s protectionist position. Macartney, 148–52.

⁴⁶ Barany, 200–03.

while maintaining equal protection under the law for all of Hungary's citizens, while demanding respect for its ancient constitutional liberties, it further proposed a government responsible to parliament, freedom of association, freedom of the press, civil rights for non-nobles and their enfranchisement, mandatory abolition of serfdom with state compensation, and other reforms of the feudal legal code to facilitate access to credit and the ability to buy and sell land.⁴⁷ The opposition tried to be conciliatory by stating they did not expect to achieve this ambitious legislative agenda in one fell swoop, yet when faced with the revolutionary situation in March and April of 1848, it served well as a platform for the April Laws.

Széchenyi in early 1847 again entered into the political fray with a sharply worded attack against Kossuth and his supporters in the radical wing of the reform movement. His Politikai Program-Töredékek (Fragments of a Political Program) charged them with threatening social peace through rousing the anger of the nationalities and goading the peasants to rebel. He encouraged Kossuth to leave political leadership to those more qualified, and argued that since the current government supported the cause of reform, agitation against it was practically treason. While his arguments have the appearance of being self-serving, in fact "Széchenyi had put his finger on the two most crucial issues then facing Hungarian society: the state of the peasantry and the relations among Hungary's ethnic groups".⁴⁸ The course of the revolution would vindicate Széchenyi's concern about the nationalities' question. In the mean time, when Emperor Ferdinand opened the Diet in Pozsony (Bratislava) in 1847, Kossuth was now leader of the opposition in the Lower Chamber, sent as a Deputy of Pest County. To counter Kossuth's activities, Széchenyi gave up his seat in the Upper Chamber and had himself elected to the Lower Chamber. The attempt of the neo-conservatives to control the Diet was nearly a success, liberal and conservative forces were precariously balanced. It was the external shock of the revolution in Paris in February of 1848 that tipped the balance toward Kossuth.

3. Revolution and Repression

3.1. The Revolution of 1848

Metternich wrote of his own downfall, "I feel obliged to call to the supporters of the social uprising: Citizens of a dream-world, nothing is altered. On 14 March, 1848,

there was merely one man fewer.” This was perhaps more wishful thinking than reality on Metternich’s part. More appropriate to the events of 1848-1849 from the Hungarian point of view is the observation of Thomas Jefferson that “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.” The blood of Hungarian patriots was liberally sprinkled on the tree of liberty during this time, and it eventually bore much fruit. István Deák argues that the “revolution, especially in its first bloodless phase, represented Hungary’s greatest spontaneous effort to achieve modernization. During these months, the Hungarian leaders attempted to adapt the country’s official ideology, as well as its government, society, and economy, to the most enlightened Western standards. The great leap forward was not unsuccessful”.⁴⁹ The events that took place in the Hungarian lands were part of the larger “Springtime of the Peoples”, as it has come to be known in Europe, in which the old conservative order was shaken, and various nationalities began their drives for national states. Yet among these the Hungarian movement stands out as the most sustained effort for national self-determination. It won for Hungary a respect among Western liberals and democrats, as evidenced by the enthusiastic welcome Kossuth received in Britain and America during his tour of 1851-1852.⁵⁰

News of the revolution in Paris reached Vienna on February 29th, the Hungarian Diet in Pozsony the next day. On March 3rd, Kossuth gave a speech to an unofficial gathering of the Lower Chamber calling on the Diet to move beyond fiscal concerns⁵¹ to address fundamental issues, as outlined in the Opposition Manifesto. When confronted by obstruction from the Upper Chamber, Kossuth arranged to by-pass them by convincing the deputies to appoint a delegation to carry an Address to the Throne. By the time the

⁴⁷ Barany, 204–05.

⁴⁸ Barany, 204.

⁴⁹ Deák, István. “The Revolution and the War of Independence, 1848–1849.” A History of Hungary. Gen. ed. Peter F. Sugar, Assoc. Ed. Péter Hanák, Ed. Assis. Tibor Frank. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1990. 209.

⁵⁰ Kontler, 272.

⁵¹ There was already great unrest in Vienna because it was feared that Metternich would finance a campaign against the French revolution by printing money that the empty Austrian treasury could not cover. The Hungarian Diet was also concerned that Hungary would have to shoulder part of the burden of such an adventure. Macartney, 155. Deák, István, 212.

delegation of notables, including Kossuth, reached Vienna on March 15th, revolution had broken out in the capital two days earlier. On the next day the Austrian and Hungarian Chancellors, Metternich and Apponyi, were dismissed. On that same day, revolution broke out in Hungary's unofficial capital, Pest, leaving it in the control of the radical Committee of Public Safety, which Kossuth used to his advantage in negotiations with the Crown.

For the next few weeks there was feverish legislative activity in Pozsony and continual negotiations with Vienna. Finally, on April 11, Ferdinand, in his capacity as the King of Hungary, formally closed the most productive and momentous Hungarian Diet. The 31 April Laws enacted were revolutionary in their impact, yet, as defenders of Hungarian liberty were to insist after the War of Independence was crushed, everything accomplished by the April Laws was legal and, in fact, represented nothing more than a restoration of Hungary's historic liberties.⁵²

István Deák has reconciled the seeming contradiction of the inclusion of the events of March-April 1848 in Hungary's revolutionary traditions with the legal fashion in which the transformation was achieved:

[These] events can be considered a revolution if we are prepared to extend the meaning of the term to include sudden and dramatic concessions wrung from an intimidated central authority by a number of determined politicians, using the threat of political violence and supported by a widespread political movement. This is what happened in Hungary, and it seems reason enough to accept the Hungarian custom of referring to the events of March 1848 as a revolution. Perhaps it would be better to call it a "lawful revolution!"⁵³

It is this firm insistence on the legality of the accomplishments of the first phase of the revolution that provided the eventual framework for the compromise of 1867.

The accomplishments of the April Laws can be conveniently summarized into three categories.⁵⁴ The first order of business was to dismantle the legal and economic structure of feudalism. Among other things abolished was the tax exemption of the nobility, the entailment of noble estates, and obligatory work and tithes from the serfs.

⁵² This is of course only half true. In terms of the Austro-Hungarian relationship, this contention can reasonably be argued. Yet the enduring legacy of the April Laws is the **extension** of the liberties enjoyed by the Hungarian nobility to all Hungarians.

⁵³ Deák, István, 211.

⁵⁴ I am drawing upon the summary given by Janos. Janos, 84–86.

Serf tenants were given the land they held in fief from their masters, but the cottage tenants were transformed into a large agricultural proletariat.⁵⁵ The nobility was to be compensated for their losses, but no formula for this was provided in the current legislation. In addition to all Hungarians now being equal before the law, religious equality was extended to the Protestants, although not to the Jews.

The majority of the legislation was given to modernizing Hungarian political institutions. The Royal Chancellery and Residential Council were replaced by a cabinet with a Prime Minister responsible to parliament. The former Diet of the Estates was replaced by a bicameral National Assembly. The House of Lords replaced the Upper Chamber, while the Lower Chamber was transformed into the House of Representatives, a body now comprised of elected deputies of single member constituencies based upon a wider suffrage than previously. In addition, all important legislation, including fiscal legislation, had to originate from the House of Representatives, while the House of Lords retained the right of rejection and review.

Finally, laws were enacted to unify the Hungarian state and to redefine its relationship to the larger Habsburg realm. The most significant laws in terms of later events were those establishing separate Hungarian ministries of Defense and Finance, increasing Hungarian autonomy within the imperial realm.

Not everyone was satisfied with the April Laws.⁵⁶ In fact, a few serious problems immediately presented themselves. The challenges to the new order were both external and internal, and in conjunction they posed real dangers to Hungary. The external challenge came from the Crown.

The point of contention was the King's objection to the interpretation the Hungarian cabinet gave to Public Law III, which established the separate Ministries of Defense and Finance. According to the Hungarian interpretation, all military units on Hungarian soil were to be under Hungarian jurisdiction. Furthermore, Kossuth, as Finance Minister, assumed the right to issue currency through a Hungarian National Bank. The King took especial exception to the authority claimed by the Ministry of

⁵⁵ The reform did not address the issue of inequality of land ownership, with over half the arable land in the hand of large and medium-sized estates representing a minuscule percentage of land-owners, while well over 80% of land-owners held less than 30% of the land. The inequality was never addressed during the period of dualism. Janos, 84–86.

⁵⁶ For example, while the legislation dismantling feudalism was unanimously adopted by the Upper Chamber, it was done so under duress with only 17 of the more than 800 voting members present. Janos, 59–60.

Defense, for the imperial army was the guarantor of dynastic power. Likewise, the perennially empty imperial coffers were threatened by Hungarian independence in economic matters. Moreover, the Hungarian interpretation of the vaguely worded “minister near his majesty” as their foreign representative with Austria and potentially other foreign powers was viewed with great displeasure in Vienna as a *de facto* separate Hungarian Foreign Ministry. The King immediately challenged the Hungarian interpretation of Public Law III in a royal rescript on March 28, as in contravention of the letter and spirit of the Pragmatic Sanction of 1722.⁵⁷ However, under fierce Hungarian protest, it was withdrawn to await more favorable circumstances.

The Hungarians were faced with a dilemma:

A monarchy consisting of two foreign services, two financial administrations, and two armed forces was ungovernable. Therefore, it was only a question of time before the Hungarians would either make some concessions to sanity, secede from the monarchy, or go to war against Austria.⁵⁸

The problem was that they could not decide which was the best course. Hungarian weakness against external and internal threats⁵⁹ suggested compromise with Austria for mutual protection and the preservation of their hegemony in their respective spheres, yet nationalist ambition and Habsburg weakness militated against it. The ideal Hungarian solution, for which they made frequent petitions to the King, was for the court to move to Budapest, turning the capital of the empire’s most powerful state into the center of imperial power. But the Austrian imperial officials would not countenance the request for their own nationalist reasons.

National ambition was the key to Hungary’s second major problem as well, the internal issue of the status of the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia and the national minorities. Croatia-Slavonia was a state joined to the Kingdom of Hungary by personal union. The Croats wanted exactly what the Hungarians had won from the King, and

⁵⁷ Designed to assure Habsburg succession in the female line, it was after great debate accepted by the Hungarian Diet in return for Habsburg pledges to respect Hungary’s feudal constitution and the rights of its nobility. Among other provisions, it recognized that Hungary and other Habsburg lands were indivisible and inseparable, and as such, the need for common action was required, especially in the case of attack by foreign powers. It was indispensable in preserving Habsburg dynastic power when Charles III was succeeded by Maria Theresa.

⁵⁸ Deák, István, 216.

⁵⁹ In particular the Hungarians were afraid of the twin evils of Russia and Pan-Slavism among their national minorities.

were quite willing to by-pass the Hungarians to appeal to the King directly. To make matters worse, as a counter to Hungarian ambitions, and to secure Croatian loyalty, the King had appointed to the empty position of Ban of Croatia-Slavonia on March 23, 1848, the “Illyrian” Colonel Josip Jelačić, a loyal officer of the army and an ardent Croat patriot who had no love for Hungary. The second problem was similar, which was the discontent of the other national minorities at the reunification of the Hungarian lands and the prospect of an intensified program of Magyarization. Together the Germans, Slovaks, Serbs, Romanians and Ruthenes comprised over half the population of the kingdom, and they were inspired by the Hungarian example to demand their own national rights. As with the Croats, they were all prepared to appeal to the King for redress of their national grievances. The competing claims and demands were incompatible with each other and with any semblance of public order, and the Hungarians adopted a strict attitude against the demands of their national minorities.⁶⁰

The question of the moment was whether the Hungarians could peacefully steer between the Scylla of the Crown’s concern for protecting the interests of the *Gesamtmonarchie* and the Charybdis of the strivings of their national minorities. The answer, unfortunately, was no.

The threat of violence had been sufficient for the Hungarians to achieve their national aims from the intimidated Crown; the Hungarians, however, were not willing to be intimidated by their national minorities into making concessions. The result was rebellion, which broke out first in the south among the Serbs. The Hungarians saw in this rebellion the evil hand of the imperial court employing a strategy of divide and conquer. Austro-Hungarian relations deteriorated from there.

This mistrust thwarted efforts at compromise with the court while the international situation and Austrian internal affairs favored Hungary. Once this changed, Hungarian fears, unjustified perhaps earlier when the Crown was beleaguered from many sides and had little interest in a destabilized Hungary unable to come to its aid, were realized.

The specific causes for this and the course of events of the second Hungarian revolution need not be recounted here. Despite the heroic efforts of Kossuth and the *honvéd*⁶¹, Hungary ultimately could not withstand the combined forces arrayed against it.

⁶⁰ For an overview of this issue, see the discussion by Kontler. Kontler, 250–52.

⁶¹ The formal name of this military force was the Permanent National Guard, formed from the best of the civilian National Guard set up to defend life and property during the chaotic early period of 1848.

Yet Hungary remained proud and defiant until the end. In response to the centralist and absolutist Stadion constitution promulgated by the new young emperor, Francis Joseph⁶², which reversed all the national gains of the April Laws, Kossuth had the Hungarian parliament, meeting in the great Calvinist church in Debrecen, dethrone the House of Habsburg-Lorraine and proclaim Hungarian independence on April 14th, 1849. This provided sufficient cause for the emperor to request assistance from the Russian Czar Nicholas I⁶³, though there is some doubt that this was necessary. The Hungarian efforts to make peace with their national minorities and enlist them in their fight against Habsburg absolutism proved too late to prevent the inevitable. On August 13, 1849, at Világos, near Arad, Görgey, the military genius who had accomplished so much against such great odds, surrendered the Hungarian forces to the Russian Field Marshall Paskievich. Kossuth and other political and military personnel who feared Austrian reprisal slipped across the border, fleeing to Turkey. Hungary was defeated.

3.2. The Period of Neoabsolutism

After the end of the Rákóczi rebellion of 1711, Joseph I had displayed restraint and foresight by seeking a reconciliation with the Hungarians. Francis Joseph, Schwarzenberg and Haynau chose not to pursue a similar path, despite such counsel from the great powers and even the Russian Czar, Nicholas I, whose help had secured the Austrian victory. An indication of the terror that followed the imposition of military rule can be gained from the following quote from General Julius von Haynau⁶⁴, the military commander in charge of Hungary: “I will hang the revolutionary leaders and will shoot

The name *honvéd*, or Defenders of the Fatherland, was soon attached to this force which fought bravely in defense of the Hungarian national cause.

⁶² The weak Ferdinand was forced to abdicate in November, 1848, in favor of his nephew, Francis Joseph, by General Prince Felix zu Schwarzenberg, the new head of the Austrian cabinet who desired to impose order upon the chaotic situation facing the empire through authoritarian measures, because he had proved too amenable to the demands of the nationalities. The Hungarians recognized the threat in this to their position, and refused to recognize the change in rulers, insisting Ferdinand was still their king.

⁶³ The offer had first been made the previous winter by the ultra-conservative Czar, who feared national rebellions among his own restive subjects, but only if there was a direct request for such aid from the Austrian side and if decisive help could be given.

⁶⁴ Haynau was already quite infamous for the brutality of his methods in the Italian campaigns, from which he acquired the name of “the hyaena of Brescia” for his efforts.

every imperial and royal officer who served the revolution ... I will shoot hundreds with a clean conscience because it is my firm conviction that this is the only way to set a deterrent example for all future revolutions".⁶⁵ The terror reached a bloody climax on October 6, 1849, the anniversary of the uprising in Vienna, when the "martyrs of Arad", thirteen honvéd generals, were hung and Count Lajos Batthyány, Hungary's first prime minister, was shot in Pest. Except for those military personnel who fled with Kossuth, Görgey was nearly the only high-ranking officer to survive the terror, and then only at Russian insistence. The reign of terror not only elicited strong disapproval from the democratic powers, but also earned the Austrians the undying enmity of a good portion of the Hungarian public. Haynau's military rule was ended in the summer of 1850.

With the military pacification of Hungary complete, Francis Joseph and the Austrian Prime Minister, Prince Felix zu Schwarzenberg, were not content to permit a return to the estates-based pre-revolutionary constitutional order in Hungary. Instead they revived the ghost of Josephinism in Hungary, aiming at nothing less than the establishment of the illusory Habsburg dream of a centralized and unitary *Gesamtstaat*, which has led historians to designate this period as one of neo-absolutism.⁶⁶ The legal justification for the incorporation of Hungary into this unitary state was the *Verwirkungstheorie* put forward by Schwarzenberg, which held that Hungary had forfeited its constitutional rights by virtue of its rebellion and deposition of the Habsburgs, and should be considered a conquered province to be governed as the ruling sovereign saw fit. Once again Transylvania and Croatia-Slavonia were detached from Hungary to be ruled directly from Vienna, the military frontier districts were reestablished, and to pacify the Serbs two new provinces, Voivodina and the Banat of Temesvár, were also created.⁶⁷ Hungary proper was further sub-divided into five districts, eliminating the traditional county organization.

⁶⁵ Somogyi, Éva. "The Age of Neoabsolutism, 1849–1867." *A History of Hungary*. Gen. ed. Peter F. Sugar, Assoc. Ed. Péter Hanák, Ed. Assis. Tibor Frank. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1990. 235–36.

⁶⁶ Hanák, Péter. "The Period of Neo-Absolutism." *A History of Hungary*. Ed. Ervin Pamlényi. Budapest: Collet's Publishers Ltd., distributor, 1975. 288.

⁶⁷ Of course the Serbs had hoped for autonomy, but these new provinces were ruled directly from Vienna as the others. R.J.W. Evans observed that during the revolutionary struggle the Habsburg's exploited the national movements of Hungary's minorities to their own ends, playing especially upon the confessional concerns of the Serbs and Rumanians. But, he concluded, contrary to the national expectations of the minorities following the defeat of the revolution, and much to their disappointment, "in response to them the Habsburgs now deployed *only* ecclesiastical politics" as a reward. Evans, R.J.W. *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. 168.

The unitary state centered in Vienna promoted German hegemony at the expense of the other nationalities⁶⁸. Ferenc Pulszky⁶⁹ expressed in more literary fashion what became a common sentiment among the national minorities of the Hungarian lands during this time: “The nationalities who were allies of absolutism in the past struggle received as reward the same treatment meted out to the Hungarians as punishment”.⁷⁰ Similarly the Hungarian writer Csengery remarked sarcastically that “all nationalities now received equal rights to become Germans”.⁷¹

Schwarzenberg hoped to create a Central European economic bloc incorporating not only the entire Habsburg empire under German leadership, but also attracting other German states to the Habsburg-led bloc. This would have naturally assured Habsburg predominance in the region, and thus regained their European position. However, it is doubtful Schwarzenberg would have been able to achieve these objectives even had he not died prematurely in 1852, for not only the German states and Prussia, but also the great powers opposed strengthening the Habsburg position to such an extent.

What remained of Schwarzenberg’s vision was the centralization of the empire under the determined hand of the Minister of the Interior, Alexander Bach⁷², “a bureaucratic-military state based on informers, spies, and a police system that concerned itself with the smallest details of everyday life”.⁷³ There were some positive aspects of the Bach regime, for it was also a “civic state, which retained the basic achievements of the

⁶⁸ Ágnés Deák observed, “In early 1849 it still seemed that the most effective allies in the government’s endeavors in Hungary might be the non-Hungarian national movements; the events of the spring of 1849, however, reinforced suspicions about the national movements, since it must have become evident that the goals demanded by them were sharply at odds with the exigencies of both Imperial centralist unity and national equality.” Deák, Ágnes. From Habsburg Neo-Absolutism to the Compromise, 1849–1867. Atlantic Studies on Society in Change, no. 131. New York: Columbia UP, 2008. 66–67.

⁶⁹ He was the representative of the Hungarian revolutionary government in England and stayed in England after the defeat of the War of Independence to attempt to gain British support for the political program of the independence-minded emigrés.

⁷⁰ Kosáry, Dominic G. A History of Hungary. New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1971. 251. 1941.

⁷¹ Kosáry, 251.

⁷² After Schwarzenberg’s death, Francis Joseph did not appoint a replacement to the position of prime minister, but assumed the duties himself. However, this period during the 1850’s is known as the “Bach period” because of the ferocity of government intrusiveness under the leadership of Bach. Ágnés Deák described Bach as the “distinctive, definitive politician of the decade.” Deák, Ágnes, 42.

⁷³ Somogyi, 237.

bourgeois revolution: the freeing of the serfs, the legal equality of citizens, and proportional taxation”.⁷⁴ The Austrian Civil Law Code, generally recognized as more progressive than the Hungarian legal code, was introduced in 1853. Education was modernized. The imperial customs area incorporated the Hungarian lands in 1850. Yet the Hungarians resented every effort at reform, perhaps more out of dislike for Habsburg absolutism than for the measures themselves. While some Hungarians were willing to fill the higher ranks of Bach’s civil service for personal gain, the lower levels of the oppressive bureaucracy were often staffed with more trustworthy imported German and Czech clerks festooned with pseudo-Hungarian uniforms derisively referred to as “Bach hussars”.⁷⁵ The later socialist historian Karl Renner observed, “the years after 1850 were a period of sweeping administrative reform and comprehensive social legislation. Bach’s organizational concept had only one, albeit fatal, weakness: it had been created by counterrevolution and not revolution, not democracy but bureaucracy was its instrument”.⁷⁶ Bureaucracy during the Bach period was not only pervasive, it was also burdensome to the population that had to pay for it.

During this period the most important challenge facing the government was working out the legal framework for implementing the primary achievement of the revolution, namely the freeing of the serfs and facilitating the transition to a capitalistic mode of agricultural production. While officially the serfs were freed in 1848, regulations governing this process were finally promulgated only with the Labor Statute Patent of 1853.

The transformation was navigated with varying results by different social classes.⁷⁷ The high aristocracy with large estates for the most part fared well, and some magnates also became involved in business ventures.⁷⁸ Also the noble families with medium-sized estates made the transition well. However, for the vast majority of the nobility, the gentry who did not possess even medium-sized estates, and who were often

⁷⁴ Somogyi, 237.

⁷⁵ Hanák, “The Period of Neo-Absolutism,” 291.

⁷⁶ Janos, 88–89.

⁷⁷ Hanák, “The Period of Neo-Absolutism,” 292–94.

⁷⁸ Railway infrastructure projects and food processing enterprises to take advantage of Hungary’s agrarian strengths were common areas of endeavor.

already saddled with debt, the transition often proved quite impossible. Macartney observed of this period,

But for the backbone of the nation, the middle and smaller nobles, the times were ruinous. The compensation paid to the former landlords ... was not only niggardly, but only paid after long delays ... Some 20,000 foreclosures were made in under twenty years. A large part of this class fell into destitution.⁷⁹

Without noble privileges to differentiate them from the non-noble classes, many of these people were assimilated into the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie.⁸⁰

The serfs were the most directly affected by the transition, yet not in a uniform manner.⁸¹ Of approximately 1,367,000 peasant families, almost one-half became free owners of land, while the remaining 800,000 families had been cotters or servants and did not own even a fraction of a serf holding or home. The process of sorting out who got what land was often a complex one, and for the former serfs, often perceived as a life or death struggle: “The urbarial settlement was protracted for two decades, in some areas even longer; and during this period it became the main issue of the intensified class struggle between the landowners and the imperial authorities on the one hand, and the peasants on the other”.⁸² But such fighting did not effect the overall distribution of land, with 75% of the population holding only 46% of the land, while the aristocracy, a very small percentage of the population, held a commanding percentage of the arable land. About a quarter of the serfs received enough land with their urbarial holdings to develop into viable yeoman farmers. The situation of the cotters, about one-half of the peasantry, was not so enviable. “The poverty-stricken peasant masses were tied by a few miserable acres to the village and its way of life. Escape from this life was very difficult because of the economy of the village and, indeed, the structure of the entire Hungarian economy”.⁸³ Unable to meet their basic needs with their meager holdings, they were forced to work as day laborers in larger estates. Finally, about one-quarter of the peasantry received no land at all and were transformed into an agricultural proletariat. They also sought work as day

⁷⁹ Macartney, 164–65.

⁸⁰ Somogyi, 239.

⁸¹ For the following statistics I am depending on the work of Somogyi, 238–39.

⁸² Hanák, “The Period of Neo-Absolutism,” 294.

⁸³ Somogyi, 238.

laborers, roaming the countryside looking for work. Not until the later stages of capitalist development was it possible for industry to absorb some of the agricultural proletariat into the urban proletariat.

The Bach period, whatever the regime's claim to be among the more progressive in Europe, was one that stifled all national life in Hungary.

All the reforms aiming at modernization of the empire were intertwined with the defense of feudal remnants and of the aristocracy, with the suppression of the national and democratic ideas, with the fostering of a rootless dynastic 'patriotism' and with Germanization... This strongly centralized absolutism was dependent on aristocratic administrators, on an army trained to place its first loyalty in the dynasty, on the Catholic clergy, and on the civil service.⁸⁴

The very narrow social basis of the regime drove even the moderate elements of Hungarian political life into passive opposition. Apart from the small numbers from among the aristocracy and the gentry who were willing to cooperate with the regime, three political groupings emerged during this period. "The first was based on the old constitution of 1847; the second considered the April 1848 legislation as its standard, and the third, radically differing from the others, accepted as its foundation the 1849 Declaration of Independence".⁸⁵ Each group had a different social basis.

The first group was called the 'Old Conservatives', once the Conservative party of the Reform Era, who wanted a return to the pre-revolutionary constitutional order that governed the relationship between Austria and Hungary, while accepting social reforms that had been enacted since then. The social basis of the group was the aristocracy, well-known families with a tradition of leadership and patriotic service within their nation who resented Austrian centralization, yet had favored compromise with the dynasty and had disapproved of the revolutionary turn of events. Because of their high social standing and contacts with the Austrian ruling class, they were not afraid to aggressively pursue their political program through numerous petitions to the court and publishing many political pamphlets. Yet they were driven into opposition by the firm adherence of the court to a course of bureaucratic centralization and Germanization.

The other end of the spectrum was offered by the third group, who would not give up on the dream of an independent Hungary. The leadership of this group was comprised of the émigrés, led by Kossuth. Considering themselves the rightful leaders of the nation,

⁸⁴ Hanák, "The Period of Neo-Absolutism," 288–89.

⁸⁵ Kosáry, 255–56.

they organized and sought support from the Western powers to continue the struggle against Austria. Secret organizations within Hungary were formed during the early 1850's to be the advanced guard of any renewed struggle, but they were discovered by Bach's agents and the leaders of the conspirators were executed. The peasantry looked to Kossuth as the father of the nation, associating him with national freedom and their own emancipation, but this did not translate into political agitation. Despite the seeming futility of the struggle, Kossuth remained committed to the Hungarian national cause to the end, writing in 1861, "Should everyone in Hungary give up the ideas of 1849, the émigrés cannot do so".⁸⁶

In the middle were those who held to the continuing legal validity of the April Laws of 1848 and demanded a return to constitutional rule in Hungary. They desired a reasonable compromise with the crown that would safeguard dynastic interests while preserving Hungarian constitutional rights. The social basis of this group was comprised primarily of the gentry, with support from smallholders, the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie.⁸⁷ The undisputed leader of this group, and eventually of the nation, was Ferenc Deák, one of the few liberal leaders of stature still remaining from the reform and revolutionary periods.⁸⁸ He had always favored compromise with the crown and had retired from government when Kossuth steered the country towards independence. However, their demands found less favor in Vienna than those of the Old Conservatives, and thus "the autocracy itself drove into opposition the bulk of the gentry, which, steering a middle course between the extremes of submission or conspiracy, entrenched itself in passive resistance".⁸⁹ This program of passive resistance characterized the entire Bach period.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Kosáry, 258.

⁸⁷ Hanák, "The Period of Neo-Absolutism," 297.

⁸⁸ Others gathered around Deák included Baron József Eötvös and the editor of the *Pesti Napló*, Zsigmond Kemény, who in 1850 wrote the controversial pamphlet *After Revolution*. In it he argued that since the Hungarians could not achieve independence on their own, and the great powers favored the maintenance of Austria, the Hungarians should return to the more pragmatic program of Széchenyi. This was labeled defeatism by the followers of Kossuth. Kosáry, 257–58.

⁸⁹ Hanák, "The Period of Neo-Absolutism," 297.

⁹⁰ Speaking of the national program of passive resistance, Deák explained its strategy: "The rich magnates and the well-to-do nobles, the intellectuals and the citizens have decided that they will not pay their taxes until the executor knocks at their doors. Only those supplies that cannot be hidden will be handed over to the military. People will deny understanding German and will everywhere demand answers and

The Austrian defeat at the Battle of Solferino in 1859 against the French and Piedmontese forces, which resulted in the loss of Lombardy, caused an internal crisis within the monarchy, and led to the dismissal of Bach. The loss demonstrated that the military-bureaucratic experiment in absolutism was a failure. The military had failed and the bureaucracy was proving no more adept at handling internal affairs, while at the same time causing great financial strain.⁹¹ What followed from 1860-67 was a period of experimentation with forms of constitutional restrictions upon absolutism.

The first attempt was the October Diploma of 1860, which restored the local legislative assemblies throughout the empire with limited authority, while the important fiscal and military powers still resided with the Imperial Council and the emperor. The diploma was designed to pacify the aristocracy of the empire who resented the usurpation of their traditional position by the bureaucratic-centralist system. However, it was undermined within the court by those who still hoped for a “Greater Austria”, while it was firmly rejected by the Hungarian liberals because it did not restore the constitutional order established by the April Laws of 1848.⁹²

Still, the reestablishment of county assemblies and the national legislature did imply a recognition of Hungary’s historic separate status, and the Hungarian liberals were willing to make use of these forums to press their political programs. At the reconstituted parliament, which opened its session on April 2, 1861, two groups emerged. Around Deák gathered the liberal aristocracy and the right wing of the gentry who argued that even though Francis Joseph was not yet *de jure* the ruler of Hungary, he was the *de facto* ruler. As such the parliament should respond to the traditional royal message sent to them with the customary address to the ruler listing the demands of the nation. This was known as the ‘Address Party’. Opposite them was the left wing nobility who did not recognize Francis Joseph as ruler, and as such wanted to state the nation’s views only in the form of a parliamentary resolution. Known as the ‘Resolution Party’, its leader, the radical Count László Teleki, committed suicide before parliamentary debate opened on May 8th. He

verdicts in Hungarian. Nobody will truthfully report the status of his wealth and income. If anybody is asked a question, the answer has to be- I do not know; if information is sought about a person, the answer has to be- I do not know him; if events have to be verified, the answer has to be- I have seen nothing. The slogan is: detest absolutism and ignore its servants as if they were not living amongst us.” Somogyi, 241.

⁹¹ Somogyi, 243.

⁹² Somogyi, 243–44.

apparently did so because he saw that while the nobility paid lip-service to the ideas of 1848, in fact they had no desire to seek common cause with the lower classes and the nationalities to defeat Austrian absolutism, but were only hoping for a peaceful settlement with the crown that would affirm their ruling position.⁹³

In any case, while the legislature was still debating these issues, Francis Joseph was prevailed upon by the liberal Austro-German champions of Greater Austria to issue the February Patent of 1861, which called for the creation of an imperial parliament. While such an imperial parliament was better suited to impose constitutional limitations upon the crown than regional legislatures, it was emphatically rejected by the Hungarians because it was in contradiction to their own constitutional traditions and rights as a separate Hungarian nation, and they refused to send representatives to it.⁹⁴ Once again Francis Joseph disbanded the Hungarian county assemblies and legislature and returned to autocratic rule.

In 1863 the Czechs and then the Poles also walked out of the imperial parliament, in part to protest absolutism in Hungary, proving the impossibility of imposing constitutional centralization upon the nations of the empire against their history and traditions. Francis Joseph realized that without some compromise with Hungary, the internal problems of the empire would be difficult to resolve. For the first time in December 1864 he sought through intermediaries Deák's view on the conditions for compromise to get beyond the current impasse. On Easter Sunday, April 16, 1865, an article by Deák appeared in the *Pesti Napló* in which he suggested that the issue of compromise with Vienna had reached a turning point, and that certain modifications of the laws of 1848 were possible to facilitate a resolution.⁹⁵ However, this process of reconciliation was only given real impetus by the swift defeat of Austria by the Prussians in 1866, excluding them from the German Confederation so that Bismarck could impose the *Kleindeutschland* solution to German reunification.

⁹³ See the discussion in Hanák, "The Period of Neo-Absolutism," 308–10.

⁹⁴ Somogyi, 244, 247.

⁹⁵ In the article he wrote: "One of the aims is to assure the continued existence of a strong empire. We do not wish to subordinate this consideration to any other concern. The other goal is to maintain the constitutional existence of Hungary, her rights and her laws ... of which it would neither be just nor expedient to relinquish more than is absolutely required to assure the secure future existence of the empire." Somogyi, 248.

With Austria now excluded from German affairs, the Austro-Germans needed a partner to strengthen their position within the multi-national empire, and increasingly a rapprochement with the Hungarians seemed the best solution. Somogyi lists three paths open to the emperor:

His options included the continuation of the centralized state (the choice of the court as well as the leading military and bourgeois bureaucratic circles), the federation of the empire (as demanded by conservative governmental circles... and the Slav national politicians), and the establishment of constitutional dualism (proposed by Deák and supported by the Austro-German liberals).⁹⁶

The emperor appointed Friedrich Ferdinand Beust to manage foreign affairs in October 1866, and it was he who convinced Francis Joseph that only the third option would provide the necessary internal peace to reorient Austrian foreign policy to the East. His position was as follows: “We must stand, first of all, on solid ground ... This solid ground, as things stand at present, is the cooperation of the German and Hungarian elements in opposition to panslavism”.⁹⁷ Negotiations began in Vienna in January of 1867 to hammer out the compromise.

The basis of the compromise was the recognition on the part of the Hungarians that certain ‘common affairs’ existed between Austria and Hungary as lands united in personal union by the Habsburg dynasty, historical precedence for which was found in the Pragmatic Sanction. In recognition of these common affairs, defined as national defense and foreign policy (plus the financing of these), the Hungarians were willing to modify the vague laws of 1848 to make provision for the regulation of these affairs between the Austrian and Hungarian governments under the direction of the emperor.⁹⁸ The precondition for this compromise was constitutional rule in both halves of the empire, for the Hungarians realized constitutional rule and full internal autonomy in Hungary could not be safeguarded if absolutism ruled in the other half of the empire.

⁹⁶ Somogyi, 249.

⁹⁷ Somogyi, 249.

⁹⁸ As this was worked out, in addition to the “pragmatic affairs” mentioned above, other common affairs were defined by practical considerations, deemed “non-pragmatic affairs”. These had to do with monetary affairs, custom and trade issues, excise taxes, transportation, and the financial burden each half of the empire had to contribute for common expenses, which were to be renegotiated every ten years. For a detailed explanation of the mechanism of dualism see Frank, Tibor. “Hungary and the Dual Monarchy, 1867–1890.” *A History of Hungary*. Gen. ed. Peter F. Sugar, Assoc. Ed. Péter Hanák, Ed. Assis. Tibor Frank. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1990. 252–54’

However, there were still some voices that spoke out forcefully against compromise with Austria as incapable of being in the best interest of Hungary. Foremost among these was Kossuth, who warned of dire consequences should Hungary surrender her rights and acquiesce to a deal with Austria and the Habsburg dynasty. In his famous “Cassandra Letter” of May, 1867, which he addressed to Deák, he castigated his friend for pursuing a policy in which “Hungary relinquishes its most precious state rights, and does this in a way that we become tools of a policy which makes our neighbors, eastern and western alike, our enemies. It makes the settling of the question of national minorities and the compromise with Croatia impossible and makes Hungary the target of competing ambitions which are clearly emerging in ever more turbulent Europe.”⁹⁹ It is this prophecy of future woe that Kossuth’s partisans point to in support of their contention that the compromise was a fatal mistake.¹⁰⁰

Deák, by contrast, defended the compromise as the best course of action open to Hungary in the parliamentary discussion on the Act of Compromise. With the imposition of autocratic rule over Hungary in 1849, he argued, three courses of action were

⁹⁹ Deák, Ágnes, 591.

¹⁰⁰ Kossuth elsewhere described the compromise in terms that represented it as a betrayal of the spirit of 1848 in order to make common cause with Austrian despotism, writing that “the compromise represented an alliance of the ostensibly liberal conservative-reactionary Hungarians with those Austro-Germans who were opposed to liberty, and it was aimed at the suppression of the other nations and nationalities.” Somogyi, 250. Kossuth’s own solution was his proposed Danubian Confederation which he outlined in 1862, which would have formed an anti-Habsburg federation of Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and Rumania, with the fate of Transylvania to be determined by plebiscite. However, the leading elites in all these countries were too committed to their own national agendas to consider an anti-Austrian confederation. Kossuth’s concern over the Compromise was certainly born out by the events of World War I. This estimation of the Compromise is shared by Hanák, who writes: “The Compromise did not mean merely the re-arrangement of the constitutional relationship between Austria and Hungary, but was at the same time a closing act in the period of bourgeois revolutions. It provided, after the revolutionary impetus of 1848 and the failure of neo-absolutism, for an anti-democratic solution to the questions of bourgeois transformation. The emperor, in order to retain his empire, gave his consent to moderate constitutional limitations on his unlimited power. The Austrian ruling circles abandoned the idea of a unitary state in order to keep hold of the entire state, in order to preserve centralization at least in the Cisleithanian half of the empire. The Hungarian landowning class turned their backs on the revolutionary achievements of 1848 in order to retain their leading role, economically and politically, in the face of the rising middle class, and their rule over the Hungarian people and the nationalities. The new system did not alter, indeed reinforced, national oppression, even if this was now divided ‘more fairly’ between the Austrians and the Hungarians. The system of big estates was not weakened but consolidated, and the remnants of feudalism were preserved within the framework of capitalism, the remnants of absolutism, wrapped in the forms of constitutionalism. Thus, at the favourable historical juncture the Compromise merely closed an era without really having accomplished the bourgeois revolution or solved its basic problems.” Nevertheless, Hanák still recognizes that given the historical circumstances of this time this turn of events was “logical” and the Compromise “realistic”. Hanák, “The Period of Neo-Absolutism,” 318–19.

possible¹⁰¹: for Hungarians to obtain their rights by armed struggle, to wait for good fortune, or to come to terms. Revolution is never an attractive option, even if success is possible. As for waiting for good fortune, it would be wrong to let the nation wither away while waiting for an uncertain future. This left the third option. In defense of the specifics of the Compromise, Deák argued that common affairs had existed since the previous century, and common defense had existed since the Pragmatic Sanction, and represented no novelty in the relations between the two states, only the manner in which they were to be regulated were new. Events since the revolution had demonstrated to him that squeezed between Germany and Russia, and confronted with the demands of the nationalities, Hungary needed the protection of the Habsburg monarchy. He summarized by admitting, “We do not claim our work is perfect. We know that it has deficiencies, but we could not produce a better one that could have been realized under the present circumstances.”¹⁰² Similarly, in his response to Kossuth’s Cassandra Letter, Deák explained:

I have stated it was my personal conviction that in our position it is better to make a peaceful settlement than to let our future depend on policies that are founded on vague promises, that would cause further delays and suffering, and that would probably depend on happenstance, on revolution and the dissolution of the empire, on foreign aid (for which our interests would certainly not be the main motive) or on new foreign alliances, the form, the purpose and advantages of which can not yet be known.¹⁰³

A parallel calculus existed for the Habsburg emperor, according to the Hungarian historian Gyula Miskolczy, “The Compromise of 1867 was not the best solution for the Habsburg dynasty and monarchy, but the only possible one by which it could preserve its great-power status”.¹⁰⁴ The paradox of the Compromise was elegantly summarized by R.J.W. Evans, who observed that the Compromise actually “sealed a gradual alienation of Austria and Hungary”, as the two halves of the empire now focused inwardly on their

¹⁰¹ Paraphrased from Hanák, “The Period of Neo-Absolutism,” 320.

¹⁰² Katus, László. Hungary in the Dual Monarchy, 1867–1914. Atlantic Studies on Society in Change, no. 132. New York: Columbia UP, 2008. 14.

¹⁰³ Király, Béla. “From the Fiasco of Neo-Absolutism to the Dual Monarchy 1859–1875.” Hungary: Government and Politics 1848–2000. Béla Király and Mária Ormos (eds.) and Norá Arató (trans.). Atlantic Studies on Society in Change No. 109. New York: Columbia UP, 2001. 60.

¹⁰⁴ Hoensch, Jörg K. A History of Modern Hungary 1867–1986. Trans. Kim Traynor. New York: Longman, 1988. 19.

respective domains, with only ‘common affairs’ shared between them. Evans concluded: “In the end the Compromise - which the Emperor resisted for almost twenty years, and which represented the greatest domestic concession of his career - proved to be the last, most unconscious, and most fateful example of Habsburg divide and rule, not so much among those who suffered from it as among those it favoured.”¹⁰⁵

In fact the German and Hungarian elites got what they required from the Compromise, “The ruling elements of both halves of the empire demanded national hegemony, civic institutions, and constitutional rule, and the compromise gave this to them”.¹⁰⁶ Of course both sides had to give up something to get to this point, and from this time on both sides would complain they gave up too much. The Hungarian opposition in particular would always press for the revision of the Compromise in terms more favorable to them, if not for outright independence. Nevertheless, on June 8, 1867, Emperor Francis Joseph was crowned King of Hungary. Constitutional rule returned to Hungary, the laws of 1848 were recognized with some revisions, and it appeared Hungary’s experiment with liberalism and bourgeois transformation would continue.¹⁰⁷

4. The Politics of Dualism: The Consolidation of the Liberal Regime

Once the Compromise had been accepted by the Hungarians, however reluctantly by some, one would assume that parliamentary life would now center on how to best promote the welfare of the country within the scope of dualism. Instead, it continued to revolve around the “question of public law”, that is, whether the compromise was to be

¹⁰⁵ Evans, 265.

¹⁰⁶ Somogyi, 251.

¹⁰⁷ Gerő argued that in fact the retreat by the liberals into strict constitutionalism muted the ethical aspects of Hungarian liberalism in its revolutionary phase, which, in his view, “exploded the unity of individual, social, and national freedom, because this unity could be maintained and reinstated only through interest reconciliation. Compromise could only be reached through capitulation to the absolutist regime... from this point on, the viability of interest reconciliation was no longer a question for Hungarian liberalism, the 1867 Compromise having forced it into a conservative role from both a national and social point of view.” Gerő, 89. In support of this view, Gerő unfolded a narrative of the decaying democratic processes within the Hungarian parliament from 1867 onward, which was characterized by increasing legislative paralysis, ethical degeneration, and fraudulent electoral practices. See the chapters entitled “Mamelukes and Zoltans: Elected Representatives under the Dual Monarchy” and “Liberalism, Conservatism and Political Legitimacy under the Dual Monarchy” in Gerő, 109–44, 169–81.

accepted, altered, or overthrown.¹⁰⁸ Three parties emerged around this question.¹⁰⁹ There were the “Deákists”, who supported the Compromise. Opposed to them was the “Extreme Left”, who rejected it for a radical adherence to the April Laws. Somewhat between these two was the “Left Center” of Kálmán Tisza, author of the political program known as the “Bihar Points”, which called for modifying the Compromise in line with Law X of 1790 (this law had asserted Hungary’s independence and marked the defeat of the Josephinist experiment). This constitutional modification was in fact a repudiation of dualism, for it demanded an independent army and autarchy in finances and commerce. Hungary’s post-Compromise political evolution was retarded by this continued focus on “public law”¹¹⁰, which Macartney states “hardened afterwards into obsessional fixations”.¹¹¹ The marriage of national and social radicalism which represented the best of the legacy of 1848 was subverted so that Magyar nationalism alone set Hungarian political life down a long degenerative path of obstructionist politics and parliamentary sterility.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Macartney, 174.

¹⁰⁹ See the discussion in Macartney, 174–75. Katus is also helpful with a discussion of the social basis of the parties. Katus, 108–11.

¹¹⁰ After a couple of years of ongoing debate, József Eötvös expressed his dissatisfaction with this state of affairs: “Is it not time to begin the task of reconstruction instead of sterile controversies? Do we see no other legislative task ahead than to argue about the common affairs? Who does not feel and see the urgent need for progress and reform in all areas? We are still engaged in legal debates ignoring the greatest danger threatening our country, which is unquestionably the fact that we have been forcibly retarded for centuries in our development.” Katus, 113.

¹¹¹ Macartney, 175.

¹¹² In addition to this fixation on public law, Macartney also faults the Crown, arguing that this negative political “evolution was fatally facilitated by the withdrawal of the Crown from its traditional role of protector of national and social minorities, and by failure to redress the grave social-political imbalance thus created, by introducing a franchise wide enough to enable those to speak for themselves.” Macartney, 175. This withdrawal and the narrow franchise enabled the Hungarian political elites to ignore pressing issues for vain constitutional fights. However, the withdrawal of the Crown from its traditional role was of the very nature of the compromise, which left the traditions of 1848 as the last source of advocacy for the masses. However, Hanák noted that “In political life after the Compromise, national and social radicalism followed separate courses, even in the opposition parties; they remained connected for a long time only in the consciousness of the poor peasantry.” Hanák, Péter. “The Dual Monarchy.” *A History of Hungary*. Ed. Ervin Pamlényi. Budapest: Collet’s Publishers Ltd., distributor, 1975. 330. So while social radicalism was disenfranchised (as were the minorities), Magyar nationalism in the opposition prevented parliament from engaging in a serious discussion of social problems. The result, according to Macartney, was that “the two great groups into which the “political nation” fell simply ignored, by tacit agreement, social and (once the Law of 1868 was passed) national questions; or if these did raise their heads, combined to repress them; concentrating instead on barren constitutional issues in which prestige all too often played a larger part than real interest.” Macartney, 176.

While Deák had not accepted political office after the Compromise¹¹³, he was still active in national affairs and provided the unifying force for the deputies of various political backgrounds who supported the Compromise. Within a few years though this political constellation began to break apart.¹¹⁴ The economic crisis of 1873 brought the final demise of the governing party, and discussions began with the Left Center about merging the two parties.

The short period of transitional governments came to an end in March, 1875, when Tisza made the strategic decision to drop the Bihar Points and merge the majority of his party with the fragments of the Deákists to form a new, powerful political force, the Liberal Party (Szabadelvü Párt).¹¹⁵ He was made Prime Minister in October, 1875, an office he held until March of 1890. While Tisza gathered in the Liberal Party the aristocratic landowners and the emerging bourgeoisie, the core of the Liberal machine was the gentry.¹¹⁶ Tisza was effective in welding together the Liberal Party and the administrative bureaucracy into a political machine in which electoral corruption was institutionalized to serve the interests of the machine.¹¹⁷ While this machine secured a measure of political stability and support for the Compromise, it came with a high cost in the long run.

Tisza quickly pushed the Deákists into the background to establish a regime of parliamentary deputies and administrative bureaucrats dependent upon him. What emerged was a variation of feudal patriarchy, personalism, a competition for political advancement at the personal rather than political level. Advancement was based not upon political principles, but upon currying favor with political benefactors and discrediting

¹¹³ His representative in negotiations with the Court, Count Gyula Andrassy, became the first Prime Minister.

¹¹⁴ Deák retired from politics, disgusted by the rush to self-enrichment, the increasing conservatism, and the internal party squabbles. Eötvös died in 1871. Finally, Andrassy was named the common minister of foreign affairs in November of 1871. These three events essentially deprived the governing party of its leadership.

¹¹⁵ Tisza was firm in his opposition to social radicalism and the demands of the nationalities. Deeming a mass-based opposition too risky, he believed a merger the best means to come to power, for which he was willing to “suspend” the principles of the Bihar Points. Hoensch, 23–24.

¹¹⁶ Zoltán Lippay, in his *A magyar birtokos középosztály és a közélet* [The Hungarian landed middle class and public life], observed that “no other age in Hungarian public life came to be so completely identified with the gentry as were the years of Coloman Tisza’s premiership.” Janos, 109.

¹¹⁷ Janos, 97.

your competitors. This had the deleterious effect that the “Hungarian political system rested on the rotation of persons, rather than of differing political views”.¹¹⁸ The lower house deputies dependent upon Tisza were known as “mamelukes”, and they referred to Tisza as the “general”. The consequences of this system of political selection can be surmised from the following advice given to Liberal Party deputies by Frigyes Podmaniczky, president of the Liberal Party, “My sons, you should stick to voting and refrain from thinking - thinking is bad for you and the nation will not benefit from it either.”¹¹⁹

The corrupting effect of this situation was such that in time even opposition deputies were bought off by the Liberal machine. These deputies whose walk was different than their talk were labeled “zoltans”.¹²⁰ This was made possible by a toothless conflict of interest law governing parliamentary deputies, and the symbiotic relationship between politics, finance and business.¹²¹ Electoral corruption and other political emollients were used to silence not only social radicalism and the nationalities, but also to blunt the Magyar nationalist opposition. The result was a loss of political rationality and legitimacy in the system. The famous Hungarian historian István Bibó wrote of the dilemma of the political elites’ attempt to abide by a compromise that lacked popular support among significant sections of the population:

The whole situation brought about a deterioration of the ruling elite’s political rationality, while the political rationality of ordinary Hungarians

¹¹⁸ Gerő, 145.

¹¹⁹ Gerő, 132. He argues this system of political selection had three effects: 1) many deputies owed their political careers to personal favors rather than personal ability, and thus they submitted themselves readily to party discipline; 2) politics became an arena for personal conflicts and agendas to the near exclusion of political ideas or agendas competing for political attention; and 3) this personalist approach to politics had a very corrosive effect upon political representation and created an atmosphere of deep cynicism in Hungary’s political life. Gerő, 118.

¹²⁰ One opposition deputy, Gyula Verhovay, wrote bitterly in his book *Az álarcz korszaka* [The Age of the Mask], that a “member of parliament, if he behaves himself and - even as a member of the opposition - “barks but does not bite”, is allowed to “glean the corn” every now and then.” Gerő, 123. Another Hungarian politician, Lajos Degré, wrote in *Pártok és vezérek az országházból* [Political Parties and Leaders in Parliament] that “In Hungary you can have opposition attitudes but opposition ideas must never prevail.” Gerő, 128.

¹²¹ Gerő explained: “In Hungary, the political system disguised rather than reflected the prevailing power relations... The outcome was mutual dependence between the business sphere and members of the political establishment. Businessmen sought political leeway and politicians sought the capital that was essential to finance and maintain their positions. No law on conflicts of interest could be enforced because the ruling elite would thereby have undermined itself.” Gerő, 123.

was kept in abeyance by the constant, pervasive and thoroughly demoralizing abuse of elections. Anyone accepting the Political Compromise also accepted electoral fraud: in the spirit of the Compromise advocates of neither absolute independence nor social revolution, not to mention national autonomy, were allowed to emerge as a majority. This is how the institutions of constitutionalism which in the spirit of 1848 were meant to be institutions of political education emerged as instruments of obscurantism.¹²²

This was a gradual process of dissolution, but the process reached crisis proportions only towards the end of the century.

5. National Minorities, Education and Magyarization

The nationalities in both halves of the empire were opposed to the Compromise, since it secured the hegemony of the Austro-Germans and the Hungarians in their respective halves. The national minorities had desired a federative reorganization of the empire to prevent this possibility. In their defense, the Hungarians promised that the rights of the minorities would be protected. Yet the bill that the parliament was presented satisfied neither the national minorities nor the Magyar nationalists. As Tibor Frank observed, “The law that was finally accepted (1868/XLIV) did not recognize the existence of separate nationalities and did not grant them collective national rights or political institutions. The law was liberal only as far as the usage of languages was concerned”.¹²³ This reflected the vision of Hungarian liberals to preserve the unitary Hungarian state by giving historical primacy to the state over the nation, and then implementing various policies to encourage Magyarization.¹²⁴ The main instruments of Magyarization were the administrative bureaucracy and the educational system. The need for an expanded educational system was seen as a prerequisite for developing a modern industrial society.¹²⁵ Elementary education was vastly expanded, most of that expansion

¹²² Gerő, 127–28.

¹²³ Frank, 255.

¹²⁴ László Kontler explained the justification for this reversal by Hungarian liberals in according primacy to the state over the nation. In their view “language and ethnicity alone were not sufficient ... to constitute a nation without a historical past and a historic state... For the reformers whose roots were mainly in the Magyar-speaking nobility, it was only natural that the broader Hungarian nation ... ought to be defined in terms of Hungary’s historic past and state, and its public sphere dominated by the Hungarian tongue.” Kontler, 241.

¹²⁵ That educational reform in post-Compromise Hungary got off to a good start is a tribute to the

coming from government schools. Secondary schooling was also expanded, though not nearly to the same extent. Also expanded to meet the needs of a modernizing economy was the university and technical educational system. University education now became a necessary step in the preparation of the sons of the nobility and the well-to-do bourgeoisie for life.¹²⁶ The only problem was the “uneconomic orientation” of much secondary and higher education subverted the intent to educate rising generations for an industrial society.¹²⁷ Yet secondary and higher education was a relatively effective instrument in assimilation¹²⁸, while primary education proved less so despite increasingly strict laws constraining schools to acquiesce to a program of linguistic Magyarization.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, the notable achievement of the educational system was the decline of illiteracy among the population.¹³⁰

vision and energy of Baron Eötvös. “It was thanks to the personal involvement of Hungary’s first minister for education and culture, the respected writer, Baron József Eötvös, that Hungary was given an Education Law imbued with liberal values as early as 1868. This law not only made education compulsory for all six to twelve-year-olds, but provided for state-controlled elementary schools alongside the existing denominational schools.” Hoensch, 46.

¹²⁶ Hoensch gives the following statistics, “Since the proportion of students from working-class and peasant families was below 3 per cent, the majority of students were the sons of the wealthy nobility (around 50 per cent) and the urban bourgeoisie (over 40 per cent). Jewish students were overproportionately represented amongst graduates.” Hoensch, 47.

¹²⁷ This refers to the fact that a majority of Hungarian students preferred to study in fields other than those that would contribute to building an industrial economy. Berend, I.T., and G. Ranki. Hungary: A Century of Economic Development. National Economic Histories. New York: Barnes, 1974. 28. Hoensch gives the following statistics for 1914, “Legal (33 per cent), medical (19 per cent), humanities (10 per cent) and divinity (10 per cent) studies enjoyed particular popularity. Only 22 per cent of undergraduates chose to study the natural sciences, technical studies or economics.” Hoensch, 47.

¹²⁸ Almost all university students were either Magyars or spoke Hungarian as their first language. Hoensch, 46.

¹²⁹ Over time the state was able to use the power of the purse to gain control of over 75 per cent of the grade schools and over 90 per cent of the gymnasia as places of instruction in Hungarian, yet with only mixed results. “On the one hand, they succeeded in capturing the potential intellectual elites among certain ethnic groups - above all among Germans and Slovaks - and reversed the earlier 45-55 ratio between Magyars and non-Magyars in favor of the former. On the other hand, in spite of all effort and expense, in 1910, 32.2 percent of the population, or 77.8 percent of the minorities, were still totally ignorant of the Magyar idiom, while the rest certainly fell short of Magyar expectations of loyalty and patriotism.” Janos, 127.

¹³⁰ Hoensch provides the following overview: “Thanks to the improvement in basic education which benefited around 90 per cent of all schoolchildren, illiteracy among the population over six years of

More than with education, a high priority of the Hungarian government following the Compromise was “to create an administrative infrastructure for the more complex and sophisticated society that was expected to arise under the aegis of national governments”.¹³¹ The administrative bureaucracy was also an important source of distributing political patronage for supporters of the liberal regime,¹³² as well as a means of social mobility. As such it became an instrument of Magyarization in which the educated elites of the nationalities entered public service and were assimilated into Magyardom.¹³³ One Magyar nationalist, who was himself a product of assimilation into Magyardom, wrote of the educational and public administrative systems as two parts of one large machine into which “one feeds a Slovak child on one side, and on the other out comes a Hungarian gentleman.”¹³⁴

Yet more effective than these deliberate assimilative strategies were economic and demographic forces that account for the majority of those who were assimilated. Following the Compromise, the process of industrial development began in earnest. A concomitant of industrialization was growing urbanization, in particular a shift in population from the periphery of Hungary (especially from the so-called *felvidék*) to central Hungary, above all to the newly formed capital of Budapest and Pest county. It was here that Hungarian industry and commerce was heavily concentrated. And it was in the urban centers of Hungary, particularly in Budapest, where Magyarization was most

age fell from 55 per cent in 1867 to 31 per cent in 1914 and to 41.8 per cent for the total population in the same period.” Hoensch, 46.

¹³¹ Janos, 93.

¹³² Of equal importance to creating an administrative infrastructure, Janos observes there “were pressures for accommodating those sectors of the landowning class and the educated public that had consistently supported the leadership of the liberal faction in politics.” Janos, 93.

¹³³ In time it became a deliberate policy of the government to encourage this- “after 1890 it became a tacit policy of the governments to encourage the entry of the upwardly mobile non-Magyar element into bureaucracy, so as to deprive the increasingly restless minorities of an educated elite of their own. Toward the end of the century the bureaucracy, together with the educational system, would not only serve as an avenue of social mobility, but also as an instrument of assimilation and acculturation.” Janos, 111.

¹³⁴ The quote comes from Béla Grünwald in his 1878 work, *A felvidék [The Highlands]*, about the region which is now Slovakia. Janos, 111.

successful.¹³⁵ This development had an impact on the ministry of Heinrich Meyer. When he arrived in Budapest in 1873, there was a large German population in the city, and it was not an impediment that he did not speak Hungarian. After twenty years of ministry in Hungary Meyer still could not speak Hungarian, but around him Budapest was becoming a predominantly Magyar city with a strong current of Magyar national pride, and Meyer soon learned that this posed a serious impediment to his leadership of the Baptist movement. The difficulty for the Magyars was that urbanization left vast numbers of rural minorities among the Rumanians, Ruthenians, Slovaks and others untouched by these assimilative forces.

Over time a growing problem, at least in hindsight, was that Magyar liberalism became increasingly corrupted by Magyar nationalism. Hoensch noted that despite “Deák’s warning to avoid an abuse of state power for the sake of Magyar nationalism and Magyar domination of Hungary’s non-Magyar population, the ruling elites held neither to the letter nor the spirit of the nationalities agreements.”¹³⁶ Increasing administrative and legislative measures were taken to further linguistic Magyarization, with most pressures applied through the educational system to limit instruction in minority languages to the benefit of instruction in and of the Magyar language.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Hoensch gives the following figures: “By 1910... a good third of the population already lived in 145 urban settlements of over 10,000 inhabitants. As a result of the rapid process of assimilation 78.6 per cent of them spoke Hungarian as their first language.” Hoensch, 39. This was most pronounced in Budapest, which was the fastest growing city in Europe from 1867 to 1914. Lukacs, John. Budapest 1900: A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture. New York: Grove Press, 1988. 64. At the time of the Compromise, Buda was a predominantly German city in character, while Pest was an even mix of German and Hungarian speakers. In 1869 Buda had a population of around 70,000 people, while Pest was nearly three times as large at approximately 200,000 inhabitants. Yet despite the huge influx of minorities from the periphery and foreign workers into a united Budapest, of “its 880,000 inhabitants in 1910, 86 per cent spoke Hungarian as their first language.” Hoensch, 39. From the old German patricians of Buda to the simplest Slovak industrial worker, and, most importantly, with the Jewish immigrants from all over central Europe pouring into Budapest to engage in commerce, all were subject to the linguistic homogenization of urban life. Now the language of politics and commerce, knowledge of Hungarian became a key to social mobility.

¹³⁶ Hoensch continued to explain: “Over the years a nationalism which had been originally liberal in character began to identify itself wholly with the traditional Magyar sense of national mission, according to which the Magyar’s historic task in the second half of the nineteenth century was to work as pioneers of the new bourgeois economic, social and cultural progress in eastern Europe and the Balkans and to transmit the achievements of western European civilization to its peoples.” Hoensch, 29.

¹³⁷ John Lukacs gives a quote from Kálmán Tisza from 1875 to explain this crusade for linguistic Magyarization, “There can be only one viable nation within the frontiers of Hungary: that political nation is the Hungarian one. Hungary cannot become an eastern Switzerland because then it would cease to exist.” Lukacs, 126. Against this, however, László Katus cited Prime Minister Tisza also affirming the following: “I have never been and will never be a supporter of forcible Magyarization, because I am convinced that it

It should be no surprise that these administrative pressures, which met with some success with the upwardly mobile elites of the nationalities, largely failed to impact their vast agrarian population. Nor were they as draconian as later presented by some.¹³⁸ In fact Hoensch states that “Despite all its shortcomings, it is still possible to describe the treatment of national minorities in Hungary before the First World War as relatively liberal and tolerable compared with contemporary conditions in eastern and south-east Europe.”¹³⁹ Yet the legacy of Magyar nationalism was not only that it prevented the Hungarian liberal elites from adequately addressing the realities of Hungary’s nationalities problem, but also that it exercised an increasingly corrosive effect upon Hungarian Liberalism. Lukacs observed that it “was nationalism, more than socialism, that destroyed the Liberalism of the nineteenth century”.¹⁴⁰ It was this corrosion of Liberalism that squandered the democratic heritage of 1848 and left it too spent to counter not only the left, but even more so the rising illiberal nationalist right.¹⁴¹

is impossible to spread a nationality or a language by force.” Katus, 453. Katus also noted the argument of the liberal journalist and historian Gusztáv Beksics, who wrote in 1896 that what was desired was the “political assimilation” of the leading classes of the national minorities more than their “grammatical assimilation”, such that they would “feel themselves to be Hungarians, share in the emotions, goals and ambitions of the Magyar nation, and refrain from looking beyond the country’s borders.” To the extent that the knowledge of the Magyar language was desired, it was to promote the possibility of a common national life and political unity shared by all the peoples of Hungary.

¹³⁸ One Hungarian historian argued that “despite the government’s repressive measures, there was no legal discrimination, resettlement, or political pressure to justify the references in historical literature to ‘ruthless Magyarization.’ Detailed census figures show that Magyarization did not touch the great majority of agrarian people.” Jeszenszky, Géza. “Hungary Through World War I and the End of the Dual Monarchy.” *A History of Hungary*. Gen. ed. Peter F. Sugar, Assoc. Ed. Péter Hanák, Ed. Assis. Tibor Frank. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1990. 275.

¹³⁹ Hoensch, 35. The same conclusion was reached by Katus, especially with regard to the “liberal character” of the Nationalities Act of 1868. Katus, 102. Similarly, László Kontler concluded that the hopes of Hungarian liberals that “the extension of individual rights would render collective rights superfluous even in the eyes of the ethnic minorities” was “an illusion” along with the hope for voluntary assimilation. “Nevertheless, it constituted the positive side, the receptiveness of the Hungarian national movement which, especially in urban environments, proved highly successful, not only among Jewish intellectuals or the German burghers of the capital, but among many Slovaks, Serbs, Greeks, Armenians and others as well. From the earliest times that charges of forced Magyarization were levelled against the Hungarian political elite, there was always a fair amount of voluntary Magyarization, too.” Katus, 241–42.

¹⁴⁰ Lukacs, 131.

¹⁴¹ Lukacs observed that Western Social Democrats would find that the masses of Magyar people were more nationalist than liberal, more race-conscious than class-conscious. He speaks of this as “a world-

6. Economic Development under Dualism

During the debates concerning the Compromise József Eötvös expressed the importance of the freedom Hungary had gained over its own affairs and the purpose which now animated the government:

As a result of the Compromise, Hungary has attained such influence over the most essential branches of its state system as it has never exercised. It guarantees its economic welfare and an opportunity for its cultural development to an extent it was unable to achieve previously. We must now utilize the opportunity to build a modern Hungary. The Compromise has resolved the issue of public law and our self-government. The time has come to address the implementation of the 1848 legislation. Who does not feel and see the necessity of reform and progress in all areas? Our development has been violently retarded for centuries.¹⁴²

And indeed Hungary began the process of economic development and modernization during this period. The process of capitalist transformation was also accompanied by profound social and demographic changes during the period of dualism. In 1850 the population of Hungary was 13,800,000, in 1869 it was 15,400,000, and by 1910 it had risen to 20,900,000 despite a net loss of approximately 1.4 million to immigration, mostly to North America.¹⁴³ Also important was the internal migration of rural populations to urban centers, from the periphery of the country to the central regions, and above all the explosive growth of Budapest and Pest County (from 1865 to 1910 Budapest grew from 270,000 to 880,000, while the overall urban population doubled to nearly one-quarter of the population by 1913).¹⁴⁴

The government necessarily had to play a role in this process. The leading figure in economic policy during this time was Menyhért Lónyay, who argued, “The government should assist where private enterprise is unable to help, and it should also permit the free development of private enterprise. It is the state’s duty to act in areas that go beyond the

wide phenomenon: the nationalist illiberalism of the rising democratic masses.” Lukacs, 131.

¹⁴² Katus, 15–16.

¹⁴³ Berend, and Ranki, 25.

¹⁴⁴ Berend, and Ranki, 26.

limits of private activity, but not to provided everything for everyone.”¹⁴⁵ Thus the government took an active role in backing large infrastructure projects, particularly those related to transportation. The rapid expansion of the railway system brought Hungary nearly up to the western European standard, increasing from 2,285 km in 1867 to 22,084 km in 1913.¹⁴⁶ River transport was also greatly expanded.

Capitalist transformation of the structure of the economy was a mixed affair, with less progress seen in agriculture than industry. The first point in regards to agriculture is that while the mode of production was transformed to capitalistic wage labor and modern mechanized and intensive farming methods were increasingly adopted, in “the half-century after the Compromise no essential change took place in the structure of Hungarian landownership”.¹⁴⁷ In other words, capitalist modes of production were grafted onto an essentially unchanged feudalistic distribution of land ownership. The large estates continued to dominate and were protected by new legislation while the average peasant farmer’s position often grew weaker¹⁴⁸ despite limited government intervention to help.¹⁴⁹ In 1895 the latifundia with estates of 1000 *hold* or more represented only 0.2% of farms, but held 32.3% of the land area, while the poorest farmers of 5 *hold* or less represented 53.6% of farms, but only 5.8% of the land area.¹⁵⁰ In short, peasant-sized

¹⁴⁵ Katus, 194.

¹⁴⁶ Berend, and Ranki, 38.

¹⁴⁷ Berend, and Ranki, 41.

¹⁴⁸ The practice among Magyar peasant farmers, in contrast with the large estates of the aristocracy which continued to be entailed, was to divide their estates evenly among their heirs. This obviously led to a severe problem: “in 1895, when the last pre-war agricultural survey was taken, over two million of the 2,800,000 holdings in the country were of 10 *hold* or less, three quarters of these being under 5 *hold* and 600,000 of them under one. Many of these last were, indeed, vineyards or market gardens, or belonged to persons whose main occupation was not agriculture; but against these must be set the smaller holdings in the 5-10 *hold* group. The minimum on which a family could exist was generally put at 8 *hold*, so that it appears that nearly half the landowning population of the country was existing on plots insufficient to meet their necessities.” Macartney, 194. A traditional Hungarian *hold* was just over one acre or 0.43 hectare.

¹⁴⁹ To support the peasant farmers the state took several steps. “Among these were laws which settled questions left over from the emancipation in favor of the peasant (eg, abolition of the surviving tithe on vineyards), the consolidation of scattered plots to form more viable peasant holdings, and settlement schemes at the end of the century which, with the co-operation of the state, made available to the peasantry small amounts of land not needed by the great landowners.” Berend, and Ranki, 42.

¹⁵⁰ In between these two extremes the following figures apply: holdings of 5-20 *hold* were 35.3% of farms and 23.6% of total land area, 20-100 *hold* holdings were 10.1% of farms and 22.9% of land area, while the larger estates of 100-1000 *hold* were only 0.8% of farms, but held 15.4% of total land area.

holdings of 100 *hold* or less represented 99% of farms, but only 52% of the land. It was only in animal husbandry that peasant farmers were predominant.¹⁵¹ The unequal distribution of land and the poor working and living conditions¹⁵² of the agricultural proletariat resulted in rising disturbances and strikes. In 1897 to 1898 eastern Hungary experienced mass strikes of agricultural workers, rioting, and spontaneous land distribution which prompted military intervention and mass arrests. Parliament responded in 1898 with the passage of the so-called “Slave Law” which governed contracts between employers and the agricultural workers; it introduced severe penalties for strikes, while also attempting to ameliorate the worst abuses and regulate agricultural wages.¹⁵³ A connection was frequently drawn between the poor conditions of the peasantry and agricultural proletariat and the rise of the sects. In 1888 the Lutheran minister Lajos Zsigmond Szeberényi wrote about the rise of the Nazarenes, an Anabaptistic sect which was making serious inroads among the Hungarian peasantry.¹⁵⁴ He argued that because of

Berend, and Ranki, 42.

¹⁵¹ Berend, and Ranki, 48.

¹⁵² As Berend and Ranki elaborate, “The living conditions of farm servants are best illustrated by the fact that 96 per cent of their dwellings were in buildings shared with stables. Disease was rampant in these conditions...Compared with these conditions, becoming an industrial worker generally brought with it an improvement in one’s circumstances - even if rural tradition, attachment to the land, and a repugnance toward industrial discipline generally made the farm laborer aspire to obtain a piece of land rather than become an industrial worker. In the cities, for one thing, however far down the social scale the workers lived and however wretched their living conditions..., they were still free of feudal restrictions, arbitrary landlords, and laws restricting the free sale of their labor.” Berend, and Ranki, 83.

¹⁵³ Kontler, 293.

¹⁵⁴ The Nazarenes did not restrict themselves just to the Magyar peasantry. They also penetrated the Serbian peasantry in both Hungary and also Serbia. Bojan Aleksov studied their growth and wrote: “Like their predecessors in the sixteenth century radical reformation sects, the early Nazarenes were also peasants and small craftsmen, burdened with high tithes and frequent wars, and similarly responded to the reformers’ appeal for lay-oriented congregations that would subscribe only to biblical authority and not to an overbearing central church or state. Their social and economic dissatisfaction found expression in religious dissent and mounting defection from the state churches and conversion into a self-help sect where they could gain social identity and self affirmation.” Aleksov, Bojan. Religious Dissent Between the Modern and the National: Nazarenes in Hungary and Serbia 1850 - 1914. Balkanologische Veröffentlichungen - Osteuropa-Institut der Freien Universität Berlin. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006. 185.

the poor economic situation of much of the peasantry and the alienation of the clergy from their flock, the Nazarenes were able to take advantage of these problem, and thus “in this respect the Nazarenes play the same role in Hungary which socialism plays abroad.”¹⁵⁵

While the industrial sector made more progress in capitalist transformation, it also suffered from imbalance. There was an imbalance in the heavy concentration of industry in large-scale enterprises, which dominated in comparison to small- and medium-scale industry. At the beginning of the twentieth century large industrial enterprises were only 0.9% of firms, but they employed 51% of all industrial workers.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, one sector of industry dominated over the others. Given the agrarian strengths of Hungary, there was an imbalance in the predominance of the food industry of Hungary.¹⁵⁷ For a while Budapest was the world’s largest milling center, until eclipsed by Minneapolis at the turn of the century, and was the second leading exporter of flour after the United States.¹⁵⁸ Likewise, Hungarian commerce was characterized by raw and finished agricultural exports, while finished goods imports were dominant, primarily industrial articles.¹⁵⁹

Because industrialization was not an organic process in Hungary, but rather it was pursued as a deliberate program of development, the state had a special role in the process, which, beyond the transportation infrastructure projects they backed, was to encourage the influx of foreign capital.¹⁶⁰ The success of this policy can be seen in that industrial growth was primarily the product of foreign investment much more so than domestic capital accumulation and investment. This leads to a contested question- was

¹⁵⁵ Bíró, Sándor, Mihály Bucsay, Endre Tóth, and Zoltán Varga. A magyar református egyház története [The History of the Hungarian Reformed Church]. Introd. by Imre Révész. Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1949. 380.

¹⁵⁶ Berend, and Ranki, 62.

¹⁵⁷ Berend, and Ranki, 62.

¹⁵⁸ Katus, 244.

¹⁵⁹ Berend, and Ranki, 66.

¹⁶⁰ Berend and Ranki state, “By and large, state activity was effective only to the degree that it created attractive conditions for foreign capital, in particular by making investment secure and profitable. Thus the unique factor in the capitalist transformation was not so much direct state intervention as the influx and collaboration of foreign capital.” Berend, and Ranki, 70.

Hungary's economic development aided or retarded by Austria?¹⁶¹ A balanced answer is given by Hoensch, who argues that "Hungary was by no means an economically exploited country held in a condition of dependence on Austria, but as it was modernized [it] had to adapt to prevailing conditions in the Monarchy and accept a delay in its socio-economic transformation and the prolongation of its traditional economic structure".¹⁶² This uneven process of capitalist transformation delayed Hungary's own industrial development and led to imbalances in that development, which preserved more feudal socio-economic structures in Hungary alongside newly emerging capitalistic socio-economic formations.

The social impact of modernization can be seen by the changing distribution of the gainfully occupied population. In 1890 80% of the population was employed in agriculture, but this had dropped to 64.5% in 1910. During the same period the percentage of people working in industry grew from 8.6% to 17.1% and in transport and trade from 2.9% to 6.5%. Even so, the agricultural proletariat and dwarf-holders forced to seek outside farm work to supplement their incomes (who made up 39% and 15% of agricultural wage-earners respectively in 1900), vastly outnumbered the industrial proletariat and comprised one third of the entire employed population of Hungary.¹⁶³ This provides the context to the growth patterns experienced by the Hungarian Baptist mission under Dualism, which began in the urban context of Budapest, but only grew dramatically when it penetrated the Magyar peasantry in its agricultural heartland.

In retrospect, although Hungary's social and economic structure underwent substantial change, "it was not fundamentally transformed," and its role as the breadbasket of the empire remained unchanged, such that all sectors of the economy "retained many elements of its earlier backwardness".¹⁶⁴ Not only was there a growing

¹⁶¹ Hanák phrases the issue thusly: "The proper historical question is not whether this partnership had advantages or disadvantages - it obviously had both - but rather, in what proportion these were to each other." To which he answers, "In the short run, and from the point of view of launching the industrial revolution, the advantages of the economic partnership are obvious; but in the long run, and from the point of view of the organic and balanced development of industry, the disadvantages seem more obvious." The disadvantages stem from the imbalance created in Hungary by uneven development: "it can be concluded that the partnership with a more developed Austria helped to retard the transformation of the economic and social structure to preserve social conditions and relations of production inherited from feudalism." Hanák, "The Dual Monarchy," 358.

¹⁶² Hoensch, 43.

¹⁶³ Berend, and Ranki, 78.

¹⁶⁴ Berend, and Ranki, 90.

gap between the cities and the semi-feudal villages, but also within the industrial and agricultural sectors existed disparate economic modes of production.¹⁶⁵ Berend and Ranki conclude that the picture that emerges is of “a belated industrial revolution, inconsistently carried through - indeed never really completed, but rather halted before it was finished”.¹⁶⁶ The problem with this uneven sectoral and regional capitalist development was that it became a “significant and growing source of tensions in the social and political structure, particularly because [it] largely coincided with the main fault lines of class status and ethnic origin.”¹⁶⁷

7. Hungarian Society under Dualism

Hungarian society under dualism was also characterized by an incomplete process of bourgeois transformation, in which the traditional ruling classes retained their predominance, rising bourgeois elites were assimilated into the ruling classes, and many feudal aspects remained in the social order. This was more apparent in the countryside, yet even in Budapest the social hierarchy was determined by feudal considerations. A summary of social distinctions is given by Hanák:

In Hungarian society during the age of dualism, the dividing line was not so much between the propertied and the unpropertied, but between those who were considered gentlemen and those who were not. In the first category belong those who possessed landed estates, titles of nobility, family trees, or the diploma entitling them to an officer's commission. The second category comprised the peasant masses, workers, the lower sections of society, that is to say, “the lower classes.” The chasm between the two was unbridgeable.¹⁶⁸

There was more social mobility during dualism than previously, particularly for Jews who played a leading role in the new capitalist economy, yet Hungarian society made only limited progress in transcending feudal social distinctions on the road to a bourgeois civil society.

¹⁶⁵ Berend and Ranki summarize, “Relatively rapid advance, combined with a level of development which still remained basically low, turned Hungarian economic life into a peculiar conglomerate, in which sectors reflecting the most disparate economic forms and levels could be found alongside one another.” Berend, and Ranki, 75.

¹⁶⁶ Berend, and Ranki, 90.

¹⁶⁷ Katus, 287.

¹⁶⁸ Hanák, “The Dual Monarchy,” 360.

At the top of the social hierarchy remained the landed aristocracy and well-to-do gentry.¹⁶⁹ Hanák notes, “Even among the gentlemen only the aristocracy and the landowners belonging to the nobility counted as ‘real’ gentlemen”.¹⁷⁰ They continued to maintain their leading position at court, in the diplomatic corps, in parliament and the political parties, as well as in cultural and financial spheres. Alongside the aristocracy, the ‘thousand *hold* men’ formed the “real backbone of the big landowning class... These ... wealthy members of the former middle nobility, with their roots deep in the landowning class, ... occupied the leading positions in government, parliament and the county organizations”.¹⁷¹ As industry and finance developed one could begin to speak of “two aristocracies in Budapest: the older landowning one, and the newer financial one,” yet despite the assimilation of the financial aristocracy to the leading social classes, they were nevertheless aware of their “relative social inferiority compared to the old nobility”.¹⁷² A few of these had their roots in the old bourgeoisie, non-Magyar immigrants who settled in Hungary’s urban centers. Foremost among these were the German patricians of Buda and Pest, but Greeks, Serbs and others were represented. Yet the ascendant group was clearly the newly emancipated Jews, who came to control the leading positions in finance and industry.¹⁷³ Even though the economic power of the Jewish financial oligarchy exceeded that of the aristocracy, “Their political and social influence .. was considerably less... [They] could only play the part of silent partners in political leadership and their power

¹⁶⁹ Hoensch gives the following figures: “6 per cent of the population were members of the nobility; among the Magyars the figure was 12-13 per cent. Some 200 aristocratic and wealthy land owning families, together with approximately 3,000 wealthy families of the middle-ranking landowners, who as “thousand *hold* men” owned estates of over 575 hectares (the so-called *bene possessionati*), dominated public life by virtue of their education and income.” Hoensch, 36.

¹⁷⁰ Hanák, “The Dual Monarchy,” 360.

¹⁷¹ Hanák, “The Dual Monarchy,” 361.

¹⁷² Lukacs, 84.

¹⁷³ Hoensch describes their rise as follows: “By the turn of the century a financial oligarchy had developed which consisted of about 50 families. These families controlled all the key positions in a rapidly developing economy, but did not challenge the social predominance of the aristocracy. Indeed, they tried to ape their lifestyle in external appearances which went as far as the ennoblement of 346 Jewish families of the haute bourgeoisie. Twenty-eight were made barons and many acquired large estates, with the result that before the First World War Jews owned a fifth of Hungary’s major estates. But although some Jews were represented in the Upper House, the financial bourgeoisie from which they emerged was content to share power only indirectly.” Hoensch, 37–38.

could only be exercised indirectly”.¹⁷⁴ In fact, they tended to emulate the habits and lifestyle of the upper gentry more than those of the nobility (such as acquiring a country estate).¹⁷⁵

Superior to the financial aristocracy in the social hierarchy, despite their economic inferiority, was the Hungarian gentry.¹⁷⁶ At the top were the few who were able to retain their estates and successfully adjust to the capitalist transformation of agriculture.¹⁷⁷ But for the majority who lost their connection with the land, the overwhelming preference was to enter the bureaucratic service over business, be it commerce, finance or industry, or even the professions.¹⁷⁸ The gentry permeated all levels of the bureaucracy, dominating all but the highest levels of government service. With this transition, they “formed the nucleus of an emergent urban bourgeoisie comprising assimilated groups and Magyar social climbers of petty-bourgeois or peasant origin.”¹⁷⁹ The social power of the gentry came in part from their own self-perception “as the truly national and historical class, the

¹⁷⁴ Hanák, “The Dual Monarchy,” 362.

¹⁷⁵ Lukacs, 94.

¹⁷⁶ The term *dzentri*, borrowed from the English word ‘gentry’, became common around the 1880’s, and entered the language based upon a comparison of the Hungarian petty nobility with the English squirearchy. Like the English gentry, their Magyar counterparts were seen as a class that was “proud rather than fashionable, they seemed to represent the essence of the race.” Lukacs, 90. The comparison went beyond their socio-economic similarity, rather the point was the “widespread belief that the main representatives of English and Hungarian freedom were the independent landed gentry class, with its inherited sense of traditional freedoms, practice of self-government, and taste for country life.” Lukacs, 88.

¹⁷⁷ The gentry, in fact, did not adjust well to this transformation: “Between the ending of serfdom and 1867 the number .. fell by half, and in the next fifty years it fell by half again.” Jeszenszky, 276.

¹⁷⁸ Kovács explained this reluctance: “the professions held little appeal for the gentry, who were still attracted to more traditional careers in the bureaucracy. Old habits, old cultural inhibitions, die hard. A nobleman’s upbringing made the notion of professional ‘service’ to an inferior personally humiliating. Medical work was particularly troubling. So, to avoid having to serve a social inferior, a true gentleman in need of a living would think twice before choosing a modern occupation. If necessary, he would rather become a veterinarian than a physician. After all, horses were still quite respectable.” Kovács, Mária M. Liberal Professions and Illiberal Politics: Hungary from the Hapsburgs to the Holocaust. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994. 17.

¹⁷⁹ Hoensch, 37. Lukacs noted that “Sometime after 1890 the term and meaning of ‘gentry’ in Budapest - though not yet in the provinces - began to overlap with another term, that of the ‘gentlemanly middle class’ (úri középosztály), suggesting at least an increase in their identification with urbanity.” Lukacs, 89.

flag-bearers of Hungarian independence.”¹⁸⁰ They held this position until the twentieth century when the middle-class began to polarize.¹⁸¹

Below the gentry and the financial aristocracy were the other members of the middle class, coming from different backgrounds and engaged in different occupations and professions. The range was from small entrepreneurs, landlords and retailers to the practitioners of the free professions- doctors, lawyers, engineers and academics. Yet despite this heterogeneity, overall the “mentality, lifestyle, and behavior of this mixed group was determined by the traditional values and ‘gentry mentality’ of the nobility”.¹⁸² The defining aspect was their cultivation of gentlemanly habits and social exclusiveness.¹⁸³

Without the financial means to cultivate a gentlemanly lifestyle were the petty bourgeoisie, the degraded artisans, small shopkeepers, minor office workers, foremen, apartment superintendents, non-commissioned officers and the lesser forms of the civil service among others who were not upwardly mobile. Economically weak and disunited, they grew to resent Hungarian capitalism and the haute bourgeoisie in addition to their historical hostility to Austria, and as such they “became the mass base of the anti-liberal, nationalist landowning opposition”.¹⁸⁴

After the 1890’s the fastest growing social formation were the industrial working classes, which by 1910 accounted for 13% of the population.¹⁸⁵ There was social stratification among the workers as well, with a more advanced social consciousness and economic organization existing among the better-off skilled workers than among the unskilled or transitional workers who lived in poverty. The latter were more prone to

¹⁸⁰ Lukacs, 90.

¹⁸¹ It was primarily the younger generation of the Jewish bourgeoisie and other members of the urban intelligentsia who after the turn of the century decided to “be free of gentry leadership and feudal-nationalist traditions... Only then did the germs of a real ‘middle-class’ of the radical, anti-feudal bourgeois type emerge.” Hanák, “The Dual Monarchy,” 363.

¹⁸² Jeszenszky, 276.

¹⁸³ Katus recounted the explanation of a contemporary sociologist as to what was required for a middle-class way of life: “a city apartment with at least three rooms, a house with a garden in the country, at least one domestic employee, a three-course meal for lunch, second-class rail travel [the lowest was third-class] and summer holidays with relatives in the country or at one of the Monarch’s spas.” Katus, 303.

¹⁸⁴ Hanák, “The Dual Monarchy,” 363.

¹⁸⁵ Jeszenszky, 277.

violent outbreaks of rebellion than to organized actions for reform. Despite various revolutionary trends, the growth of trade unionism and social democratic political agitation among the working classes, overall the working class did not successfully transcend Magyar nationalism. In fact, the assimilative pressures of urbanization continued to facilitate the increasing Magyarization of the working class, particularly in Budapest.¹⁸⁶

The largest social group remained the peasantry, whose dress, social customs and village lifestyle separated them not only from the noble landowners, but also from the various urban classes. The devolution of the feudal mode of agricultural production and the transition to a capitalist mode of production increased stratification among the peasantry. Other factors came into play as well, “The peasantry was strongly divided not only to the fundamental class stratification but also according to nationality and degree of *embourgeoisement*; in addition, there were differences between regions and forms of settlement”.¹⁸⁷ Despite regional and sociological differences,¹⁸⁸ overall the small section of the peasantry who benefited from the urban settlement or were able to introduce intensive farming methods became prosperous yeoman farmers on the road to *embourgeoisement*. In the middle were those who had to struggle to survive on their own land to maintain their economic independence. Worse off yet were those with dwarf holdings who needed to supplement their income through other means, these were on the road to proletarianization. At the bottom was the agricultural proletariat, either farm servants tied to their employer’s land, or seasonal and migratory workers. Those on the road to proletarianization and those who had arrived supplied the labor pool for the growing industrial proletariat, and with no social mobility, they also accounted for the greatest number of emigrants who left Hungary during the period of dualism, particularly from the national minorities.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Hanák, “The Dual Monarchy,” 363.

¹⁸⁷ Hanák, “The Dual Monarchy,” 364.

¹⁸⁸ The peasantry in Transdanubia, around the larger cities, and in certain sections of the Great Plain often did better than those in Transisza, Transylvania, the Highlands and southern Hungary, although regional differences in farming traditions and other socio-economic factors played a role. Hanák, “The Dual Monarchy,” 364.

¹⁸⁹ László Katus provides a helpful discussion of the dividing line between those peasants considered rich or of middle stature and those who struggled, and the various regional differences which accounted in part for the ease or difficulty in achieving success. He follows this with an overview of the

Hungarian society under dualism never lived up to the best ideas of the Revolution of 1848. The process of bourgeois transformation and the creation of a civil society in which social function and prestige was based more upon merit than heredity was never fully realized. A good family tree continued to be a much more important indicator of social status than wealth or achievement. The well respected historian Gyula Szekfű wrote:

The paper standards of the legislature of 1848 were not strong enough to destroy the old social framework and establish a new one: equality before the law among the aristocratic, noble and peasant classes in the social arena was realized only in a nominal sense; the feudal system no longer exists, but the magnate class, the gentry and the peasants, that is, the small farmers and cotters, are still separate individuals, who are kept together by little more than a barely conscious feeling of a broader Hungarian community.¹⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the halting capitalist transformation of socio-economic life did afford some opportunity for social mobility among the urban classes, primarily in Budapest, which dominated Hungary's urban life.¹⁹¹ That is because while wealth was not the most important indicator of social status, it did afford its possessors the opportunity to live the life of a gentleman. This was important in a society with an intense concern, "the desire for respectability, which involved all classes of the population."¹⁹² But for those on the lower levels of Hungarian society, there continued to be a large gap between them and those who enjoyed bourgeois respectability. One reason the rise of the Nazarenes and the Baptists was both feared and ridiculed by the clergy of the historic churches and by their compatriots in government was because it was a movement of peasants and the urban lower classes. The Hungarian bishop and theologian Ottokár Prohászka, who was a leader

differences among the agricultural proletariat. Katus, 307–10.

¹⁹⁰ Katus, 313.

¹⁹¹ Hoensch observed that the "city's elevated position as Hungary's economic and cultural capital was underlined by the fact that Greater Budapest with its ribbon development of suburbs contained only 5.1 per cent of the country's total population but 28 per cent of its workforce and two-thirds of its major industry. Hungary's provincial centers suffered as a result of the capital's dynamic growth... A third of Hungary's towns, including half of its major cities with only 50,000 inhabitants remained typical market towns with a pronounced village character, especially in the outlying areas." Hoensch, 39.

¹⁹² Lukacs, 100.

of the Catholic renewal and an advocate of Christian socialism at the beginning of the twentieth century wrote:

The spirit of feudalism still thrives in Hungary, with regard to the antagonism between noble and peasant. In this regard, the pre-1848 period lives on, not on paper or in legislative paragraphs, but in the sentiment of the social classes. The old dividing line between noble and peasant is still drawn today ... [because] the noble does not regard the peasant as a full person, still less as a brother, but rather, in the old constitutional manner, as a semi-idiot.¹⁹³

This attitude was reflected by the Protestant ministers who struggled against the Baptist peasant evangelists, the village officials who supported the clergy, and even by erstwhile liberal government officials and members of parliament who held that toleration of the sects was necessary in a modern society, but who rejected the possibility of granting peasants engaged in ministry equal status with the educated clergy of the historic churches. While the sects and their members struggled to realize equal treatment under the law, Hungarian society during the period of Dualism continued to be stratified by social, economic, and ethnic divisions which were counter to the best ideals of the revolutionary struggle they honored and cherished.

¹⁹³ Katus, 313.

Chapter 3

Pioneers and Pilgrims

The First Attempt to Establish a Baptist Movement in Hungary

1. The Religious Situation in Hungary from the Reform Period through Neo-Absolutism

1.1. From the Reform Period through the Revolution of 1848

Religious life in Hungary during the Reform Period was one of internal decay in terms of spiritual vitality. This was masked, however, by the Magyar national revival and the preoccupation of the religious elite with the political questions of the day and, from the Protestant point of view, the intersection of these concerns with their own struggles for religious equality against an intolerant Catholic hierarchy which enjoyed a great measure of privilege and protection from Vienna, a long struggle which had sapped their strength. Two factors dominated life in the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary. First, the legacy of Josephinism was very much alive, which subordinated the hierarchy of the Church to the interests of the Habsburg dynasty and made her a servant to the state. The arrangement could be described as a golden cage in which the Church was entrapped. During the very conservative reign of Franz I (1792-1835), the stagnation of church life under the strict supervision of the state had the ironic effect of a decay of spiritual vigor in the face of the spirit of the age, a cultural movement to which the regime was opposed, the *Aufklärung*.¹ It was this experience of the symbiotic relationship of the Roman

¹ The enlightened despot Joseph II was of course influenced by the ideas of the day, and sought to curb the power of the Catholic Church to carry out his program of reform in the empire. His attempt at absolutist centralism in the end foundered upon Hungarian resistance. Hungarian Protestants nevertheless benefited enormously from his reign by means of the Edict of Toleration issued in 1781. These freedoms were then secured by law with the seventeen articles of the Diet of 1791 under the brief reign of his successor, Leopold II. However, Franz I was able to continue the practices of Josephinism in regard to the Catholic Church with the opposite spirit of his predecessor. Of this Adriányi wrote: "Im Interesse seines politischen Systems erniedrigte der Staat die Kirche zu seiner Dienerin, erlaubte ihr nicht, zeitgemäße und nötige Reformen durchzuführen, und tat alles, um den innen- und religionspolitischen Status quo zu zementieren. Bald waren die Folgen auch im religiösen Leben zu spüren. Es fehlte an Führungsgestalten der Kirche, die Aufklärung und der Indifferentismus eroberten die Seelen, die josephenistisch erzogenen Priester vernachlässigten ihre seelsorgerischen Pflichten, ihre Disziplin war gelockert und ihre Lebensweise dem modischen Zeitgeist angepaßt. Je länger das josephenistische Staatssystem dauerte, um so verheerender wirkte sich dies auf die Kirche aus." Adriányi, Gabriel. Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte Ungarns. Studia Hungarica 30. München: Rudolf Trofenik, 1986. 111.

Catholic Church and the Austrian state under Josephinism and the inroads of enlightenment ideas that prepared the way for the next current from the West that came to dominate the life of the churches in Hungary for much of the nineteenth century, liberalism.²

The development of liberalism among the Catholic clergy of Hungary was at first an aspect of the wider impact of liberalism upon Hungarian society that characterized the Reform Era. Just as political Liberalism expressed the national aspirations of the Hungarian people against Habsburg attempts to subjugate Hungary to their own dynastic interests, so was Catholic liberalism a reform movement aimed against reversing the subjection of the Church to the conservative Josephinism of the Crown along democratic lines.³ This movement reached its climax during the revolutionary upheaval of 1848.

Likewise among the Protestant churches there was a dearth of spiritual vitality. This can be attributed to two factors. The first was the prevalence of rationalistic theology and a dry formalism among the Protestant clergy. Kool observed, “The spirit of the Enlightenment with its more and more ‘vulgar’ rationalism and moralism, once it had found its way into the Hungarian Protestant Churches, held sway for an unusually long time. After its day had waned everywhere else, it remained in power in Hungary for almost half a century. Not even circles regarding themselves as most orthodox could escape its influences.”⁴

The second factor was the preoccupation of Protestant clergy and laity alike with political matters. To be sure, part of the political struggle was to defend historic

² While Josephinism was harmful to the Church, Adriányi saw the rise of Liberalism in the Church, first in the West, and then also in Hungary, as more pernicious still: “Die Symbiose von Staat und Kirche, die staatliche Ingerenz, erwies sich aber [in Ungarn] für die Kirche noch gefährlicher, als in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 19. Jahrhunderts eine gewaltige neue Strömung die westliche Welt erfaßte, der Liberalismus. Die Aufklärung löste mit ihren Zauberworten ‘Freiheit und Gleichheit’ die Religion ab, die Religion verlor ihre frühere zentrale Bedeutung; und so büßten auch die Kirche und der Klerus ihren Einfluß ein. Die gleiche Entwicklung zeichnete sich auch in Ungarn zwei Jahrzehnte später ab.” Adriányi, 111–12.

³ Later in Dualist Hungary Catholic Liberalism was primarily a phenomenon of the upper hierarchy in symbiotic relationship with the Liberal Hungarian regime, although a stream of radical Catholic Liberals who wanted a separation of church and state and a greater role for the laity remained. Ultramontanism was mostly found among the lower clergy, who were not bound by golden chains to the regime as was the episcopacy. Adriányi observed: “Der Episkopat hatte keine Aussicht, über den liberalen Zeitgeist zu siegen. Ihm blieb nach der Machtübernahme durch die Liberalen nichts anderes übrig, als sich mit der Regierungspartei zu verständigen.” Adriányi, 121.

⁴ Kool, Anna Maria. God Moves in a Mysterious Way: The Hungarian Protestant Foreign Mission Movement (1756–1951). MISSION.4. Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1993. 38.

Protestant rights against ongoing encroachments by the Catholic clergy⁵. The Protestants were constantly fighting to have mixed marriages legally recognized⁶, and to prevent the practice of “reversal”, by which the Catholic Church insisted that all offspring resulting from mixed marriages belonged to Rome.⁷ In addition, they fought to remove the numerous obstacles that were employed by the Catholic clergy to prevent conversions to a Protestant church.

Attempts to redress these grievances through appeals to the Crown or through efforts to pass legislation at dietal assemblies met with only limited success. Such a battle erupted at the Diet of 1843-44, when Count Zay, Inspector General of the Lutheran Church, gathered together the Protestants at the Diet and arranged to have them present a petition concerning their grievances to the Palatine⁸, the Archduke Joseph, addressed to the Crown. It was widely circulated, and its tone and intent can be gathered from the following excerpt: “Our freedom is trampled on, and the religious convictions of our brethren are subjected to arbitrary commands. Foreign powers exercise their subtle influences over our faculties. The efficacy of our schools is destroyed; our independence is hampered; we are treated as if our religion were a crime. Promises made to us by the government lie dead on the statute-book, and those who demand their right are treated like rebels.”⁹ The Palatine, though sympathetic, regretted the petition because he

⁵ George Bárány described the context of the battles over religious affairs during this period. Following the Edict of Toleration issued by Joseph II in 1781, the Diet of 1790-1791 translated these gains into public law. Bárány described Act 26 of 1790 as the “Magna Charta of Hungarian Protestantism.” This act granted Calvinist and Lutheran Churches full autonomy in religious and educational affairs, but fell short of Protestant goals of equality in the area of mixed marriages, the religious upbringing of children from mixed marriages, and the conversion of Catholics to Protestantism. Thus Bárány noted: “During the reform Diets, the debates on religious affairs focused on the issues left ambiguous by Act 26 of 1790.” Bárány, 35.

⁶ These were almost always performed by Protestant pastors, since the Catholic priests often insisted on conversion to Rome as a precondition to the marriage ceremony. Moreover, the Catholic hierarchy used its considerable power over matriculation to block recognition by the civil authorities of mixed marriages performed by Protestant clergy.

⁷ Since the Catholic Church also wielded great power over the registration of births, she was able to continue this practice against the wishes of the parties involved or the Protestant Churches, sometimes using physical coercion with the help of civil authorities to force the matter.

⁸ An ancient office, the Palatine was the King’s representative in Hungary.

⁹ Bauhofer, Georg. History of the Protestant Church in Hungary: From the Beginning of the Reformation to 1850. Trans. J. Craig, Rev., Introd. by J. H. Merle D’Aubigné. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1854. 530.

anticipated a firestorm in response to it. Indeed debate at the Diet proved to be most fiery.¹⁰ The Protestant cause had a good deal of support in the lower house, which associated it with the national one and the cause of democratic reform.¹¹ The problem was in the Upper House, where the Catholic liberals, such as Lajos Batthyány, József Eötvös, and Széchenyi were locked in a battle with the Catholic hierarchy and conservative magnates who were opposed to reform to find a compromise acceptable to the Upper House and the Court.¹²

The result was the passage of Article III in both houses, which then received royal sanction. Article III was a victory for the Protestant cause because it retroactively made mixed marriages solemnized by Protestant clergy legal, and further provided an explicit legal framework by which a Roman Catholic could convert to a Protestant church despite the opposition of his or her priest.¹³ The victory was partial, however, because the Diet did not address the difficult problem of reversals.¹⁴ Neither was the liberal principle yet embraced that the petition posed as a solution to the religious strife disrupting the social order. As Bauhofer summarized, the petition “closed with the assertion that nothing short of a complete equality and reciprocity between citizens, as such, and independent of their faith, would ever bring peace and harmony to the land.”¹⁵ Bárány concluded that the

¹⁰ One particular outburst which earned the rebuke of the Palatine was delivered by the Lutheran Count Zay, an ardent Magyar nationalist, who was outraged at the recent pastoral writings of the hierarchy regarding mixed marriages and launched a brutal attack against the Catholic clergy. During his speech he quoted an unidentified “distinguished man” as saying: “If our Saviour returned from heaven to earth, he would not be crucified by the Jews but rather by the hierarchy.” Bárány, 42.

¹¹ Bárány cited the 1841 article “The Evolution of Democracy in Our Fatherland” by the liberal Catholic priest and historian Mihály Horváth to draw the connection between political and religious reform in Hungary. Those who sought to advance the cause of equality had to fight not only the secular power of the monarchy, but also the ecclesiastical power of the Roman Catholic Church, which was intimately intertwined with the aristocracy and the monarchy. Horváth observed: “Are not the foremost liberals the most vehement attackers of the Church? ... This force emanates primarily from amidst the lower nobility, in clearest proof that this is where democracy has put down its strongest roots.” Bárány, 32.

¹² Bárány, 38–43.

¹³ Bauhofer, 532–33.

¹⁴ Bauhofer, 528. A Royal Resolution, dated July 5, 1843, had attempted a resolution of the problem of reversals by dictating that the religious education of children in mixed marriages be left to the discretion of the parents. This solution pleased nobody. Therefore the magnates proposed a different solution, which was to give the power of the decision to the father. This proposal fared no better. Reversal thus remained a thorn of contention.

¹⁵ Bauhofer, 531.

passage of the reform legislation was a sign of the changing social and political culture in Hungary. “There can be no doubt that this first major modification of Act 26 of 1790, which met Protestant grievances at least partially, was largely attributable to the inroads secular Magyar nationalism had made into the privileged preserves of both Church and royal authority. As shown in the dietal debates, Hungarian patriotism per se became a superior criterion to which a certain moral value began to be attached.”¹⁶

Thus the preoccupation of Protestant leaders, both clergy and lay leaders alike, with political matters was not restricted to the defense of Protestant rights. Rather, Protestant grievances against Catholic abuses were seen within the wider framework of the rise of Magyar nationalism and liberalism which characterized the Reform Period, which sought to bring Hungary up to modern liberal standards politically and economically in the face of Habsburg autocracy and Hungary’s economic subordination to Austria. With the flowering of Magyar nationalism and liberalism, religion itself became politicized¹⁷. While the most vigorous efforts of the Habsburgs to sponsor the Counter-Reformation in Hungary had come to an end under Joseph II, in an effort to use religion as a unifying factor in the empire the Crown still championed Roman Catholicism as “the Hungarian national religion.”¹⁸ In contrast to this, Protestant freedom came to be identified with the cause of national freedom. As the Reform Era progressed, the “Roman Catholic Church gladly allied itself with the feudal system and taught the Habsburg State that Protestantism seemed to be very mixed up with what were coming to be called ‘democratic ideas’, and also that Protestants were responsible for a decline in the moral standards of the nation. Therefore, the Court, too, came to think of Protestants as mere revolutionaries.”¹⁹ Indeed the leading figures of the revolution were Protestants,

¹⁶ Bárány, 43.

¹⁷ This politicization of religion was not merely a Protestant phenomena. Indeed, the debates concerning religious reforms as it related to Catholic Uniates and the Orthodox within the Kingdom, particularly in relation to the problem of Uniates converting to Orthodoxy, were fraught with political concerns. As Bárány observed: “Although the Diet of 1843-44 succeeded in dealing with a substantial portion of the Protestant’s grievances, the ‘Orthodox Question’ remained unanswered. Indeed, it was politicized as much as the Protestant problem used to be and also had serious international implications.” Bárány, 58. Part of the problem was the fear of Pan-Slavism and the intentions of the Russian Czar in the region on the part of liberals imbued with Magyar nationalism, while conservative Catholics resented the persecution of Catholics under the Czar.

¹⁸ Kool, 37.

¹⁹ Kool, 36.

and Hungarian independence was proclaimed in the Reformed Church of Debrecen.

Religion not only became political, but also tribal. In other words, the rise of Hungarian nationalism and other ethnic particularisms infected the realm of religious identity. The Roman Catholic Church played it both ways, claiming to be the “national religion” of the dominant nation within multinational Hungary, but also stressing its Christian universalism and its role as a point of unity within an empire increasingly subjected to the destructive centrifugal effects of nationalism. This dual role was not out of context for the Church of Rome, in contrast to the various Orthodox churches of the national minorities, which tended to emphasize the role of national church over Christian universalism. Yet ethnic particularism was not foreign to the Protestant churches. Even before Calvinism became known as the “Magyar religion”²⁰, this was demonstrated by the unsuccessful attempt at Protestant unity undertaken by the Inspector General of the Lutheran Church, Count Károly Zay. According to Bauhofer, after the return of a measure of peace and reconciliation to the ethnically divided Protestant community²¹, the election of Zay again brought strife. The reason: “The two great ideas which Count Charles Zay zealously maintained, were those of nationality and of union. The German, Slavonian [Slovak], and Hungarian elements he wished to unite, and to bring the two sister Churches to combine together.”²² The Slovak Lutheran population was especially aroused by Zay’s campaign as a disguised attempt at Magyarization.²³ They sent a delegation of

²⁰ The origin of this folk attitude seems to have originated from the role Protestants played in the revolutionary events of 1848, and the close identification of the Magyar populated Reformed Church with the Hungarian national cause.

²¹ The Reformed Church was almost entirely Magyar in composition, while the Lutheran community was rather mixed. Historically autonomous were the Lutheran churches of the Transylvanian Saxons. In Inner Hungary there were some “Swabian” Lutheran parishes spread thinly about the region, Germans who were mostly Catholic and had a distinct historical identity from that of the ancient communities of the Transylvanian Saxons. Concentrated in Upper Hungary were the Lutheran parishes of the Slovaks, who were three-quarters Catholic and one-quarter Lutheran, along with the ethnic German congregations of the “Zipser Sachsen”. Finally, also spread about the country, though stronger in Upper Hungary, were the Magyar Lutheran parishes.

²² Bauhofer, 525.

²³ Bauhofer described this animosity of the Slovaks: “It was in Hungary, where a deep-rooted jealousy and hatred had at all times existed between the Slaven and the Magyars, no easy task to develop [Zay’s] idea, and his impetuous zeal in the cause raised him many and bitter foes, who misrepresented his motives. The Slaven in Hungary would rather unite with their own race in other countries than with the Magyars and Germans in their native land.” Bauhofer, 525. According to Bárány Zay was an “advocate of the union of the Calvinist and Lutheran Churches so that the latter’s Slovak members might be Magyarized, [because] Zay identified Magyardom with liberty and Protestantism, and as a shield against the Pan-Slavism

ministers to Vienna to protest Zay's plan, thus inviting imperial interference into internal church affairs. Because of this outcry and threats from the Catholic hierarchy²⁴, the attempt at Protestant unity was abandoned.

Not all Protestant ministers found their focus revolving around political or national concerns. One prominent exception was the Rev. Gottlieb August Wimmer (1791-1863), Lutheran pastor of Oberschützen (Felsőlvő) from 1818 to 1849.²⁵ Orphaned at nine years old, Wimmer apparently was imparted with a desire for the ministry from his dying mother.²⁶ After studies in a number of gymnasia in Upper Hungary, he finished his theological studies in Sopron (1812-14). When he was ordained as pastor of Oberschützen in 1818, it was a small village of around 1000 inhabitants, serfs

promoted by the 'Northern Colossus' [Russia]." Bárány, 42. Similarly Bucsay described the sharp opposition from Slovak Lutherans as follows: "Es hieß darin, Zay verfolge das doppelte Ziel, die Lutheraner zu Calvinisten und die Slowaken zu Ungarn zu machen." Bucsay, Mihály. Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Teil II: Vom Absolutismus bis zur Gegenwart. Studien und Texte zur Kirchengeschichte und Geschichte. Wien: Verlag Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1979. 76. It would appear that the Slovak Lutherans had reason to be concerned about the impact of the proposed union. Bauhofer, of course, exaggerated the age and degree of Slav animosity towards the Magyars, and of all of Hungary's Slavs, it was precisely the Slovaks who had for so long peacefully co-existed with the Magyars. Whereas the Croats had always maintained their distinct national traditions and identity, and the Serbs were nurtured by the Habsburgs in the Military Frontier Districts as a thorn in the Hungarians' side, the Slovaks had been a part of the Hungarian political nation since its inception. Some were naturally influenced by the ideas of Pan-Slavism, as were many of the Slavs of the empire, while other Slovaks such as Jan Kollar were more oriented towards Austro-Slavism and looked to their Czech brethren in the West for support. Others like Ludovit Stur began to look to their own linguistic and cultural heritage to build a national identity in opposition to that of the Magyars. This was important to them precisely because they were the most threatened Slavic group by the growing pressures of Magyarization. Ironically, Zay's plan played a role in pushing Stur and other Slovak Lutheran ministers to abandon the Czech literary language in use among Slovaks (this was a legacy of the use of the Kralice Bible, introduced by Czech Hussite clergy fleeing persecution in Bohemia, and adopted for use by Slovak Protestants following the Reformation) in favor of developing an independent Slovak literary language based upon the central Slovak dialect. Kirschbaum, Stanislav J. A History of Slovakia. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1995. 100. Nevertheless, Bauhofer was correct to point out the growth of an anti-Magyar animus among the Slavs and of Pan-Slavic ideas. And it must be remembered that at the time of his writing, the memory of the role the Slavs of Hungary played in the defeat of the revolution was still fresh.

²⁴ The Catholic hierarchy did not desire such a union because it would have made the Protestants a more formidable foe in the ongoing battle over Catholic abuses. Bauhofer characterized their attack as follows: "The Popish party threatened, that if a union took place the Protestants could be no longer tolerated, for the law knew only of a 'Lutheran and Reformed Church.' If they were united, they ceased to be the one or the other, and had then no further claim on toleration." Bauhofer, 526.

²⁵ For a bibliography on Wimmer, see: Kool, 82.

²⁶ Kool, 83.

on the land of Count Batthány who were engaged more in smuggling as a source of livelihood, thanks to the village's close proximity to the Austrian border, than in agriculture. As a result the moral life of the village was at a very low level. Wimmer engaged upon a long, arduous path to turn his parish around, which in turn led him into activities that had an impact well beyond his parish.²⁷

Most important among these for the purposes of this study was Wimmer's work with the British and Foreign Bible Society. Wimmer was continually in conflict with the leading men of the parish, in part because of his strong personality and outsider status, but primarily because his theological convictions were at odds with the strong adherence to theological rationalism of these men. Wimmer often was accused of "pietism" because of his evangelical convictions, which resulted in continual harassment from his colleagues and peers in Oberschützen. In time his convictions and activities also aroused opposition from his peers in the Lutheran clergy²⁸, and even from some within the Catholic clergy. The conflict within his parish continued to build until a breaking point was reached²⁹, and Wimmer was forced to leave Oberschützen for two years (1833-35) to become pastor in Modern, close to the then imperial administrative center of Hungary, Pozsony³⁰.

It was in Modern and Pozsony that Wimmer came into contact with several people who would broaden his vision and prove valuable in his later work. Chief among these were his Lutheran colleague J.G. Bauhofer³¹ and the wife of the Palatine, the

²⁷ In the judgment of Kool, Wimmer's "contribution to the Hungarian foreign mission movement is noteworthy." Kool, 96. Wimmer's work in the distribution of Scripture and Christian literature also provided a foundation for renewal which came after Wimmer had passed from the scene.

²⁸ In 1847 the Hungarian Catholic periodical *Sion* wrote an article about the religious situation in Hungary, and had this to say about the Lutheran Church: "In most of the congregations rationalistic or naturalistic preachers are appointed, with only one exception in Oberschützen, the well-known pastor Wimmer. He completely alone represents the evangelical orthodoxy in the Pietistic sense and therefore meets with opposition from the whole Lutheran clergy, and has already several times suffered opposition, because of his evangelical stand; this man has much talents in writing and has honest intentions with his church." Kool, 82.

²⁹ Speaking of the struggle he had with one particular enemy in Oberschützen, Wimmer wrote, "My life became so bitter, that I was constantly resolved to lay down my office any moment." Kool, 85.

³⁰ Chosen because of its proximity to Vienna, it was most widely known as Preßburg, its German name. Today it is known as Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia.

³¹ This is the same Bauhofer whose work on the history of Protestantism in Hungary provides a valuable first-hand source for the churches during the Reform Period and the beginning of Neo-Absolutism. He shared the evangelical convictions of Wimmer, and spoke approvingly of a visit he made to Oberschützen after Wimmer's return to the ministry there: "Today I visited brother Wimmer in

Archduchess Maria Dorothea.³² Through Maria Dorothea Wimmer was introduced to the Brethren community at Herrnhut³³ and to the Pietism of the Basler Mission³⁴, which expanded his mission vision. Eventually Wimmer's association with the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Scottish Mission would be furthered by his friendship with Maria Dorothea. Wimmer came into contact with the Bible Society in 1837 when he requested from them 200 German New Testaments and 100 Hungarian Bibles which had recently been published at Sárospatak.³⁵ This contact was fortuitous for both because the Bible Society was looking for someone to replace their previous agent for distribution, whose work had been brought to a halt by the Habsburg authorities.³⁶ Wimmer was a perfect match. This was not only because of Wimmer's evangelical convictions and boundless energy³⁷, but also for geographical reasons. Wimmer was close to the state authorized publisher, the Reichardt Press of Güns (Köszég). This was advantageous for two reasons. First, books could easily be sent to the press, from where Wimmer could

Oberschützen and I heard him preaching. A real Lutheran sermon on the righteousness before God in Christ. The church was crowded. After the church service he wrote several 'Recepten' for medicines and after the afternoon service he vaccinated more than 140 children." Kool, 90–91.

³² As a member of the Protestant House of Württemberg, the Archduchess brought with her the Württemberg Pietism of Albrecht Bengel, and proved to be the most important ally of Hungarian Protestants in Budapest, and a voice for them in the strongly Catholic Habsburg Imperial Court. Kool repeats the judgment of a contemporary Hungarian Lutheran Church Historian, Tibor Fabiny, that her arrival in Hungary marked "the beginning of a new era in Hungarian Protestantism." Kool, 100. It was she who later invited Bauhofer to establish the Castle Hill Lutheran Church in Buda and to be her personal chaplain.

³³ Kool writes, "His 'Aufnahmegesuch' in the *Herrnhuter Predigerkonferenz* dates from 1835." Kool, 86. Wimmer's expanded vision for social ministry is often ascribed in part to the influence of Herrnhut.

³⁴ There were close connections between Württemberg Pietists and the Basler Mission. Kool, 86.

³⁵ Eibner, John V. "British Evangelicalism and Hungary, 1800–1852." The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society 3.2 (Oct 1983): 45.

³⁶ Eibner, 44.

³⁷ Robert Pinkerton, since 1830 charged with the oversight of Central European affairs for the BFBS, described Wimmer in correspondence to his superiors in 1838 as follows: "...a man of enterprising spirit - 47 years of age - sharp intelligence and very zealous for the service of evangelical truth; [he] has a parish of 4,000 souls - has been twice denounced to the Imperial Government by his Neologian Brethren as a *Mystic*; but tho' his case has each time reached the Cabinet of the Emperor, he has been acquitted." Eibner, 45.

collect them for distribution. Second, Wimmer could supervise the printing of Christian literature at the press, thus eliminating the financial burdens of importation and potential confiscation by custom agents or censors.

In typical fashion Wimmer threw himself into this new opportunity with great enthusiasm. In a short time the scope of Wimmer's efforts had grown tremendously. Eibner observed,

As a result of Wimmer's account of the severe shortage of inexpensive Christian literature, of the domination of the Protestant Churches by clergymen who were either advocates of rationalist theology or practitioners of a lifeless orthodoxy, of the poverty of the country, and of the eagerness of the common people to obtain Christian books, both the Bible Society and Tract Society began to pour increasing amounts of money and a growing list of publications into his hands. These resources, coupled with Wimmer's tremendous energy and organizational abilities, proved to be a dynamic combination... By the early 1840s Wimmer had established a network of over two hundred distributors in all quarters of the country.³⁸

Wimmer had recruited these men, mostly clergymen, through his broad travels in the country.³⁹ This accomplishment is all the more remarkable when one considers that according to Wimmer's own estimation, as he informed his contacts at the Bible Society, there were only two pastors of "decidedly evangelical principles" in Hungary beside himself.⁴⁰ Many were involved out of concerns other than evangelistic ones. More than a few were motivated out of a nationalistic interest to distribute literature in their native language.⁴¹

In any case, the figures are impressive. By 1842 Wimmer had been able to get into circulation 23,000 Hungarian, 20,000 Czech, and 11,000 German Scriptures - a vast majority printed at the Reichardt Press - as well as several hundred Wallachian (Rumanian), Serb and Hebrew Scriptures.⁴² In addition, Wimmer was responsible for having an even greater amount of Christian literature, both books and tracts, in the

³⁸ Eibner, 46.

³⁹ Eibner, 46. Eibner reports that Wimmer went as far afield as the Bánát, the Felvidék, and Nagyvárad (Oradea) in Transylvania, often working from the back of a horsecart.

⁴⁰ Eibner, 46.

⁴¹ Prominent among these were the Magyar nationalists Count Zay and Ferenc Pulsky, as well as a leader of the Pan-Slav cultural movement, the Slovak poet Ján Kollár.

⁴² Eibner, 46.

Hungarian, Czech and German languages printed and distributed with the support of the Religious Tract Society.⁴³ The publication of one of these books, the evangelically oriented textbook Church History, by Dr. C.G. Barth, was used by Catholic opponents of Wimmer before the Cabinet in Vienna to have him brought up on charges of inciting hatred against the Church of Rome. Bauhofer remarked that there “was good reason to fear that he would be suspended, for his zeal in the distribution of Bibles and Testaments had long been known at head quarters, and had not tended to increase his popularity at court.”⁴⁴ He goes on to explain, however, that “Wimmer defended himself with energy, and, partly from the merits of his own case, partly, too, from the kindly intercession of the Archduchess Maria Dorothea with her husband the Palatine, he was for this time rescued from his perilous situation.”⁴⁵ The measure of melancholy in Bauhofer’s comments comes no doubt from his hindsight on the fate the events of 1848 would hold for Wimmer.

The cause of evangelical religion in Hungary was greatly aided in the 1840’s by the arrival of the Scottish Mission in Buda-Pest. Because the activity of the earliest Baptist pioneers is entwined with the activity of the Scottish Mission, a brief overview of their work will suffice here.⁴⁶ In 1839 the Church of Scotland sent an expedition of inquiry to the Jews of the Levant and Eastern Europe. While in Palestine, Dr. Alexander Black fell off his camel, injuring his leg. Forced to return home, he was accompanied by a second member of the expedition, Dr. Alexander Keith, as he attempted to return to Scotland via the shortest route, which required a trip up the Danube. When the two men arrived in Pest, their intention was to stay but one night, because of the dim view the Habsburg authorities took of unauthorized Protestant activities in Hungary. However, at that point Dr. Keith fell gravely ill, and it appeared he would not recover. In a short matter of time Maria Dorothea was made aware of the presence of the two missionaries in Pest and of their plight. To the Archduchess it was providence that brought these men to

⁴³ Eibner, 46. The Tract Society invested a good amount of money into this venture, but the return was equally impressive. Over 107,000 pieces of literature were distributed.

⁴⁴ Bauhofer, 535.

⁴⁵ Bauhofer gives no specific date, but the incident appears to have occurred around 1845-46, before the Palatine’s death in January of 1847. See Bauhofer, 535. Eibner also mentions this incident without giving a date, but he does mention that the book’s placement on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* only made it more sought after. See Eibner, 50.

⁴⁶ For a bibliography on the Scottish Mission, see: Eibner, 47.

Buda-Pest, and she immediately took care to see that the needs of the two men would be provided for while they recuperated.⁴⁷ During this time she availed herself of the opportunity to urge them to establish a mission in the city in the hope that it would stimulate a revival of spiritual life in what she saw as a dry and desolate land.⁴⁸ When the two men returned home they brought the invitation before the Church of Scotland, which elected to comply with it.

In 1841 Dr. John Duncan⁴⁹ and Robert Smith arrived in Hungary, followed a year later by William Wingate. Wimmer's disheartened view of the state of the Protestant churches in Hungary was shared by the Scottish missionaries. Robert Smith later reminisced, "When we arrived in 1841, we found them lying under the black pall of an almost universal torpor and death. Of the three thousand pastors only three were known of in whose hearts the Lord had kindled the lamp of life."⁵⁰ In one report back to the Church of Scotland, Dr. Duncan gave his assessment of the situation: "The mass of

⁴⁷ Scottish missionary Robert Smith wrote of the burden Maria Dorothea had for the people of Hungary isolated and alone in her apartment in the palace on the Castle Hill: "There, in the deep embrasure of a window, which she more than once pointed out to us afterwards, she was wont day by day, to seek the face of God. Looking out on the scene below, the city with its 100,000 inhabitants, and the vast Hungarian plains stretching away in the distance behind it, she thought of her own desolateness, and the still greater desolation of the land, and poured out her heart before the Lord. Sometimes her desires became so intense, that stretching out her arms towards heaven, she prayed almost in an agony of spirit, that he would send at least one messenger of the cross to Hungary. She thus continued waiting on God, for about the space of seven years." Smith, Robert, Rev. "Personal Narrative of a Ten Years' Mission in Hungary." Pt. 1. The Sunday at Home XIII.658 (Nov. 24 1866): 739. To her the Scottish missionaries were an answer to her prayers. Perhaps that is why she was so quick to minister to the sick missionary. Smith wrote, "The Archduchess heard of his sickness, and like the good Samaritan of the parable, came and ministered to him with her own hand." Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Years' Mission in Hungary," 740. To show her care and concern for them, she spared no effort: "she also had the street be covered with straw, giving order that no carriages should use it as a through road and those having to call in the street were not to travel faster than walking pace." Kool, 100.

⁴⁸ In her ministrations and conversations with Dr. Keith, "He received from the [Archduchess] the assurance, that should the church consent to plant a mission in Pest, she would endeavor to protect it to the very utmost of her power." Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Years' Mission in Hungary," 740. In this way she sought to assuage their natural fears of attempting a mission work in a land under the staunchly Catholic Habsburgs.

⁴⁹ Sometimes referred to as "Rabbi" Duncan, and greatly respected for his great knowledge as well as his piety, he excelled in dialogue with Jewish and Roman Catholic learned men. The daughter of Georg Bauhoffer reminisced: "when he entered the room, he shook hands with us and directly proceeded to the great library and asked my father to teach him to read Hungarian - he was not yet three minutes in the room, before they were deeply engaged in reading a voluminous book." Kool, 101. He was called back to Scotland to continue his academic ministry at home in 1843.

⁵⁰ Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Years' Mission in Hungary," 739.

Protestant clergy, if not neologians, are careless men, dumb dogs that cannot bark.”⁵¹ Eibner summarizes their view as follows: “The missionaries perceived the root causes of the decadence of Hungarian Protestantism to be the preoccupation of Churchmen with political concerns and the predominance of rationalist theology.”⁵² It is true that there was a conflation of spiritual with political concerns on the part of the Protestant clergy to the detriment of the former, justifying in part the criticism of the Scottish missionaries. But this conflation was not entirely the result of worldliness or spiritual naïveté on the part of the clergy, another factor was the centuries long battle of the Protestants against the combined forces of Habsburg and Catholic oppression. If the Protestant clergy came to equate Hungarian national freedom with their own, it is because they had always been at the forefront of the battle for the former, and knew that to secure the former freedom would necessarily ensure the latter. If the Protestant clergy had lost sight of the gospel for which they sought the freedom to preach, it should also be noted that their struggles had preserved a Protestant presence in the country that the Scottish missionaries could attempt to revive.

Even so, the role of Maria Dorothea in the success of their work cannot be underestimated. As Robert Smith expressed it, “without her influence and protection it would not have been tolerated under a government so intensely bigoted .. for a single month.”⁵³ A priority of the missionaries after their arrival was to seek the counsel and friendship of the Archduchess. Eibner noted, “Without her support it is inconceivable that they could have remained in the country. From their first days there she met them at least once a week at the Royal Palace. Through her influence the Palatine provided the missionaries with advice about the complexities of Hungarian law relating to religious activity.”⁵⁴ This cooperative spirit on the part of the Palatine was noted by the Papal Nuncio in the Austrian empire Viale, who complained to the Holy See that “whenever the question was raised to make concessions to Lutherans, Calvinists or to the Orthodox Churches, he was always willing to cooperate, and was in fact cooperating.”⁵⁵ The

⁵¹ Eibner, 49.

⁵² Eibner, 49.

⁵³ Smith, Robert, Rev., “Personal Narrative of a Ten Years’ Mission in Hungary,” 739.

⁵⁴ Eibner, 47.

⁵⁵ Lukács, Lajos. The Vatican and Hungary 1846 - 1878: Reports and Correspondence on Hungary of the Apostolic Nuncios in Vienna. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981. 47.

Nuncio blamed in particular the influence of the Archduchess upon him, warning the Holy See that she used every means at her disposal to spread Protestantism in Hungary.⁵⁶ It was on the Palatine's advice that they styled themselves as chaplains to the British workers then engaged in the construction of the Chain Bridge⁵⁷, and also arranged to be designated as vicars of the Superintendent of the Reformed Church, Pál Török, which gave a legal cover to their religious activities.⁵⁸ Even so, they had to be discreet.

Robert Smith summarized their *modus operandi* as follows, "From the very first, we were led to adopt the maxim, 'To do as much, and be seen to do as little as possible.'"⁵⁹ It was a matter of some embarrassment that the British workmen in Buda-Pest paid no attention to the work of the Scottish missionaries, showing little interest in spiritual matters. But to their immense satisfaction, the same could not be said of their work among the Jews. The rising forces of modernity were at work among the Jews, breaking down the grip of their ancient traditions. This was especially true among the younger Jews, many of whom were being captured by the secular philosophies of the day. Thus, as Robert Smith expressed it, the missionaries labored among the Jews to prevent them from becoming "slaves to some new despotism - perhaps of that very spirit of the age which has helped to their emancipation."⁶⁰

The work was furthered by the interest shown early on by well-educated Jews, many of them seeking to improve their English, though some came out of spiritual curiosity.⁶¹ With the conversion of some influential members of the Jewish community, a steady stream of Jews was assured at the various services and counselling sessions of the

⁵⁶ Lukács, 47.

⁵⁷ Smith expressed the opinion that "But for the singular and providential circumstance of these fellow countrymen being temporarily resident there at this precise juncture, it is not probable that the Archduchess, with all her influence, would have been able to shield us." Smith, Robert, Rev. "Personal Narrative of a Ten Years' Mission in Hungary." Pt. 2. The Sunday at Home XIII.657 (Dec. 1 1866): 764.

⁵⁸ Eibner, 47.

⁵⁹ Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Years' Mission in Hungary," 740.

⁶⁰ Eibner, 48.

⁶¹ Smith wrote, "These diets of worship were frequented, besides the English, by a good many Hungarians, and especially by Jews. Some came for the sake of the language, which began to be a favorite study about that time." Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Years' Mission in Hungary," 764.

missionaries. Over time more than fifty lasting conversions were recorded.⁶² This success aroused a measure of jealousy in Roman Catholic circles, and became a matter of controversy at the Diet of 1843-44.⁶³

With this success the scope of the mission was expanded. A primary school was begun under the direction of one of the prominent converts with funding from the Free Church of Scotland. Jewish converts were also trained by the missionaries and then sent out as preaching evangelists.⁶⁴ As a result, according to William Wingate, “there

⁶² Eibner, 48. Among the best known were Adolph Saphir and Alfred Edersheim, both of whom became ministers in Britain, as well as Moritz Block (Mór Ballagi), who would become a professor of theology in Budapest.

⁶³ As Bauhofer recounted the events, the perennial controversy over reversals was being vociferously debated. “In the course of the debate, the nobleman Lewis Vay charged the Roman Catholic clergy with aiming at being fishers of souls, which they wished to take in their net. The reply was, that in such a case they were not so much to blame as the Protestant missionaries who were travelling through the whole world, and who had even come to Pest to try by force of money to gain over some Jews to their Church.” Bauhofer could not let this charge pass unanswered, and in a footnote he scolded the unnamed Catholic Bishop: “The bitterness of the bishop is evident from this groundless charge; for it is well known that the missionaries to the Jews in Pest required a thorough knowledge of the Gospel, and abundant evidence of change of heart, before they admitted any Jew to baptism.” In fact, the missionaries “never made promises of worldly advantage, as the priests do, to gain any one over to their faith.” The Jews in fact had a great respect for the motives and methods of the missionaries’ work. Bauhofer concluded: “it is quite incomprehensible how the learned bishop could compare this work with the missions of his own Church.” Bauhofer, 529.

⁶⁴ The story is quite interesting and demonstrates the caution exercised by the Scottish Mission. Smith explained, “We know that the report of the work at Pesh had gone forth everywhere, and had awakened a very general spirit of inquiry. Of this we wished to take advantage before the freshness of the interest should die away. We therefore put six of the most gifted converts under a course of preparatory training, with a view to their being sent out as evangelists.” However, despite the eagerness of the converts, the missionaries deemed it too dangerous to send them out under the present political conditions, so they waited and gave the converts an extensive training regimen. “Two years passed away, but meanwhile no change had taken place in the external relationships of the country. The men were ready, but the barriers were still unremoved. We communicated our wishes to the Archduchess, who undertook to seize the first favourable opportunity to lay the whole matter before the Archduke and boldly solicit his protection.” The opportunity soon came when a peasant rebellion broke out in Austrian Poland, which profoundly shook the Archduke and set him to thinking about what could be done to prevent such an outbreak in Hungary. He confessed to his wife at last the only thing that could raise the masses above their present “degradation” was the circulation of the Bible among them, which immediately prompted the Archduchess to solicit his protection for the plan of the Scottish missionaries. Agreeing to the plan, “He now entrusted her with a message for us, to the effect that we should send out our men, with as little noise and public observation as possible, that, if they met with any molestation from the authorities, they were on no account to offer resistance, but report the case at once to us, and we to him, and that he would take his own measures for its repression. Even he himself could not go beyond a certain point.” Thus the Archduke was willing to quietly support a practice that would be looked upon unfavorably in Vienna. “The door now stood open before us. We thanked God and took courage, seeing the marvels he had wrought.” Smith, Robert, Rev. “Personal Narrative of a Ten Years’ Mission in Hungary.” Pt. 4. The Sunday at Home XIII.659 (Dec. 15 1866): 794–

was...not a synagogue of the half million Jews in Hungary, who had not heard of the Christian missionaries.”⁶⁵

A further effect of the revival among the Jews was the renewed life the work was to bring to Hungarian Protestantism. In a short time Pál Török, the Reformed pastor and Superintendent under whom the missionaries were permitted to work as vicars, and József Székács, a Lutheran pastor in the capital, were firmly within the evangelical camp. To this group the aforementioned Georg Bauhofer was added in 1844, when he was invited by the Archduchess Maria Dorothea to establish a new Lutheran Church on Castle Hill and to be her personal chaplain. “As a result, three of the capital’s six Protestant congregations, led by three of the nation’s most influential clergymen, now had a strong evangelical bias. These three pastors formed the core of the weekly pastor’s conferences that were instituted by the missionaries in 1844, at which they held devotions for two hours and then discussed the best means for promoting evangelical religion in the country.”⁶⁶ According to Kool, it was Maria Dorothea who took the initiative in holding the conferences.⁶⁷ From this venture came the impetus to establish Sunday Schools for the first time.⁶⁸ In addition, the pages of the leading Protestant periodicals were opened to

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⁶⁵ Kool, 103.

⁶⁶ Eibner, 49.

⁶⁷ She no doubt wished to use her influence to further the work of the missionaries. As Kool goes on to explain, their work had at first met with distrust and some opposition from Protestant clergymen, “since the term ‘missionary’ was in the minds of the Protestants identified with Jesuit.” Kool, 104. Apart from the core trio, Michael Lang, a rationalistic Lutheran pastor, and Jan Kollár, the Pan Slavist, often were known to attend frequently. The prominence of Maria Dorothea meant that such outstanding figures as Count István Széchenyi and Lajos Kossuth accepted invitations to attend. As Smith described the impact of the meetings, “We held them alternately at each other’s houses. Two hours were devoted to prayer and the study of the word of God, with which was conjoined the discussion of any practical subject bearing on the religious welfare of Hungary, We then drank tea or rather supped together in company with our families, who also assembled on these occasions, and spent the rest of the evening in social converse. In these meetings we greatly delighted, and they were greatly blessed. So much did they become a necessity to all of us, that nothing of importance was undertaken in our department, or in theirs, without first consulting the brethren. This proved a material benefit to us in our work, and furnished us with an opportunity of suggesting many things for the good of the country.” Smith, Robert, Rev., “Personal Narrative of a Ten Years’ Mission in Hungary,” 795–96. Smith also praised these meetings for strengthening the Hungarian pastors for the coming dark days.

⁶⁸ Concerning this William Wingate wrote in his diary on April 5, 1845, “Many deeply interesting

the Scottish missionaries to introduce their readers to British evangelicalism.⁶⁹

Another important area of activity was the distribution of Christian literature. In this effort the missionaries cooperated with Gottlieb Wimmer and various British Bible societies. It is in this endeavor that J.G. Oncken, the father of the continental Baptists, who also was the continental representative of the Tract Society and the Edinburgh Bible Society, enters into the picture, as do the first Baptist pioneers in Hungary. I will pick up on this aspect of the story in more detail later.

With the arrival of the Scottish Mission in the city and the looser political atmosphere that characterized the end of the Reform Era, Wimmer's colporteur work prospered between 1842 and 1848. More than 80,000 Bible Society Scriptures were printed at Güns during this period. However, the growing politicization of religion and ethnicity also introduced new obstacles and difficulties in the work that were troubling to Wimmer. He wrote in December 1844 to the Bible Society,

The present political excitement is becoming daily more injurious to a religious life. The ungracious dismissal of the Diet and its portentous conclusion have caused a feverish commotion and agitation throughout the country, the consequences of which may be anticipated. The Society of Industry is a masked Repeal Union⁷⁰, and if the government has not the wisdom to ignore it, a serious conflict can scarcely be avoided. Times and circumstances like these are very unfavorable for the promotion of religion among any people.⁷¹

The political preoccupation of the Magyars was not Wimmer's only worry. He also blamed the significant drop in the number of Czech Bibles distributed during this time to

conferences held with Protestant Ministers of the city. Proposal to begin Sabbath schools agreed to by Mr. Szekács and Török. Entrusted us with the furnishing of Sabbath books for their translation into Hungarian. Proposal to visit the different parishes and preach made by Szekács, Török and Bauhofer on the same evening." Kool, 104–05.

⁶⁹ Eibner, 49. The Hungarian language periodical, Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap [Protestant Church and School Paper], edited by Török and Szekács, and the German language periodical Der Evangelische Christ, edited by Bauhofer, were their forums. Views on church-state relations was one topic frequently broached.

⁷⁰ Wimmer was making a reference to the Repeal Association set up by Irish nationalists who wished to repeal the Act of Union of 1800 which joined Ireland to Great Britain. Wimmer was ascribing the same intent to the Society of Industry set up by Magyar nationalists in relation to Hungary's incorporation into Austria.

⁷¹ Eibner, 51.

the growing ethnic particularism of the indigenous Slovak population, laying particular blame for the development upon the agitation of their clergy.⁷² These tensions did not bode well for the future, but the situation took a dramatic turn with the Revolution of 1848.

At first events resulted in a positive gain for Hungarian Protestants, the Scottish Mission and evangelical religion in Hungary. Robert Smith wrote the following to the Church of Scotland about the impact of the revolution: “Tolerated hitherto but not openly acknowledged and protected, they [the missionaries] now enjoy perfect liberty, and are now relieved from an oppressive load - the government under which they have trembled having fallen with its whole system of espionage and corruption.”⁷³ Article 20 of the Diet of 1848, dealing with ecclesiastical affairs, established the liberal principle of equal rights and full reciprocity of the recognized religions, a victory for the Protestant churches. It

⁷² The Czech *Kralická Biblia* (Kralice Bible) was adopted by the Slovak Protestants in the seventeenth century to symbolize their break from Rome, and Czech had remained the Slovak literary and liturgical language in the absence of the development of a Slovak literary language. See Kirschbaum, 94–95. That the spoken language of the people remained Slovak can be demonstrated by the infiltration of Slovakisms into this literary language. The effort to develop a Slovak literary language began in earnest in the nineteenth century, and was prompted by the neglect of Slovak interests and suggestions by Czech literati in the creation of a united Czechoslovak literary language, an urgent need for the Slovaks in the face of rising Magyar nationalism and their battle to make Magyar the official language of the political nation. See Kirschbaum, 99. The effort was energized by the attempt of Count Zay to make Magyar the official language of the Lutheran Church and to unite it with the Reformed Church in the 1840’s, and became urgent with the replacement of Latin with Magyar as the official administrative language of the land in the Diet of 1844. See Kirschbaum, 100. A common Slovak grammar was finally decided upon with the support of Slovak Catholic and Lutheran leaders in 1851, although it continued to meet with resistance from both Czechs and Slovaks who still hoped for Czechoslovak unity, and from a minority of Slovak Lutherans who still preferred the Kralice Bible. Wimmer’s efforts to distribute the classical Czech Bible in Upper Hungary were caught in the middle of this battle and his sympathies clearly sided with those who sought to maintain the historic liturgical language of the Slovak Lutherans. In 1846 he wrote of these problems to the BFBS: “What particularly seems to deserve the attention of the Bible Society is the singular feature in which the Bohemians (Slovaks) are placed. These people have been instigated by the violent proceeding of their clergy to assume a position in their national character positively opposed to that of the Hungarians, and have been led astray into bye-paths which are unfavorable to the distribution of the Scriptures and appear likely to become still more so. The clergy are beginning to give up the use of the classic Bohemian (Czech) in their addresses from the pulpit and they preach to people in a *patois* dialect usual in the District of the Liptau (Slovak). They condemn the Bible and all religious publications that are not written in the dialect of the people.” Eibner, 51. It is obvious that Wimmer was operating with a fundamental misapprehension of the national character of the Slavs of Upper Hungary. While he considered them but an eastern branch of the Czech nation, calling them “Bohemians”, these people were asserting their historical linguistic and ethnic autonomy as “Slovaks”. In any case, Wimmer was not happy with the adversarial nationalism of the Slovaks vis-à-vis the Magyars and the effect of the emerging Slovak national consciousness and the struggle for a separate Slovak national literary language upon his colporteur work.

⁷³ Eibner, 51.

also promised to provide state funding for the churches and schools, the mechanism for which would be decided at the next Diet.

This promise raised heated discussions among the Protestant churches during preparatory meetings held to formulate the churches' position on the legislation. At the General Assembly of the Lutheran Church Wimmer decried with great vehemence what he saw as "Judas money", the state funding of churches and schools which would transform pastors into state employees and open church schools to direct state supervision.⁷⁴ Wimmer's stand for maintaining the internal autonomy of the churches and their schools won the endorsement of the Lutheran General Assembly. After difficult talks among the deputies of the Protestant churches, this position became the basis for their joint discussions with the Minister of Public Instruction, Baron Eötvös. In a conference with Eötvös they asserted the historic autonomy of their churches and expressed a willingness to wait for such a time when public peace would be restored to work at the restructuring of church-state relations.⁷⁵ They only asked that since the tithe had ceased with the restructuring of ecclesiastical affairs and the ability of pastors and schoolmasters in many areas to collect payments had been severely impaired as a result, that the state would reimburse the loss at public expense. Arrangements were made with the minister to this effect. Bauhofer remarked of this conference with the Minister that the deputies of the churches had shown true wisdom: "The Churches had approached nearer to each other. They had united in an act of self-denial, rejecting Esau's pottage, and retaining their birthright as free and independent Churches. Events showed how prudently they had acted, for dark and gloomy days were coming over the Church and the land."⁷⁶

Before that happened Wimmer and the missionaries took advantage of the opportunity to expand their literature distribution work.⁷⁷ Wimmer sent out five colporteurs, a warehouse and a bookshop was established in Buda-Pest to distribute Bible and Tract Society literature under the supervision of the missionaries, and there were plans to set up Bible depots in Pozsony, Debrecen, Kolozsvár, Brassó and Zagreb. Twentyfive additional colporteurs were also in the works, and Wimmer even began negotiations with a publisher to print Wallachian, Serb and Croat Scriptures, something

⁷⁴ Bauhofer, 540.

⁷⁵ Bauhofer, 541.

⁷⁶ Bauhofer, 541.

⁷⁷ Eibner, 51–52.

the censors had previously prohibited.⁷⁸ Again, the efforts of the Baptist pioneers in this work will be discussed fully later. Wimmer himself would soon be caught up in the swirl of events. His base of operation in Oberschützen early on in 1848 was threatened by “seditious bands.”⁷⁹ In August of 1848 Wimmer put his work on hold to travel to England with Robert Pinkerton of the Bible Society to discuss his plans to expand the printing and colporteur work.⁸⁰ However, Eibner points out that Wimmer was secretly the emissary of Kossuth in this trip, with the goal of obtaining arms and a banknote press from London.⁸¹ Shortly after Wimmer returned from England, he felt compelled to become an officer in the Honvéd⁸² in the campaign against Ban Jelačić and the Croat forces under him, because he saw an unholy alliance between the Illyrian leader and the anti-Protestantism of the Habsburgs which he characterized as “the mad tools of the annihilation of the Gospel and of religious education.”⁸³

As a result of Wimmer’s obvious involvement in the revolutionary effort, when Austrian troops occupied Oberschützen a warrant for his arrest was issued. Wimmer was forced to flee to Switzerland in January of 1849.⁸⁴ Bauhofer explains that the Protestant

⁷⁸ Kuzmič describes the attempt of Wimmer to have the Reichardt Press print an edition of the recent Stojković translation of the New Testament into Serbian in 1840, but the attempt foundered over the objections of the censor appointed by the Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Hungary. See Kuzmič, Peter. Vuk-Daničićovo Sveto Pismo i Biblijska Društva. Analecta Croatica Christiana. Zagreb: Kršćanska Sadašnjost, 1983. 89. When Wimmer travelled to England in August of 1848, one of his goals again concerned the possibility of publishing a Serbian New Testament. See Kuzmič, 110.

⁷⁹ Eibner, 52.

⁸⁰ Kuzmič, 110.

⁸¹ Eibner, 52.

⁸² The Honvéd, which means “Home Defense Force”, was the military force created by Kossuth and the National Defense Committee of the Hungarian Parliament in September of 1848 to defend Hungary against the forces arrayed against it during the revolution.

⁸³ Eibner, 52.

⁸⁴ It was reported in the Annual Report of the BFBS as follows: “He visited England about a year ago, in company with Dr. Pinkerton, full of the best hopes. He received authority to make large preparations for printing the Scriptures, and also for employing colporteurs for their distribution. It is with much regret therefore that your Committee inform you, that all their fair prospects have been blighted—that the Pastor has been obliged to leave his country—that the work of distribution has been stopped.” The Forty-Fifth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1849. lx. In a Hungarian pamphlet on the BFBS, it was erroneously reported that Wimmer fled back to England. Balogh, Ferencz. “A brit és külföldi biblia társaság százévi működésének és hatásának ismertetése [A Survey of the Centenary of the Work and Influence of the British and Foreign Bible Society].” Debreczen: A Magyarországi Ev. Református Egyház Egyetemes

pastors and schoolmasters were caught by the vagaries of war between the two sides and were persecuted by both sides for what they did when under the jurisdiction of the other.⁸⁵ As a consequence, quite naturally, the “clergy complained bitterly that their bishops and superintendents gave them no directions how to act.”⁸⁶ When church leaders did issue pastoral letters of advice, they were often later punished for it by the Austrian authorities. Nevertheless, Bauhofer recounts that “when the cause of Hungary seemed victorious, many priests and Protestant clergy openly took the part of the conquerors, and zealously supported their cause.”⁸⁷ The Scottish missionaries were also sympathetic to the Magyar cause, but refrained from open political involvement so as not to jeopardize their position. As Smith explained, “We made it a rule to keep entirely aloof from all political questions. Of course we could not help sympathizing with what we considered right, and we could not but condemn in our hearts what we thought to be wrong. But we carefully abstained from all interference, direct or indirect, with that which lay beyond our sphere.”⁸⁸ Even so, they made the decision to leave in September of 1848 when civil war broke out between the Croatian and Hungarian forces.⁸⁹

Konventje, 1903. 20.

⁸⁵ Bauhofer recounted the ebbs and flows of the military campaign in Hungary, and then remarked: “We are obliged to take this glance of the political and military transactions, for the sake of explaining the persecutions to which the pastors and schoolmasters were now exposed. The pastors were tried by court-martial for having read Kossuth’s proclamation from the pulpit, and were visited with condign punishment... At the same time that the severest punishment was being inflicted on the pastors for reading proclamations which the temporary authorities had compelled them to read, the Prince Windischgrätz was compelling them to read other documents of a most extraordinary nature with reference to the so-called rebels. As a matter of course, when the imperial troops were obliged to retire, those who had read the imperial proclamations were, in their turn, regarded as guilty of high treason, and some were condemned to be shot.” Bauhofer, 542–43.

⁸⁶ Bauhofer, 543.

⁸⁷ Bauhofer, 543.

⁸⁸ Smith, Robert, Rev. “Personal Narrative of a Ten Year’s Mission in Hungary.” Pt. 5. The Sunday at Home XIII.660 (Dec. 22 1866): 810.

⁸⁹ Eibner, 52.

1.2. The Churches under Neo-Absolutism

With the Hungarian surrender at Világos in August of 1849, the Austrian oppression fell hard on the nation, including the churches. Several Hungarian Roman Catholic bishops were either jailed or exiled, others were forced to resign. These vacancies were then filled with people thought less susceptible to Magyar nationalism, often ethnic Germans or Slovaks.⁹⁰ Yet while Magyar influence within the Roman Catholic Church was lessened, the power and privileges of the Church as a political and social institution were to reach their modern zenith during this period.

In regards to the Eastern Orthodox Church, the status quo was by and large maintained, hardly the reward the Serbs expected. The most significant change for the Church came in 1864, when it was divided into Serbian and Rumanian branches. Thus while their traditional autonomy in ecclesiastical and educational matters was maintained, at the same time the Crown continued to exercise broad powers of oversight over the Eastern Orthodox Church and its constituted assemblies to manipulate the Orthodox for Vienna's own purposes.⁹¹

It is beyond dispute, though, that the hardest hand fell upon the Protestant churches. Király observed: "The Habsburgs considered the Protestants of Hungary rebels to a man and they were even more severely persecuted than Hungary's Roman Catholics."⁹² Robert Smith agreed with this opinion, "At the court of Vienna the term Protestantism became synonymous with revolution."⁹³ Bauhofer relates that of 3000 Protestant pastors in Hungary, around fifteen were "condemned to more or less severe punishment."⁹⁴ He does not provide figures on how many, like Wimmer, fled in advance of the impending repression. After the initial terror, Austrian repression of the Protestant

⁹⁰ In addition, the Holy See, at the request of the Crown, elevated the episcopal sees of Zagreb in Croatia-Slavonia and Fogaras (Romanian Uniate) in Transylvania to archbishoprics, thus removing them from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Hungarian archbishopric. See Laszlo, Leslie. "Nationality and Religion in Hungary, 1867-1918." *East European Quarterly* XVII.1 (Mar 1983): 44.

⁹¹ In particular, the Crown continued to use the Orthodox, especially the Serbs, as pawns in its struggle against Magyar nationalism. See Laszlo, 44.

⁹² Király, Béla K. "Protestantism in Hungary Between the Revolution and the Ausgleich." *Tolerance and Movements of Religious Dissent in Eastern Europe*. Ed. Béla K. Király. East European Monographs.13. Boulder, Colorado: East European Quarterly, 1975. 67.

⁹³ Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Year's Mission in Hungary," 810.

⁹⁴ Bauhofer, 544.

churches was formalized by General Haynau's Open Order of February 10, 1850. It not only repealed Article XX of the Diet of 1848, it wiped out all Protestant rights guaranteed by laws and treaties extracted from the Habsburgs over the centuries. Perhaps the best thing that can be said about the Open Order was the observation by Király: "In a sense Haynau's Open Order was laudable, for it said what it meant and meant what it said. It was couched in the language of autocracy and repression; there was no subterfuge."⁹⁵

The Open Order in essence abolished the ecclesiastical autonomy of the churches to replace it with a system described in the Protestant petition to Maria Dorothea as a "kind of military consistorium."⁹⁶ In each military district with its administrator a parallel church administration was established. These new districts cut across the traditional church districts that had functioned for centuries, another way to break the power of the churches. A reading of the Open Order will demonstrate Haynau's subjection of the new church structures to the martial law authorities:

For the sake of relieving the Protestant Church from the miserable state into which it has been brought by the abuse of power on the part of some of its office-bearers, to serve party purposes, and for the sake of securing to the said Church its rights and privileges, during the continuance of the martial law, I have, after consultation with the civil governor, found it desirable to publish the following regulations: § 1. The offices of general inspector and district inspector in the Lutheran Church, and of curator in the Reformed Church, are to be considered as extinct. § 2. Inasmuch as the free election of superintendents to the vacant offices, as also all enactments, are forbidden during the continuance of martial law; inasmuch as men must be found who will bring the clergy and the people back to a state of submission to constituted authority, the government shall select suitable persons to supply the place of the superintendents, and shall appoint seniors and laymen who possess the confidence of the governor to assist them in their work. § 3. These superintendents shall also discharge the duties of district inspectors and curators, and shall convey the wishes of the individual churches to the military commander. For managing the Church and school fund, they shall, with the advice of the seniors and lay assistants (section 2), give in a report of what they consider to be the best way of managing that fund. § 4. By these deliberations, a royal commissioner, appointed by the military governor of the district, shall always be present, and in like manner no local Church court shall be held without the presence of such a commissioner. § 5. As the clergy of the Protestant Church are badly paid, and as it is necessary that these temporary officers of the Church, as appointed by section 2, have a position free from worldly care, I shall endeavor to provide for them an

⁹⁵ Király, Béla K., 67.

⁹⁶ Bauhofer, 558.

endowment from the state.⁹⁷ § 6. The new administrators shall enter immediately on their duties, and, at the same time, the functions of the former office-bearers shall cease. Every assistance shall be given by the civil and military authorities to the new office-bearers, in the discharge of their duty. § 7. The superintendents who are thus degraded remain, in so far as their conduct in political matters is irreproachable, in the position which they held previous to their appointment to this office. § 8. All possible exertions shall be made to have the boundaries of the dioceses made to correspond with the military districts. The superintendents and administrators may be sure of a friendly reception to *every proposal which tends to bind the Protestant Church closer to the state.*⁹⁸

This network of church superintendents and royal commissioners, along with a good number of spies and informers, was erected to supervise and control church life and to detect any disloyalty to the Crown. Such sweeping measures were only undertaken with the Protestant churches.⁹⁹ In response the Protestants sent a petition first to the Archduchess Maria Dorothea to plead for her intervention¹⁰⁰, and then to his Majesty the Emperor Franz Joseph.¹⁰¹ Of the two petitions, the former received by far the more

⁹⁷ Bauhofer referred to this state subsidy as “Judas money.” Bauhofer, 545.

⁹⁸ Bauhofer, 544–45.

⁹⁹ At the close of his study, Bauhofer decries this persecution of the Protestant churches, and lays the blame squarely at the feet of the Roman Catholic Church: “Shall the time never come when statesmen shall open their eyes to the falsehood of the statement which passes current at every Popish court, that the Protestant religion is the cause of revolution? ...May the Almighty God preserve the house of Habsburg-Lothringen from the snares laid for it by the Jesuits!” Bauhofer, 548–49.

¹⁰⁰ At this point Maria Dorothea was no longer in Hungary, but had been forced by the royal family to move back to Vienna after the death of the Palatine, the Archduke Joseph, in 1847. Dated June 1, 1850, the petition complained bitterly, “While his Majesty is giving the Roman Catholic Church privileges *which she never before enjoyed in the empire*, our very existence is threatened.” Bauhofer, 558. The Archduchess was greatly moved by the petition. She was not, however, able to win the repeal of the Open Order. But she was able to have a proposed constitution for the Protestant churches set aside that would have institutionalized state control. See Bauhofer, 547.

¹⁰¹ This petition was dated May 5, 1851. The language used was laden with emotional power to elicit a sympathetic response: “We do not ask for ease, for this is not the place of our rest; nor for outward good, which vanisheth; but we beg for that liberty of conscience which is denied us by the civil power in Hungary. The cause of our sufferings is to be found in the edict of His Excellency Baron Haynau, of the 10th of February, 1850, by which the rights of the Protestant Church, which she has enjoyed for three hundred years, are, with one stroke of the pen, annihilated.” Bauhofer, 554. It disputed the *Verwirkungs-Theorie* which was used to justify their repression, “The alleged cause of this edict, however, is a ground of deep sorrow, for it takes for granted, what has not been proved, that the Protestant Church, as such, was deeply involved in the late troubles, and has thus forfeited her rights.” Bauhofer, 554. It also complains of a double-standard in the treatment meted out to them as opposed to the Roman Catholic Church - “When individuals and office-bearers of another Church, which is not Protestant, sin against the state, their transgression is not laid on their Church, nor is she compelled to accept of another constitution on that

favorable reception. Unfortunately, Maria Dorothea did not have the same power to intervene in behalf of the Protestant churches as did the Emperor. Rather, Protestant life continued to be squeezed, particularly in the area of education.¹⁰² Oddly enough, at the same time martial law was pressing hard upon the Protestant churches in Hungary, a legal vacuum existed which allowed the Scottish Mission to resume. Therefore Robert Smith and William Wingate returned to Buda-Pest. In addition, the British and Foreign Bible Society sent Edward Millard to the Habsburg Empire to manage its Hungarian work. To their surprise they “found that the effects of the late war had created an extraordinary interest in spiritual matters. They experienced an unprecedented demand for Christian literature which they did their utmost to fulfill.”¹⁰³ Smith described this turn of events as follows: “A thirst sprang up for the word of God, such as had never existed in Hungary before. Our work had been interrupted during the period of war; but now, towards the end of 1849, it was resumed with tenfold results. Our evangelists went forth again on their mission. But the eagerness of the people to possess a copy of the Bible was such that for a time our supply ran short, and we could not meet the demand.”¹⁰⁴ Millard was able to get

account; wherefore we may well expect that the same measure of justice may be granted to the Evangelical Church.” Bauhofer, 554–55. The primary request was therefore quite simple - “That your Majesty would be graciously pleased to annul the edict of February; for this edict is like an axe laid to the root of Protestantism, and so long as it remains in force, our feelings must be those of condemned criminals waiting for execution.” Bauhofer, 556. Allied with this was a plea to return the Protestant churches to the *status quo ante* before the revolutionary events and to remove the threat of the *Organisationsentwurf* over the church schools, which placed them in imminent danger of losing state certification unless they met certain requirements which they lacked the personnel or the finances to meet. See Bauhofer, 557.

¹⁰² Bucsay observed that during martial law “hat Habsburg alles versucht, die Arbeit der protestantischen Kirchen und Schulen zu hemmen.” Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 92. As a result of this pressure, for example, “In der gedrückten wirtschaftlichen Lage gingen so von den sechs *theologischen* Schulen der Lutheraner während des *Belagerungszustandes* drei (Käsmark, Leutschau und Schemnitz), von denen der Reformierten vier (Losonc, Máramarossziget, Neumarkt und Székelyudvarhely) *verloren*.” Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 92. Király had the following to say about the use of bureaucratic regulations to shut down schools in Hungary, especially Protestant schools: “The Habsburgs, who paraded so long as the civiliziers of East Central Europe, closed down twice as many Hungarian schools as they licensed. Moreover, the closure of a quarter of the non-Hungarian schools lent weight to the general impression that the Rumanians, Serbs and Croats were receiving as a reward for their loyalty to the Habsburgs in 1848-49 precisely the same treatment as was being used as a punishment for the Hungarians for rising in revolt.” Király, Béla K., 68.

¹⁰³ Eibner, 52–53.

¹⁰⁴ Smith, Robert, Rev., “Personal Narrative of a Ten Year’s Mission in Hungary,” 810.

the Reichardt Press to resume work, he and the missionaries also revived their decimated networks of distributors. In the face of great hardship they nevertheless were able to get over 40,000 Scriptures into circulation in less than two years, plus thousands of tracts and books from their centers in Oberschützen and Buda-Pest.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, at a time when the Protestant church schools were under attack, the Mission's school flourished and rapidly expanded its enrollment to 350 pupils.¹⁰⁶

However, this freedom did not last long. For internal and external reasons, the Austrian government began to view the British evangelicals as a liability.¹⁰⁷ Over a two year period the noose was progressively tightened on their activities until they were brought to an end. It began with the closure by police of the bookshop operated by the British and Foreign Bible Society, Tract Society, and the Free Church of Scotland in the summer of 1851. The axe fell next on the Scottish missionaries, who were expelled from the country in January of 1852.¹⁰⁸ This aroused wide indignation among the populace, press and in Parliament.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the authorities proceeded with the crackdown despite this outcry. In March, 1852, the Reichardt Press was raided by police and all Bible

¹⁰⁵ Eibner, 53.

¹⁰⁶ This represents a trebling of their enrollment between 1848 and 1851. It is also interesting to note that the British Evangelical Alliance took up the cause of supporting the educational institutions Wimmer had established in Oberschützen. See Eibner, 53.

¹⁰⁷ The former reason had to do with the Crown's plans to merge Hungary into the rest of the empire to realize the long-cherished dream of a *Gesamtmonarchie*. To the architects of this plan, "Protestantism was seen as a barrier to the successful erection of such a state." Eibner, 53. As for the latter, external reason, Britain had been engaged in a series of diplomatic disputes with Austria, making the British evangelicals a retaliatory target.

¹⁰⁸ The Scottish missionaries had expected this to happen. Smith wrote, "At length the thunder-cloud, which had sensibly become blacker and more threatening towards the end of 1851, burst on our heads on the first week of January, 1852." Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Year's Mission in Hungary," 810.

¹⁰⁹ Not only the fact of the expulsion, but also its manner, was viewed with contempt. In the dead of winter, and with sick family members for which to care, the missionaries were given ten days to pack up ten years of life in Hungary and leave the country. They were presented with an impossible task. An interesting sidelight is that among the few things the missionaries were able to take with them was the just completed manuscript by Georg Bauhofer on the history of Hungarian Protestantism, which they smuggled out at great risk so that it could be published in Berlin. The departure was a sorrowful one. Smith wrote, "But now the naked reality stood before us. A thousand cords, which bound us to a land where we had seen so many marvels of God's grace-to its church-to individuals-to brethren dearly and tenderly loved-were at once and violently snapped asunder. The desolation of heart I felt in that hour I cannot describe." Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Year's Mission in Hungary," 811.

production was put to a stop. Finally, the “last direct link of the British evangelicals with Hungary was severed on July 20, when, after months of police interference Millard too was banished from the Habsburg Empire along with 58,087 Bibles and New Testaments.”¹¹⁰ This cessation of the activities of British evangelicals in Hungary lasted until 1860. In the interregnum the remaining ministries (such as the Mission’s school and the weekly pastor conferences) were nurtured by the indigenous leaders, as was the spirit of evangelicalism.¹¹¹ The fact that evangelical activity exploded in Hungary after the Compromise of 1867 is a testimony to the effectiveness of the people who labored in these years.¹¹²

The Open Order was finally superseded in 1854 by new regulations issued by Archduke Albrecht, the governor-general of Hungary.¹¹³ The new regulations were more propaganda than substance¹¹⁴, and were a further example of what caused Bauhofer to complain bitterly about the hypocrisy displayed in the government’s persecution of Hungarian Protestants: “And the sting of all is, that in the constitution, and in the mouths of the rulers, one constantly hears of ‘perfect equality of the different confessions; perfect freedom of faith and conscience; complete independence of the Church courts within the limits of the law.’”¹¹⁵ What further galled the Hungarian Protestants was the disparity of treatment meted to them and to the Roman Catholic Church, a disparity that in fact characterized the period of Neo-Absolutism. In fact, a significant difference between the attempt of Franz Joseph to build a *Gesamtstaat* following the revolution and that of

¹¹⁰ Eibner, 53.

¹¹¹ Eibner, 53–54.

¹¹² Kool points out the cooperative efforts embodied in such activities as the ministerial conferences planted the seeds that would come to fruition years later: “Archduchess Maria Dorothea’s role in the establishment of this international and interdenominational fraternity...cannot be overestimated, neither the example of the missionaries, of their personal lives and their teaching, by which they won trust and built bridges. It gave them opportunities to pass on a vision for missions and prepared the ground for the seed of missions to sprout.” Kool, 107.

¹¹³ The Open Order thus outlasted Haynau, who was replaced by Albrecht in 1851.

¹¹⁴ Concerning this Király commented, “Lacking the straightforwardness of General Haynau’s Open Order, the new regulations were a much more typical Habsburg measure. They spoke of a return to legality, to the status quo ante according to the laws of 1790-91, but they bespoke the same aim as before, repression.” Király, Béla K., 67.

¹¹⁵ Bauhofer, 548.

Joseph II at the end of the 18th century was the very different religious orientation the two pursued. Hanák wrote the following:

The difference between Josephinism and neo-absolutism became especially evident in the government's attitude towards the Catholic Church. Whereas the enlightened Joseph II had done much to limit the power of the Church, Francis Joseph did much to increase it. He permitted the return of the Jesuits, allowed unlimited contact between the Austrian hierarchy and the Holy See, and resigned the *ius placetum regis*, the Hungarian monarch's century-old, jealously guarded right. In the Concordat of 1855 he ceded near absolute power to the Church in matters of marriage and education and gave substantial material advantages to ecclesiastical institutions and the higher clergy.¹¹⁶

Thus the Catholic Church, along with the military and the administrative bureaucracy, became a bulwark of Habsburg power and the attempt to build a unitary state.¹¹⁷

The culmination of this struggle to subordinate the Protestant churches to the state was the Patent fight. While the fight began in earnest during 1859, it had its roots one year after the 1854 decree of Archduke Albrecht, when he presented a draft proposal for a permanent settlement to a small group of Protestant leaders. At the same time the Roman Catholic Church received breathtaking powers and liberties from the Crown in the Concordat of 1855, Protestant leaders were presented a draft that moved in the opposite direction.¹¹⁸ The draft was swiftly rejected. The reasons for the rejection are easily

¹¹⁶ Hanák, "The Period of Neo-Absolutism," 288.

¹¹⁷ As an example of the very different outlook the Roman Catholic hierarchy had on church - state relations in Hungary during this period from the Protestant clergy, one only has to look at the sentiments expressed by János Scitovszky, the Archbishop of Esztergom, during the 1850 Esztergom episcopal conference. He observed that "after having united its forces with those of the Empire in an alliance fitting to both parties, the church, along with the most gratifying triumph of the state, has again burst forth into a spiritual flower ... Emperor's crowns are better guarded by clergy than by arms." Csorba, László. "The Revolution and the Habsburg Response, 1848–1859." *Hungary: Government and Politics 1848–2000*. Béla Király and Mária Ormos (eds.) and Norá Arató (trans.). Atlantic Studies on Society in Change No. 109. New York: Columbia UP, 2001. 27.

¹¹⁸ The draft was ably summarized by Király under four main areas. See Király, Béla K., 68–69. The first area dealt with the reorganization of the structures governing the churches from a presbyterial system to a consistorial one: "An *Oberkonsistorium* or *Oberkirchenrat* was to be set up on the pattern of the Prussian Lutheran Supreme Church Council. Even Catholics could be council members, who were to be appointed by the crown for life. This council was to be the highest source of church superintendence, administration and judicature." The fact that Catholics could be appointed to this council only served to underline the complete subjection of the churches to the Catholic state. The second area dealt with bringing the bulwark of Protestantism to heel, the church schools: "State supervision of the schools was to be continued on the basis of the regulations of 1854. Secondary schools and teacher-training colleges were to lose the last vestiges of their autonomy and become fully state-supervised." The third area attempted to

understood:

The provisions of the draft wiped out the Protestant churches' centuries-old traditions of self-government. Rather than a return to legality, it amounted to making an extraordinary situation permanent. The patent would arrogate to the state rights that did not belong to it but instead were the sole prerogatives of the church councils, which under the constitution were the supreme legislative organs of the Protestant churches. The Habsburg state, which was Roman Catholic by nature, a fact that had been reinforced by the Concordat, would have a say in all Protestant affairs, great and small.¹¹⁹

The absolutist intention behind the draft was plain to see. It was the final step in the repression of Hungarian Protestantism that had been waged inexorably since the suppression of the revolution. In short order the opposition to the draft vastly expanded: "Immediately after the draft was published in 1855, first the Protestant leaders, then the Protestant masses, then gradually the Catholic hierarchy and finally the vast majority of the Hungarian nation united in militant opposition to it."¹²⁰ Despite this opposition, and despite the weakened position of the empire following the disasters at Solferino and Villafranca during the summer of 1859¹²¹, on September 1, 1859, Count Thun issued the

make a historically transparent and autonomous manner of conducting church business into one that was closed and strictly monitored: "Contrary to long-standing tradition, all meetings of church officials were to be closed to the public. Presiding officers were to be held responsible for seeing that there were no discussions or resolutions on matters that were outside the meeting's specific area of interest or infringed the law - and the law, naturally, included all unlawful imperial rescripts. Resolutions and even minutes of meetings were not valid without ministerial approval. Nor were appointments or elections of teachers and ministers. The election of superintendents and district presbyters was subject to imperial consent." These provisions left the churches with practically no **legal** means of redressing grievances against the government. Finally, there was a veneer of a return to the status quo ante and the offer of financial inducements to make the draft more palatable: "The fourth area included in the proposed patent would indeed have restored the legal conditions that were set up in 1790-91, but they were secondary matters. The authority of the Protestant church judiciary was to be reestablished over Protestant marriages. The rights of Hungary's Protestants were to be extended over the Protestants of Croatia and the Military Frontier Zones. The superintendencies were to receive annual state subsidies." Even so, it is highly doubtful the Protestants would have been able to redress their traditional grievances over Catholic abuses concerning mixed marriages and reversals, making any gains mostly cosmetic.

¹¹⁹ Király, Béla K., 69.

¹²⁰ Király, Béla K., 69.

¹²¹ It should be noted that only the precipitous collapse of the Austrian Army in the Italian campaign and the quick armistice signed by Franz Joseph with Napoleon III prevented the latter from honoring his agreement with the Hungarian government in exile to keep fighting until Hungary was

Imperial Protestant Patent.

The impact was like that of a “bombshell”.¹²² Count Thun had seriously misjudged the political climate at a most inopportune time. The liberal Hungarian statesman Baron Zsigmond Kemény opined: “But God only knows what will happen if the government makes another blunder in its analysis of the situation in some other area like the one Count Thun has committed in the matter of religion.”¹²³ Opposition to the Patent grew into national resistance transcending all barriers. The reason the issue transcended denominational, political¹²⁴, and even, to a certain extent, ethnic barriers¹²⁵ was that this attack upon Protestant liberties held ominous implications for the nation’s liberties and for the liberties of those constituent groups of the political nation. Thun not only misjudged the political climate, he also miscalculated badly on how to implement the Patent. And in fact the result was that it was not implemented.¹²⁶ The church leaders “refusal to act on the patent turned passive resistance into a movement of open defiance.”¹²⁷ To force the matter, numerous church officials were arrested and jailed. But

liberated. Király noted that following this military and diplomatic debacle of the Habsburg empire, “a critical situation developed in Hungary, a situation in which discontent with the draft patent was a major element.” Király, Béla K., 69.

¹²² Király, Béla K., 70.

¹²³ Király, Béla K., 70.

¹²⁴ While Deák maintained a principled stand of passive resistance, the leading role in the fight was nevertheless taken up by those committed to liberal Magyar nationalism. However, they did not fight alone. They were joined by the conservative aristocracy alienated by Habsburg autocracy. See Király, Béla K., 72.

¹²⁵ Király quotes from the report of the police commissioner of Nagyvárád, dated December 21, 1859: “Catholics and Protestants, liberals and arch-conservatives, and, what needs more careful watching, all the nationalities of Hungary - Hungarians, Slavs, Rumanians, Serbs, Germans and Jews - are all opposed to the government.” Király, Béla K., 71–72.

¹²⁶ Thun began by banning the activities of the existing district authorities who had the staff to implement orders. He had further arbitrarily reworked the church districts to break up old loyalties, and entrusted his new district leaders with the task of implementing the Patent - but they had no staff to do it. The consequence was that the traditional structures continued to operate as normal, while the new structures were ignored. See Király, Béla K., 71.

¹²⁷ Király, Béla K., 71.

this only had the opposite effect of stiffening resistance.¹²⁸

A measure of the opposition to the Patent can be gleaned from the respective success of two petition drives for and against it. Support for the Patent came primarily from Lutheran parishes (that is, from German and Slovak congregations), with 39,610 signatures collected.¹²⁹ Contrast this with 2,684,033 signatures collected against the Patent, and one can surmise the broad antipathy it aroused. Anecdotal proofs can also testify to the depth of opposition. A prominent one which electrified the country concerns an important meeting held in Debrecen on January 11, 1860, which coincided with a large agricultural fair in this economic center of the Hungarian Great Plain. The timing assured a large attendance. The church was packed to overflowing with the clergy and other officials of the Reformed Church, as well as curious laymen. An imperial representative came to demand the dispersion of those gathered. He stood and said, "In the name of the Emperor I do now prohibit this meeting." To which Péter Balogh, a deputy-bishop and chair of the meeting, replied, "In the name of God I do now constitute this meeting."¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Révész observed that with increased government persecution of church leaders and the disruption of church gatherings, "wherever it was learned that a church leader was to be speaking in defiance of the law, huge crowds would gather to hear him; the Church resistance was thus turning into a national resistance." Révész, Imre. History of the Hungarian Reformed Church. Hungarica Americana. Trans. George A.F. Knight. Washington D.C.: The Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, 1956. 132.

¹²⁹ Friedrich Gottas explained the different reactions of various German and Slovak Lutheran parishes. The starting point necessary to understand the differing reactions was that with the Patent the government in Vienna wished, among other things, to reorganize the geography of the church districts to change the balance of power within Hungarian Protestantism in favor of the nationalities over against the Magyar majority, to strengthen the Germans, of course, but especially the Slovaks. The vast majority of Slovak parishes supported this development. As Gottas remarked: "Ihre Loyalität Wien gegenüber erklärt sich freilich wiederum aus politischen bzw. nationalen Gründen." The interesting development was that the response of the German Lutheran communities was not united. Gottas continued: "Während die Magyaren eine patentfeindliche Haltung an den Tag legten und die Slowaken in der Majorität für das Patent waren und deshalb von den Magyaren als Panslawisten, also politisch verdächtigt wurden, waren die ungarländischen deutschen Protestanten in zwei Lager gespalten: auf der einen Seite standen die 'Patentisten', die nur das kirchliche Interesse im Auge hatten, denen politisch-nationale Motive in der Auseinandersetzung mit den Septembergesetzen fremd waren und die daher für das Patent eintraten; auf der anderen Seite begegnen wir den 'Autonomisten', die vor allem aus politischen Gründen nicht geneigt waren, im Kampf um das Patent und in ihrer Ablehnung des neoabsolutistischen Systems ihre Solidarität mit dem Magyarentum aufzugeben." Among the latter were mostly the Zipser Saxons of Upper Hungary, who sided with the Magyars against the Slovaks. Gottas, Friedrich. "Die Geschichte des Protestantismus in der Habsburgermonarchie." Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918 Bd. IV: Die Konfessionen. Adam Wandruszka [ed] and Peter Urbanitsch [ed]. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985. 504–05.

¹³⁰ Révész, Imre, 130.

The meeting proceeded, the imperial representative grew fearful with all eyes upon him, and so he left having accomplished nothing.

Without going into a detailed chronology of the events as they unfolded, two aspects of the fight should be brought to the fore - the battle for public opinion within Hungary and outside it for international public opinion. The leading figure to emerge in the internal battle was Imre Révész, a Reformed pastor “who became the movement’s ideologist.”¹³¹ In addition to his literary activities before the promulgation of the Patent, Révész authored two major documents for the Reformed Church during the struggle. The first was the Petition of the Hungarian Reformed Church, Trans-Tisza District, dated October 8, 1859. A delegation of mostly high-ranking church officials was sent to Vienna with the petition, but they were viewed as having no legal status, and so neither Franz Joseph nor his government would receive the delegation.¹³² Following this rebuff, and fearing news that Minister Thun would require Protestant clergy to read the Patent from their pulpits, the second document was drafted to provide direction to those clergy who might be confused as to the correct course to follow.¹³³ Entitled Tájékoztatás¹³⁴, it was approved on January 28, 1860, and published by the Trans-Tisza District on March 1, 1860. It was then widely circulated throughout the country. The Orientation focused its arguments on the responsibilities of ministers to the church versus the state and on church discipline, all with a view towards convincing its readers that a minister’s duty towards God and the Church demanded solidarity with the Church and its leaders in resisting the Patent. Király characterized it as “probably the most outspoken and influential document of the whole movement of defiance.”¹³⁵ It had its desired effect. Only a handful of mostly German and Slovak Lutheran ministers read the Patent from the pulpit as ordered.

¹³¹ Király, Béla K., 73. It is interesting to note how the crisis launched public and even political careers. Révész went on to become a leader of the evangelical renewal within his church and a prominent church historian. Another leading figure of the fight who made a name for himself through his tireless organizing and speaking efforts against the Patent was none other than Kálmán Tisza, the “General” of the Liberal political machine, the most imposing political figure of the Dualist era. The future Prime Minister was a young, minor official of the Reformed Church at this time, whose efforts made a martyr of sorts for the movement when he was arrested and persecuted by the regime because of his activities.

¹³² Kálmán Tisza also took part in this delegation.

¹³³ Király, Béla K., 73–74.

¹³⁴ This has been translated as Orientation by Király, or Instructions by Révész.

¹³⁵ Király, Béla K., 74.

Révész bravely admitted his authorship of the Orientation to state authorities, who proceeded to initiate legal proceedings against him. He was spared imprisonment by victory.

Révész and others also wrote for an international audience to win support for their cause in the West.¹³⁶ However, the lead in this propaganda fight was taken by the Hungarian exiles. Kossuth was the best known figure in this campaign, but an important role was played by Baron Miklós Jósika and the exile press bureau in Brussels. They were determined that this time Habsburg propaganda would not perpetuate an anti-Hungarian bias.¹³⁷ The Austrian press, for their part, continued to press the *Verwirkungs-Theorie* as justification for their actions.¹³⁸ In this battle the Austrian press was able to convince the German Protestants.¹³⁹ The Hungarians, however, were able to win the support of the Protestant great power of the day, Great Britain. Kálmán Tisza, significantly, “attributed the patent’s repeal mostly to British intercession.”¹⁴⁰ The propaganda activities of the exiles played a significant role in the outcome of the struggle, yet the foundation for

¹³⁶ Király, Béla K., 78.

¹³⁷ Király observes that with “the patent crisis...the exiles finally broke through this barrier and the West at last was treated to both sides of events.” Király, Béla K., 76.

¹³⁸ This argued that Hungary had forfeited all constitutional rights with the revolution, any rights they now enjoyed were by the grace of the Emperor. This was extended to the Protestant churches by virtue of their complicity in the revolutionary events.

¹³⁹ Király, Béla K., 77. Király argues that the German Protestants had developed along consistorial lines under the protection of their own rulers, a far different situation from Hungarian Protestants. Therefore they misunderstood the Hungarian situation and viewed the Patent as a rather liberal constitution offered by the Crown. The Swiss Calvinists, in contrast to the German Lutherans, seem to have understood the Hungarian argument. One newspaper, Zeitstimmen, commented on January 1, 1860: “Who could blame the Hungarian Protestants for rejecting the free church constitution offered by the Habsburgs? It is true that this constitution is more liberal than that of any Protestant church in any state. However, the Hungarians say: ‘We do not accept even the freest constitution from the hands of an absolutist regime, as an act of imperial grace. What the absolutist regime gives today, tomorrow, if it so pleases, it can take away. On the basis of old laws and contracts, we have the right to administer our own affairs.’ They are right! They are speaking like men! The Hungarian Protestants’ actions cannot be understood by foreigners, because they stem from political grievances. Naturally, they are inspired by political considerations, but the sources of them are the same as the sources of their religious considerations. Political and denominational autonomy on the one hand confronts bureaucratic absolutism on the other.” Király, Béla K., 77. Apparently, the Swiss Calvinists understood something about the connection between political and religious freedom that the German Lutherans did not grasp.

¹⁴⁰ Király, Béla K., 78.

victory was the overwhelming rejection of the Patent by the Protestant churches, with vocal support from all levels of Hungarian society.¹⁴¹

By March 31, 1860, 226 Lutheran parishes had acceded to the Patent, while 345 had rejected it. Again, it was primarily German and Slovak parishes, parishes more amenable to Habsburg rule and less supportive of Magyar nationalism, which had accepted the Patent. Yet when we turn to the almost wholly Magyar Reformed Church of Hungary, we find that of some 2000 parishes, only 1% acceded to the Patent - a resounding rejection.

With internal and external pressures mounting, the Crown was forced to act. In April of 1860, Archduke Albrecht was dismissed as Governor General of Hungary, and General Lajos Benedek was appointed as his replacement. The selection of Benedek was significant for a few reasons. To begin with, he was a Hungarian and Protestant (Lutheran). Moreover, he was the only general “who had acquitted himself with honor” in the disastrous military campaign in Northern Italy.¹⁴² Király rightly remarked: “That the only man considered an effective general had to be spared for political duties in Hungary rather than charged with the reorganization the Habsburg army sorely needed in 1860, dramatized the pressing necessity of pacifying Hungary by concessions instead of using greater force.”¹⁴³ Shortly thereafter, on May 15, 1860, the Emperor handed Benedek a document which in essence annulled the Patent.¹⁴⁴ Some Hungarian Protestants thus credited Benedek with the Patent’s repeal.¹⁴⁵

Certainly building international pressure and Benedek’s counsel to Franz Joseph were contributing factors. But the credit rests ultimately with the solidarity of Hungarian Protestants, with the support of the nation, in resisting Habsburg absolutism. The Compromise of 1867 was in a sense the logical outcome of a process that began with the change of course signalled by the repeal of the Patent.¹⁴⁶ The significance of the struggle

¹⁴¹ Support even came from the ranks of the Roman Catholic prelature and the conservative aristocracy, normally the Crown’s strongest supporters. See Király, Béla K., 78.

¹⁴² Király, Béla K., 78.

¹⁴³ Király, Béla K., 79.

¹⁴⁴ Révész, Imre, 132.

¹⁴⁵ Király, Béla K., 78.

¹⁴⁶ Király, Béla K., 79.

was summarized well by Bucsay:

The struggle against the Protestant Patent was not only momentous from the perspective of church history, but it was also politically significant. The absolutistic system was sorely weakened, and the prospect of a return to a free and constitutional [political] life seemed justified. Once again the Protestants had been able to perform a service for freedom through their resolute behavior and readiness for sacrifice.¹⁴⁷

The immediate victory for Hungary's Protestants was the preservation of their historic freedoms. They would have to wait until the beginning of Dualism for the next restructuring of their relationship with the state.

2. Roots of the Hungarian Baptist Mission

2.1. J.G. Oncken - The Father of Continental Baptists

In his history of the continental Baptist movement, the British Baptist leader and church historian J.H. Rushbrooke commences his study as follows:

Johann Gerhard Oncken has long been known in Britain as the "Father of the German Baptists"; but he is far more. "Father of the Continental Baptists" would scarcely be an exaggerated title... Other personal influences have played a part; minor movements have added their contribution to the main current; but the summary statement may at once be made that the vast majority of the Baptist Church membership of to-day is found in communities established by Oncken and his fellow-Germans, or by those who were influenced by them. His name must stand at the head of what may be distinctively named *the* modern Baptist movement on the continent of Europe.¹⁴⁸

The Baptist movement in the Habsburg lands, in which the Hungarian movement grew to become the most prominent, is no exception to this observation. Born in the town of Varel in Oldenburg on January 26, 1800, Oncken spent the formative period of his youth, nine years dating from 1813, in the service of a Scottish merchant who was a family friend. It was at a Methodist chapel in London that Oncken, confirmed as an infant in the Lutheran Church, gave his life to Christ completely.

Oncken's disciplined and active Christian life earned him a position with the Continental Society as a missionary to his native land. In 1823 he settled into Hamburg to

¹⁴⁷ Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 95.

¹⁴⁸ Rushbrooke, 17.

begin his work, attending the English Reformed Church. Christian literature distribution was central to Oncken's ministry, in 1828 he opened a small bookshop to secure citizenship in the city, thus ensuring that city authorities would not be able to expel him despite their dim view of his evangelistic activities.¹⁴⁹ He also became an agent for various societies such as the Edinburgh Bible Society and the Religious Tract Society.

During these first years of ministry Oncken was not yet a Baptist. The religious influences upon him in Great Britain were mostly Presbyterian, Independent, and Methodist. As Rushbrooke describes the situation, "For ten years after his return his work was carried on upon what may be described as Evangelical Alliance lines."¹⁵⁰ Yet during this time he grew increasingly doubtful about the practice of infant baptism. "Accordingly in 1829, we find him in correspondence with Haldane of Edinburgh, but he recoils from Haldane's advice that he should follow the example of John Smyth by baptizing himself."¹⁵¹

Oncken waited five years until help came from an unexpected quarter. An American sea-captain, Calvin Tubbs, who was an acquaintance of Oncken's informed the American Baptist Missionary Society in Boston about his predicament. This was then passed on to Professor Sears of Hamilton College, who was to travel to Europe in 1833. Sears contacted Oncken, but they were unable to arrange a suitable time to meet until 1834. Finally, on April 22, 1834, Oncken and his wife, along with five others, were baptized in the Elbe by Sears. "On the next day the American visitor completed a task whose historic importance he could not at the time have realized, by formally constituting in Hamburg the first German Baptist church, with Oncken as its pastor."¹⁵²

The persecution which Oncken had experienced previously for his vigorous evangelistic activities now greatly increased as a Baptist, while former associates disavowed him. He found new Baptist allies, however, in America and Great Britain. When Oncken and two associates were arrested in May of 1840, petitions from Great Britain and the USA to the Hamburg Senate convinced the Hanseatic city to ease up the

¹⁴⁹ Rushbrooke, 20.

¹⁵⁰ Rushbrooke, 20.

¹⁵¹ Rushbrooke, 21–22.

¹⁵² Rushbrooke, 22.

pressure on the growing Baptist community.¹⁵³ Despite the persecution, the church continued to grow. So much so that larger quarters were rented for the expanding ministry.¹⁵⁴

2.2. “For the praise of God and for the welfare of man, Hamburg, 1842.”¹⁵⁵

The turning point for the Baptists of Hamburg came with the great fire which broke out on May 5, 1842, and destroyed one-third of the city. Oncken immediately proceeded to offer the Baptist premises for the care of the homeless. The offer was accepted and for months the Baptist community fed, clothed, and sheltered some seventy homeless citizens. After this, things could not go back to the way they were before the fire. “The Senate forwarded a letter of thanks to Oncken; and, although legal freedom was for a time withheld, persecution was henceforth impossible. The ‘sectarians’ had in the day of trial proved themselves among the bravest and most self-sacrificing, and to treat them as bad citizens was unthinkable.”¹⁵⁶

The fire also afforded the Baptists the opportunity to expand their witness, not only to their fellow citizens, but also to the many craftsmen flooding into the city from around Germany and abroad to seek work in its reconstruction. For Oncken this presented the Baptists with a strategic opportunity to recruit new missionaries as it were for the Baptist message. This was in keeping with Oncken’s oft-quoted dictum that “every

¹⁵³ The city leaders had offered to pay Oncken’s passage to America to rid the city of him, but he refused. The other two arrested with him were C.F. Lange and Julius Köbner. Lange was converted by Oncken at his first sermon back in 1834 and remained a lifelong friend and helper. Julius Köbner was one of the so-called “triumvirate” of German Baptist leaders along with Oncken and G.W. Lehmann. Köbner was born on June 11, 1806, in Odense on the Danish island of Fünen. He was the son of the Jewish Rabbi there, but during his early years of wandering he declared himself a Christian. He was converted to the Baptist faith by Oncken at a service he attended in Hamburg and was baptized on May 17, 1836. He later became a pastor in Berlin.

¹⁵⁴ A large granary was found on the Second Market Street with room enough for a chapel, Sunday school quarters, and a book store.

¹⁵⁵ This is the inscription on a seal Oncken commissioned to commemorate the Baptist response to the tragedy of the great fire of Hamburg, which swept through the city in 1842. Mészáros, Kálmán. “A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)].” ”Krisztusért járva követségben”: Tanulmányok a magyar baptista misszió 150 éves történetéből [“We Are Christ’s Ambassadors”: Studies from the 150 Year History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission]. Ed. Lajos Bereczki. Budapest: Baptista Kiadó. 19.

¹⁵⁶ Rushbrooke, 25.

Baptist is a missionary.”¹⁵⁷ Among those from the Habsburg lands engaged in the reconstruction of the city that were converted by the Baptist outreach were Marschall, Hornung, Scharschmidt, Woyka, Rottmayer and Tevely.¹⁵⁸ Joseph Marschall, a carpenter journeyman from a village close to Vienna, gave the following account of his conversion:

As I came to Hamburg in 1843, I was very afraid that I could become an apostate from the faith of the Catholic Church, which I held to be the only true faith. I was therefore zealous in my [attendance of] public worship, I vowed to myself I would give up my life for my faith, and I rejoiced that I was a good Christian. In the beginning of 1844 an acquaintance from our usual Sunday amusements stayed away. It was said that he not only became discontented with his faith, he had also lost his senses, that he now only talked about holy things. I was distressed about it and sought to warn him. But he invited me to go with him to where he was going; so I came to the congregation without knowing what kind of congregation it was. Here I now heard described the natural state of man in sin clear and unvarnished, according to the gospel. But there I saw no holy water and did not observe the people making the sign of the cross upon themselves, and the thought came to me, whether or not such pious people, that were correctly instructed from the Bible, nevertheless could indeed find salvation without being Catholic. I went therefore every Sunday to the congregation, if even with the fear that I would lose my faith. Soon, however, I realized that up to now I had not been at all a true Christian, I

¹⁵⁷ Wagner, William L. New Move Forward in Europe: Growth Patterns of German Speaking Baptists in Europe. South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1978. 12.

¹⁵⁸ This last named person remains a mystery figure. He is mentioned by Johann Rottmayer Jr. along with the other converts, although it is not clear if he was among those who returned to Austria and Hungary. Rottmayer, Johann, Jr. “Rottmayer János.” Emléklapok. Jubileumi füzetek 2. Ed. Imre Somogyi. Budapest: Magvető, 1948. 25. It would appear that Rottmayer Jr. believed Tevely was indeed among those who returned because the Rev. Charles Byford, the Continental Commissioner of the Baptist World Alliance and a good friend of Rottmayer Jr., likely was dependent upon his friend’s story when he included one “Andreas Tiveley” among those who returned to Hungary. Byford, Charles. Peasants and Prophets. Second ed. London: The Kingsgate Press, 1912. 3. Byford states the same in the chapter on Hungary he contributed to Rushbrooke’s first edition of his history of Continental Baptists. Byford, Charles. “The Movement in Hungary: Progress and Difficulties.” The Baptist Movement in the Continent of Europe. J.H. Rushbrooke. London: The Kingsgate Press, 1915. 100. Only this time the name appears as “Andreas Tively.” In the second edition of Rushbrooke’s history, which he authored in its entirety, Rushbrooke depends upon the account given by Joseph Lehmann of the origins of the first Baptist mission to Hungary. Lehmann made no mention of Tevely in his Geschichte der deutschen Baptisten, which Rushbrooke cited and “freely” translated. Rushbrooke, 149. Contemporary Hungarian Baptist historians mention Tevely, but only to repeat the tradition from Rottmayer Jr. without further elaboration. Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 16. Mészáros does give Tevely’s first name as “István”, which is odd because that is the Hungarian version of Stephen, whereas the German “Andreas” (our Andrew) would be “András” in Hungarian. Mészáros, “A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)],” 24. Thus Tevely remains a mystery person in Hungarian Baptist annals.

let go of my supposed piety, and took hold of Jesus Christ in living faith as the only way to salvation.¹⁵⁹

A similar account comes from the son of Johann Rottmayer concerning his father's conversion in Hamburg:

Here God sent beside him a young believer named Hinrichs, who witnessed about Christ our Lord. He led him to the baptizing congregation. He began to read the Bible and to listen to sermons. He confessed his sinfulness and like a lost person he grabbed onto the salvation in Christ. He became a new person.¹⁶⁰

Overall this was a dynamic time for the Hamburg church in terms of ministry and growth. Rushbrooke recounted the following figures: "In the year 1843 the baptisms reached 273, and in the two years next following the totals were respectively 322 and 380."¹⁶¹ It is not surprising then that this success resulted in the expansion of the Baptist mission beyond the borders of the city of Hamburg, which Rushbrooke likened to the parable of Jesus in Mark 4:26, "So is the kingdom of god, as if a man should cast seed."¹⁶²

2.3. Oncken's "Mission-School"

Apparently Johann Rottmayer was the first Hungarian to be baptized. While there are different dates given for his baptism in various sources, the traditional date accepted is that from the Hamburg Taufbuch, in which Rottmayer is the 283rd entry. According to it Rottmayer was baptized in the Elbe on May 4, 1884.¹⁶³ Szebeni reports that the other young men, Hornung, Marschall, Scharschmidt, Tevely, and Woyka were all baptized later in the same year.¹⁶⁴ Mészáros adds that Woyka and Marschall were baptized on

¹⁵⁹ Lehmann, J.G. Geschichte der deutschen Baptisten. Band 1. Hamburg: J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1896. 211.

¹⁶⁰ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 25.

¹⁶¹ Rushbrooke, 31.

¹⁶² Rushbrooke, 32–33.

¹⁶³ Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 16.

¹⁶⁴ Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 16.

October 31, 1844, with Hornung, Scharschmidt, and Tevely following later.¹⁶⁵ Baptism was only the first step in the vision of Oncken concerning these young men. As Johann Rottmayer Jr. expressed it, “They obtained the further encouragement to return to their homes and give a witness about the good news they found and accepted.”¹⁶⁶ In this manner the Baptist faith would be spread.

But before they could be sent out, they had to be properly equipped. Therefore Oncken took these young men to his side and gave them instructions as a means of preparation for their work. Not much is said of this effort. The first Baptist seminary was not established in Hamburg until 1880, although less formal instruction was first begun by Oncken much earlier.¹⁶⁷ The informal training provided by Oncken has been presented in language drawing upon the imagery of the mentoring model provided by Paul and Timothy in the New Testament. As Mészáros described the training, “The Hungarian youth finished a nearly two year mission-school by Oncken’s side, as they actively joined in the effervescent congregational life.”¹⁶⁸ The training was comprised primarily of what is often referred to today as practical ministry experience, learning by doing under the mentoring hand of an experienced pastor. When the time was right, these young men were sent off to their respective homes with the prayers and support of their church home in Hamburg.

3. The First Baptist Missionaries in Hungary: The Sending of Rottmayer, Scharschmidt, and Woyka

An oft-quoted source about the arrival of the Hungarian missionaries is the

¹⁶⁵ Mészáros, “A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1973)],” 24.

¹⁶⁶ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 25.

¹⁶⁷ The roots of the seminary extend to much earlier, but it was a difficult process for the German Baptists to accept and work towards the goal of providing formal theological education to those preparing for ministry. Rushbrooke described the situation as follows: “Although from the outset Oncken had realized that the testimony of the members must be supplemented by trained service, it was but slowly that this idea laid hold of the Baptist community. Many of the most earnest brethren dreaded the substitution of a caste of priests for a universal priesthood, and feared ecclesiasticism and the limitation of the operations of the Holy Spirit. But gradually Oncken’s view prevailed. The earliest students were called to Hamburg for the winter of 1849-50, and there received from Oncken a course of elementary instruction. Such were the remote beginnings of the seminary.” Rushbrooke, 43. In light of this summary, it would appear that Oncken’s training of the Austro-Hungarian missionaries was one of the first steps in this process.

Geschichte der deutschen Baptisten by J.G. Lehmann.¹⁶⁹ He wrote:

So it happened that in April 1846 the Austrians Marschall and Hornung, as well as the Hungarians Scharschmidt, Rottmayer and Woyka, to whom was added as a sixth person Lords from Hamburg, set off for Austrian lands, namely Hungary, to work for the Lord, in as much as it was possible under the existing laws. The sending of the brethren had been requested by the Jewish Mission of the “Free Church of Scotland” in Pest; moreover they had received instruction from Oncken in order to be better prepared for their work... The small band came .. to Vienna .. where Marschall and Hornung remained, while Scharschmidt and Rottmayer went to Pest, Woyka and Lords went 24 miles further to Fünfkirchen [Pécs].¹⁷⁰

This represents the most probable account of the actual pairs of the variant traditions found in the literature. The confusion exists mostly within the Hungarian Baptist literature.¹⁷¹ The core issues that have contributed to the confusion are the mystery figure of Tevely and when exactly Lords came to Hungary, with the original band of pioneers in 1846 or with the second wave of German brethren sent by J.G. Oncken in 1847 to help with the work. Around these two issues stem the contradictory pairings of missionaries.

Before we examine the variant traditions, the broad outline of Lehmann’s narrative can be confirmed from letters written by Oncken to the Baptist Missionary Magazine in America. The first mention of a new door opening for ministry in Hungary came in a letter Oncken wrote in February of 1846 to his American supporters, “The Jewish missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland at Jassy and Pest wish us to send some of our converted Hungarians, and when I have completed the instructions which they receive at present, it is most likely we shall send them.”¹⁷² Confirmation of these plans followed quickly, “We hope soon to be able to spread the glad tidings of salvation

¹⁶⁸ Mészáros, “A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)],” 20.

¹⁶⁹ It is cited in German, English, and Hungarian Baptist literature.

¹⁷⁰ Lehmann, J.G., 211–12.

¹⁷¹ Within German Baptist literature Donat follows Lehmann. Donat, Rudolf. Wie das Werk begann. Kassel: J.G. Onckenverlag, 1958. 422–23. In English Baptist literature Byford evidences the confusion that surrounds the person of Tevely, while Rushbrooke follows Lehmann, as previously discussed.

¹⁷² Oncken, J.G. “Extracts of a Letter from Mr. Oncken.” Baptist Missionary Magazine XXVI.5 (May 1846): 117.

in Hungary and Moldavia, through the instrumentality of six dear brethren, formerly Roman Catholics, natives of Hungary and Austria. These dear brethren, who enjoy the confidence of the church, we hope soon to send into the above regions, accompanied by another brother, who has offered his services. We commend them to the prayers of our American brethren.”¹⁷³ At this point Tevely was among those preparing to go, but at the same time Lorders had also volunteered to join the group. The question is where the band was preparing to work. Oncken described the genesis of this effort and where the plans stood at the present moment as follows:

Just at the time my mind was occupied with this plan, I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mr. Phillips, missionary to the Jews at Jassy, from the Free Church of Scotland, who gave me much useful information and encouragement. He pressed me much to send two of the brethren to Jassy, as there are a considerable number of Protestants in Moldavia, but in the most deplorable condition. Our plans in reference to these seven brethren is to let them travel together as far as Pest. This will take about six weeks, as they will make the whole of this long tour on foot, laboring as they go along. At Pest they will have to part; two or three will remain there, and at Ofen [Buda], two will go to Jassy, and two to Fünfkirchen [Pécs], south of Ofen, toward Croatia. Br. Creig, Jewish missionary here, from the Irish Presbyterians, highly approves of this plan, [he] has procured 10,000 tracts to be sent to Pest, and given me fifty Prussian dollars towards travelling expenses. We are already preparing a case, with 20,000 tracts, 500 testaments, 100 Haldane’s Canon and Inspiration of the Scriptures, &c., &c., to be sent on before our brethren. Oh! that our gracious Lord may send our brethren, as once he did his disciples, into the places which he himself intended to visit with his presence.¹⁷⁴

What immediately stands out from this account is that at first there was no plan to send any of the brethren to Vienna, despite the fact that some of the converts were Austrians from the environs of the imperial city. The main effort was to be centered in Pest and Buda, with two to go to Pécs, the only city of the three where the Scottish Mission did not have missionaries. Finally, two were to travel beyond the borders of Hungary to Jassy [Iași], the capital of the Principality of Moldavia, at that time nominally under Ottoman suzerainty, yet also under a Russian protectorate.¹⁷⁵ Pécs was included despite the fact

¹⁷³ Oncken, J.G. “Mr. Oncken’s Report of the German Mission for 1845.” Baptist Missionary Magazine XXVI.6 (June 1846): 139.

¹⁷⁴ Oncken, “Mr. Oncken’s Report of the German Mission for 1845,” 139.

¹⁷⁵ Hitchins, Keith. Rumania 1866–1947. Oxford History of Modern Europe. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. 3–5.

that the Scottish Mission was not active there because it was Woyka's home city with a sizable German population.

Yet it is evident that plans changed. In June of 1846 Oncken reported that "Six dear brethren, five of them converted Roman Catholics, have gone into Hungary, and I have made arrangements to send them, through the booksellers at Leipzig, the Holy Scriptures for distribution. If you can do anything more for us in this quarter, think of this."¹⁷⁶ Two observations stand out from this brief comment. First, it is evident that Tevely dropped out of the company that went, while Lorders was the sixth person.¹⁷⁷ Second, while Oncken only mentions Hungary as their destination (in actuality Vienna was now one of the three destinations), this short-hand reference does show that the plans for Jassy had been dropped. Confirmation of Lehmann's narrative comes from Oncken's description of his trip to Vienna and Budapest during the summer of 1848, "I went in search of br. Marschall, a converted Catholic, baptized at Hamburg. This brother returned to Austria, his native country, two years ago, in company with our Hungarian converts, and though till recently his attempts to spread the gospel had to be very secret, his labors have not been in vain."¹⁷⁸ While it appears that by 1848 Marschall was alone in Vienna, the correspondence from Oncken to his American supporters confirms the narrative given by J.G. Lehmann.

If Rottmayer Jr. was not very clear about the place of Tevely in the group that was sent from Hamburg, the Hungarian Baptist historian and close associate of Heinrich Meyer, Gusztáv F. Szabadi, further confused the situation by writing that Hornung, and not Scharschmidt, was Rottmayer's companion in Pest.¹⁷⁹ Thus Szebeni posited the

¹⁷⁶ Oncken, J.G. "Extracts of a Letter from Mr. Oncken." Baptist Missionary Magazine XXVI.12 (Dec 1846): 359.

¹⁷⁷ One possibility about the fate of Tevely comes from Byford. He stated that after being driven from their ministry in Hungary, "Hornung and Tivelly emigrated to the United States of America and commenced Baptist work amongst the Hungarian settlers in the great coal and iron districts of Pennsylvania." Byford, "The Movement in Hungary: Progress and Difficulties," 102. The problem is that Byford's account of the early Hungarian Baptist mission is hopelessly muddled and filled with inaccuracies. And while it is demonstrable that Hornung never emigrated to America, the fact that Tevely remains such a mystery figure makes it possible that Byford's convoluted account preserves a shred of truth as to Tevely's ultimate fate.

¹⁷⁸ Oncken, J.G. "Letter of Mr. Oncken." Baptist Missionary Magazine XXVIII.10 (Oct 1848): 388.

¹⁷⁹ Mészáros, "A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1973)]," 20.

following reconstruction based upon Rottmayer Jr. and Szabadi: Tevely and Schar Schmidt went to Vienna, Rottmayer and Hornung went to Pest, and Woyka and Marschall went to Pécs.¹⁸⁰ As a result Szebeni placed Orders with Fritz Oncken as one of the two helpers sent later from Hamburg, apparently unaware of Kruse.¹⁸¹ This reconstruction influenced later scholarship.¹⁸² Thus while Mészáros quotes Lehmann and assumes his reconstruction of events,¹⁸³ he also contradicts this view at other places. For example, he approvingly cites Szabadi which places Hornung in Pest with Rottmayer,¹⁸⁴ and he follows Szebeni in placing Orders with Fritz Oncken as one of the two helpers sent later by J.G. Oncken.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain which view of events Mészáros actually holds. The evidence from Oncken's correspondence to American Baptists should clear up any confusion as to the actual course of events. The other observation to be made is that Oncken deliberately sent out the converts in pairs, even assigning the volunteer Orders to Woyka so that he would not be alone in Pécs. Mészáros comments that Oncken's method was to send out the disciples in pairs as Jesus did (Mk. 6:7).¹⁸⁶ We will turn now to the work of the missionaries. The ministry of Marschall and Hornung in Vienna falls out of the scope of this study, although reference to their work and later lives in Hungary will be made. Rather we turn to the Baptist missions in Pest and Pécs up to the revolution.

¹⁸⁰ Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 16.

¹⁸¹ Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 17.

¹⁸² In a personal correspondence dated April 4, 1998, Szebeni had revised his view to agree with Lehmann, noting that there was "nothing to say on the problem of Tevely." I had the pleasure of visiting Szebeni in Budapest and saw his massive card catalog that he had compiled over many years of research. If he had no further information on Tevely, then it is likely that Hungarian Baptist scholarship has lost the trail on this obscure figure.

¹⁸³ Mészáros, "A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)]," 20, 24, 30, 32.

¹⁸⁴ Mészáros, "A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)]," 20.

¹⁸⁵ Mészáros, "A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)]," 21.

¹⁸⁶ Mészáros, Kálmán. "Woyka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]." Theologiai Szemle 23.5 (1980): 294.

4. The Baptist Missions in Pest and Pécs up to the Revolution

4.1. Johann Rottmayer's Early Work in Pest

4.1.1. Rottmayer's Background

Johann Rottmayer was born in Pest to Roman Catholic parents, his exact date of birth is unknown, but he was christened on December 27, 1818.¹⁸⁷ As a young man “he really loved music and the fine arts.”¹⁸⁸ He wanted to study music, but his religious mother objected that he would destroy his life through the bad society he would be surrounded by in such a profession. She successfully pleaded with him to choose a more honorable profession, and so he entered into an apprenticeship to become a carpenter.

Rottmayer was also at this time a physically fit young man who loved to exercise and bathe in the Danube, even during winter. One account passed on concerns a winter day in which Rottmayer was bathing on the river when the ice gave way beneath him and he barely escaped going underneath the ice and drowning. Of this incident Csopják commented, “From that day on he became more serious and began to ponder what would have happened to him if he was forced to suddenly give an account in the other world, he who so much loved the theater and dancing, but did not concern himself with his soul.”¹⁸⁹ This was not Rottmayer's only brush with death. In 1838 a great flood swept down the Danube upon Buda-Pest. So high did the water rise that soldiers were rescuing people from the roofs of their houses in small boats. Rottmayer Jr. passed on the story he received from his father: “My dear father was among the people crying out for help, it was a miracle of God that he escaped. The fear of death he experienced, the merciful deliverance and the destitution brought about by the devastation brought to fruition within him the resolve to begin his journeys.”¹⁹⁰ To put this decision into context Csopják explains that at this time it was customary in Hungary for apprentices in Rottmayer's chosen profession to undertake such travels to gain work experience with various

¹⁸⁷ Mészáros, “A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1973)],” 24.

¹⁸⁸ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 5.

¹⁸⁹ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 6.

¹⁹⁰ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 25.

masters. In this way they rounded out their training before establishing themselves in the trade.¹⁹¹

Rottmayer Jr. goes on to recount his father's travels. He went first to Vienna, where he studied drawing in addition to his work, then on to Dresden and Berlin. It was in Berlin that he heard of the great fire in Hamburg and decided to go seek work there. Rottmayer was approximately twenty when he left home in 1838 to make his way in the world. He arrived in Hamburg in 1843 and was twenty-five when he was invited by Hinrichs to the church where he met "happy people".¹⁹² He was baptized on May 4, 1844. Thus when he arrived back in Pest in the middle of 1846, he had been away for approximately eight years and was now in his late twenties. He was indeed a changed person.

4.1.2. The Opening of the Baptist Work in Buda-Pest

Rottmayer once wrote of the beginning of the work: In the spring of 1846 five brothers came with me to my beloved home as the first Baptists. Two remained in Vienna, two in Pécs, two in Budapest. With love and in the strength of the Holy Spirit they gave a testimony about what God had done with us. Our activities quickly brought us into contact with censorship and the authorities.¹⁹³ The date of Rottmayer's arrival in Pest has been placed at May 20, 1846, by Gusztáv F. Szabadi.¹⁹⁴ After their period of preparation in Hamburg, the time for their pioneering work was at hand.

What shape did that work take? To get at that, some background information is necessary. In the ministry of J.G. Oncken, the role of Christian literature distribution played a central part. The story is told of Oncken that when he was yet a young Christian in England, "instead of spending in food the shilling allowed for dinner, he ate only a

¹⁹¹ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 6.

¹⁹² Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 16.

¹⁹³ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 25.

¹⁹⁴ It must be remembered that Szabadi also stated that Hornung, and not Scharschmidt, was Rottmayer's companion in Pest. See the previous discussion. Even so, the date is entirely plausible, for J.G. Lehmann, it must be remembered, stated that the small band departed Hamburg in April of 1846, and all spent some time in Vienna before the rest went on to Hungary.

penny roll, and applied the balance to the purchase of tracts!”¹⁹⁵ This concern did not fade during his many years of ministry on the continent. In 1879 after fifty years of service with the Edinburgh Bible Society, he reported that he had distributed over 2,000,000 Bibles. This figure is ample demonstration of the central role literature distribution played in Oncken’s vision of mission and the propagation of the Baptist faith and message. Thus Oncken prepared a large case of literature bound for Pest “to be sent on before our brethren.”¹⁹⁶

The role of Oncken is only half the picture, however, at least in terms of the work in Buda-Pest. The other half concerns the Scottish Mission to the Jews. Oncken, as previously noted, reported that the impetus for the Hungarian mission came from “The Jewish missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland ... [, who] wish us to send them some of our converted Hungarians.”¹⁹⁷ Speaking of the literature distribution efforts of the Scottish missionaries, Eibner commented, “The missionaries also worked toward this same end in an unofficial capacity with Johann Rottmayer and his small band of Baptists, who, upon their return to their native land from Hamburg in 1846, constituted Hungary’s first Baptist congregation. They had come back to Hungary at the request of the Scottish missionaries for the purpose of distributing Christian literature, much of which they received from the Tract Society and the Edinburgh Bible Society via J.G. Oncken, who besides being the founder of the Baptist movement in Central Europe, was also a continental agent for both those British societies.”¹⁹⁸ It has been suggested by some Hungarian Baptist historians that the Baptist pioneers actually worked for the Scottish Mission in an official capacity.¹⁹⁹ This is not the case.

¹⁹⁵ Rushbrooke, 19–20.

¹⁹⁶ Oncken, “Mr. Oncken’s Report of the German Mission for 1845,” 139.

¹⁹⁷ Oncken, “Extracts of a Letter from Mr. Oncken,” 117.

¹⁹⁸ Eibner, 50.

¹⁹⁹ Bányai argued this based upon a reconstruction drawn from Rottmayer’s own letters to German Baptist magazines. He commented, “Up to now, as far as we knew, this relationship [with the Scottish Mission] was - at least as far as Rottmayer was concerned - merely informal and spontaneously formed.” Bányai, Jenő. “Az első hitvalló baptisták [The First Believing Baptists].” *Békehírnök* XV (LXL).7 (Apr. 1 1971): 26. However, Rottmayer reported in 1856 during the dark days of the Bach Period in the May issue of the *Missionsblatt*, according to Bányai’s translation, that he would have liked to leave Pest for some place “where spiritually speaking a more favorable situation would exist: but this is not possible as long as they do not relocate, or rather send us.” Bányai, “Az első hitvalló baptisták [The First Believing Baptists],” 26. Unfortunately, Bányai’s translation and interpretation of this passage is not entirely accurate, as shall be discussed later. It shall suffice to remember that the Scottish Mission was shut down at this time

Concerning his work with the Scottish missionaries, Rottmayer wrote in an 1884 Der Wahrheitszeuge article, “In the year 1846, as I came home from Hamburg, I found more than a few believing souls. At work in that place were the two Jewish missionaries Smith and Wingate, they founded a school for Jewish children; I met at that time some truly dear souls from the house of Israel who turned to the Redeemer through the witness of these two pastors.”²⁰⁰ Bányai lauded this as an example of the unusual ecumenical spirit Rottmayer displayed throughout his life.²⁰¹ Perhaps this remembrance provides a clue to Rottmayer’s later emphasis upon Sunday School work in his ministry, he was obviously impressed with the educational ministry of the Scottish Mission.

Another interesting aspect of the arrangement between the Scottish missionaries and the Baptist pioneers was brought to light by Eibner. The cooperation between Smith, Wingate and the Rev. Gottlieb August Wimmer, Hungarian agent for the British and Foreign Bible Society at this time, has been previously discussed. Eibner discovered through his examination of correspondence from Wimmer to the Bible Society in 1846 that the Scottish missionaries “hoped that the Bible Society would also make use of the Baptists as colporteurs, but their plan was ruined by the confessional objections of the usually ecumenically minded Wimmer.”²⁰² While the Scottish missionaries could count on literature from various British societies funneled through Oncken in Hamburg, they obviously were hoping to pair up the Baptist pioneers with the extensive work Wimmer

and would not be resumed until 1859. Bányai also points to an 1884 Der Wahrheitszeuge article by Rottmayer in which he fondly recalls the Scottish missionaries Smith and Wingate. He further hypothesized that this comment in the Missionsblatt explains Rottmayer’s move to Kolozsvár in 1866, where he was sent as a colporteur for the National Bible Society of Scotland [NBSS], whose work in Hungary was operated by the Scottish Mission. This move, conversely, presupposes that Rottmayer was working for the Scottish Mission prior to 1866, possibly from 1846. However, my research will show that Rottmayer did not work for the NBSS, but for the BFBS when he moved to Kolozsvár in 1866. Thus, at key points of Bányai’s reconstruction the facts do not match the picture he has painted.

²⁰⁰ Rottmayer, Johann. “Weiteres über Ungarn.” Der Wahrheitszeuge 6.16 (Aug. 15 1884): 171.

²⁰¹ Of course, Bányai saw this as a necessary virtue for Rottmayer as a Baptist to work with the Presbyterian Scottish Mission. Bányai, “Az első hitvalló baptisták [The First Believing Baptists],” 26. While some of the conclusions he has drawn are incorrect, Bányai was right to describe Rottmayer as someone possessing an unusually irenic spirit.

²⁰² Eibner, 50.

had built up as the Bible Society's agent in Hungary.²⁰³ This little-known fact also shows that the Baptist pioneers' relationship with the Scottish Mission was not a formal one, but rather an informal cooperative arrangement which the Scottish missionaries hoped to extend to include Wimmer and the Bible Society.

More specifics of this cooperative work have been furnished by Eibner. He commented that while Bible colportage was an important aspect of the work Smith and Wingate sought to encourage, "it was in the distribution and publication of inspirational books and tracts that the Scots worked most zealously."²⁰⁴ The distribution of such literature was the most effective way of establishing their presence and their message in the consciousness of the people. Towards this end they had received a £400 grant from the Religious Tract Society in the mid-1840's to publish Christian literature. Among the books published were Bogue's Essay on the Divine Authority of the New Testament, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and Edward's History of Redemption. In addition, there were popular level tracts such as Conversations between Two Sailors, Amelia Gale, Well Spent Penny, Wonderful Advantages of Drunkenness, and Martha and the Happy Death, which were translated by Georg Bauhofer and distributed by their lay evangelists.²⁰⁵ Rottmayer and Scharschmidt had access to this literature for distribution as well as the literature provided by Oncken.

However, even as political events were moving quickly towards the climax of the Reform Era, the Baptist missionaries had to be very circumspect in their literature distribution work. Woyka wrote of the constraints in their desire to "testify for the Lord" in their homeland, "This, however, they could not do openly, because the priests were in league with the authorities, and policemen could arrest any one who attempted to propagate opinions which were contrary to the state religion."²⁰⁶ Rottmayer spoke of "censorship" and contact with the "authorities" upon his arrival in Hungary. He was speaking from personal experience. Donat passes on the following account:

²⁰³ This is somewhat ironic in that Wimmer's eventual replacement was the English Baptist Edward Millard, honored among Austrian and Hungarian Baptists as a father to their movements. Millard would open the doors to Baptist colporteurs, and in fact this proved fundamental to the success of the Baptist mission in Hungary.

²⁰⁴ Eibner, 50.

²⁰⁵ Eibner, 50.

²⁰⁶ Woyka, John. "A Voice from Hungary: A Short Account of Mission Work Carried on by the Baptists in Hungary from the Year 1846 to 1894." Glasgow: Privately printed, 1894. 2.

Because of the strictness of the law in these Catholic lands they had to be very careful, for their activity could very quickly have found an end. One time Rottmayer was already summoned before the authorities and could have resigned himself to a year in prison. But not only was he freed from all punishment through the intercession of the Lutheran minister [Georg Bauhofer], he also received back the literature already confiscated, now deemed 'harmless.'²⁰⁷

A slightly darker picture of the incident was painted by Oncken in a report to his Baptist friends in America:

We have again sent two of our most trustworthy brethren into Hungary, to strengthen and encourage our feeble band there, who have passed recently through much fear on account of the threatening attitude which the authorities assumed. The dreaded storm has however passed by, or has been averted. The brethren looked for nothing less than three years imprisonment and labor at the fortifications, but the Lord raised up a friend for them in a pious Lutheran minister, through whose interference the tracts and books which had been taken from them were restored.²⁰⁸

It would appear that Scharschmidt was in some danger as well, and the potential punishment was serious indeed. The pious Lutheran minister must be Georg Bauhofer, personal chaplain to Maria Dorothea. It is quite possible that among the literature confiscated were tracts translated by Bauhofer himself. With Bauhofer as a character witness for the Baptist brethren and responsible for some of the literature they were distributing, this respected minister closely associated with the wife of the Palatine was able to secure the brethren's release and the return of the confiscated literature.²⁰⁹ No date is given for this incident, but it probably occurred in early 1847.²¹⁰

4.1.3. Rottmayer's marriage, the arrival of Fritz Oncken, and the visit of J.G. Oncken

On August 6, 1847, in Berlin Rottmayer was married to Emilie Stibler. The ceremony was performed by the Baptist pastor G.W. Lehmann, pioneer of the work in

²⁰⁷ Donat, 422.

²⁰⁸ Oncken, J.G. "Letter of Mr. Oncken." Baptist Missionary Magazine XXVII.12 (Dec 1847): 426.

²⁰⁹ A similar situation was attested to by Wingate which occurred in July of 1848, except that when the magistrate read the tracts translated by Bauhofer and found out that the Baptist brethren received the tracts from him, they were released immediately. This incident will be discussed more fully later.

²¹⁰ This is an assumption based upon the arrival in the fall of 1847 of the helpers requested from Hamburg after the successful resolution of the crisis.

Berlin and one of the *Kleeblatt*.²¹¹ Unfortunately, nothing is known of how Rottmayer came to marry Ms. Stibler. A hint is provided by Lehmann in a report detailing his visit to Pest in 1865, “After a long day’s sail, at eight o’clock we reached Pest, the capital of Hungary, and I found a home with a brother, who had spent some years in Berlin, and married there one whom I had seen growing up from childhood. My visit awakened great joy.”²¹² It is known that Rottmayer spent some time in Berlin before going to Hamburg, although he was not yet a Baptist at that time and as far we know, he did not have contact with Baptists in Berlin. Ms. Stibler was apparently well-known to Lehmann and a member of his church. A reasonable guess is that sometime before Rottmayer left to return to Hungary in 1846, he had made the acquaintance of Ms. Stibler through Lehmann. When they became engaged is impossible to ascertain.

The persistence and faith of the missionaries can be measured by the fact that their response to the crisis they had passed through was to request additional helpers from Hamburg. The extract from Oncken’s letter cited above also shows that Oncken was sensitive to the need of his small band to receive encouragement and strengthening in order to persevere in the face of adversity. According to J.G. Lehmann, the brethren gathered together in Pest and began to strengthen one another, and then wrote to Hamburg for help.²¹³ The Hamburg church wanted to encourage the brethren as well after the difficulties they had passed through, and decided to send two proven brothers to support the work. This entailed a measure of sacrifice on their part, as Oncken wrote, “Two brethren have been sent out by the church, at its own charges, to Hungary and Austria,” but with the immediate reward that converts were baptized in both Pest and Vienna.²¹⁴ It would appear that the two helpers were sent to Pest and Vienna, when in

²¹¹ Literally a “clover leaf”, it was a figurative way among the German Baptists to refer to the triumvirate of Oncken, Köbner, and Lehmann, the three dominant figures of the movement. Gottfried Wilhelm Lehmann was born in Hamburg on October 23, 1799. He spent his childhood in Berlin, and was influenced by the Mennonites and became an earnest Christian through their witness. An interest in Bible distribution brought him into contact with Oncken. When Oncken announced himself to be a Baptist, Lehmann was at first taken aback, but eventually invited him to come and explain his decision to a group of friends. Oncken did so and on May 13, 1837, Lehmann, his wife and four others were baptized by Oncken in the Rummelsberg Lake outside Berlin. The Berlin church was constituted the next day under Lehmann’s leadership. Rushbrooke, 29–30.

²¹² Lehmann, G.W. “Letter from Mr. Lehmann.” *Missionary Magazine* XLV.11 (Nov 1865): 399.

²¹³ Lehmann, J.G., 213.

²¹⁴ Oncken, J.G. “Mission to Germany.” *Baptist Missionary Magazine* XXVIII.7 (July 1848): 275.

actuality Vienna was not a final destination. However, Fritz Oncken, an approved worker in the Hamburg church who was one of the two helpers sent out²¹⁵, did baptize in Vienna a couple converted by Marschall in the Neustätter Canal on October 28, 1847.²¹⁶ His final destination was Pest, while his companion, G. Kruse from Radbruch near Lüneburg, went on to Pécs.²¹⁷ Judging from the date of the baptisms in Vienna, the two workers arrived in Hungary late October or early November of 1847.

The brethren were strengthened in their resolve to continue in their ministry. Oncken continued in his letter detailing his reasons for sending out two helpers:

Our brethren meet now regularly on the Lord's day for the worship of God and the observance of the solemn ordinance, by which his death is to be commemorated by his redeemed family till he come. They cherish the hope, that ere long their prayers and efforts for the conversion of sinners around them will be heard and crowned with success, and that the little band will be increased by such as are and shall be saved. As it is attended with difficulty and much expense, to introduce tracts **into** the country, they propose that we should get them printed there; and if our means will admit of it, we shall act on their advice.²¹⁸

J.G. Lehmann recounted that Fritz Oncken began to hold regular meetings in Rottmayer's house, and as a result the number of members of the congregation beginning to form rose to nine persons.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, it was still a dangerous work and because of opposition from the Catholic clergy, they needed to exercise caution. It is also interesting to note that they continued to strategize on how to best procure literature for distribution. The brethren wanted to follow the example of Wimmer and the Bible Society in having literature printed in Hungary. It does appear they were able to make such arrangements.

Oncken also had other goals in sending the two brethren to Hungary, which he recounted in another letter, "In Hungary our dear brethren are zealously engaged in the spread of the gospel; and I have quite recently engaged two additional brethren there, to make extended missionary tours into the interior; and if I possibly can get away from

²¹⁵ It is not known whether Fritz Oncken was a relative of J.G. Oncken or just happened to share his last name.

²¹⁶ Lehmann, J.G., 213.

²¹⁷ Lehmann, J.G., 213.

²¹⁸ Oncken, "Letter of Mr. Oncken," 426.

²¹⁹ Lehmann, J.G., 213.

here, I intend to pay a short visit to Vienna and Pest.”²²⁰ The two brethren were not only sent to encourage the small band of workers in Hungary, they were also sent to take the Baptist message outside of the urban centers where the missionaries were active to the interior, and to serve as a possible advance team for a visit by Oncken. If the two workers were able to make tours of the interior, a written record of their work was not left behind.

On the other hand, they did an admirable work as an advance team for Oncken’s visit. Rottmayer reminisced later that “the brethren Fr. Oncken, Lords, and Kruse preached .. with great energy.”²²¹ In Rottmayer’s house worship services were being held under Fritz Oncken’s leadership. Also a renewed effort was made in the area of literature distribution. Rottmayer Jr. wrote of the revolutionary period of 1848-49 as one in which great caution needed to be exercised, and yet it was one in which “My dear father was fetching one box of Bibles after another from the Hamburg literature mission, several books were translated into Hungarian.”²²² The arrangements for the translation of tracts into Hungarian were made during Oncken’s visit, as shall be seen. Movement into the Hungarian cultural sphere was a challenge for the Baptist brethren.²²³ Yet it was one the Scottish Mission was making, in part because its work attracted the interest of its fellow Hungarian Calvinists. So it was natural that the Baptists would seek to move beyond the German cultural sphere as the opportunity afforded it.

The efforts of the Baptist brethren were intensified in the spring and summer of 1848 during the first, legal stage in the Hungarian revolution. As has been noted, Wimmer rapidly expanded his work with the Bible Society and the Religious Tract Society, opening up a depot and bookstore under the supervision of the Scottish missionaries in Pest, with plans to open more depots and employ colporteurs throughout Hungary.²²⁴ The Scottish missionaries also took advantage of these new freedoms,

²²⁰ Oncken, J.G. “Letter of Mr. Oncken.” Baptist Missionary Magazine XXVIII.9 (Sept 1848): 348.

²²¹ Rottmayer, Johann, “Weiteres über Ungarn,” 171.

²²² Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 25–26.

²²³ It must be remembered that the Magyarization of Hungary’s urban centers had not yet begun. Buda [Ofen] was almost entirely German at this time, Pest was slightly more Hungarian than German in its composition, while Pécs [Fünfkirchen] also had a large German presence. Of all the Baptist brethren, the only one with any known connection to the Magyar cultural sphere was Rottmayer, whose mother was Hungarian. Bányai, Jenő. “Válasz Pechtöl János és Szigeti Jenő megjegyzéseire [An Answer to János Pechtöl’s and Jenő Szigeti’s Notes].” Theologiai Szemle 9 <new series>.7–8 (1966): 230.

²²⁴ Eibner, 51–52.

making use of their partnership with the Baptists. As Eibner describes it, “the missionaries continued their cooperation with the Baptist congregation, which considerably increased its efforts. These Baptists embarked on a campaign of door to door tract distribution and sponsored a week of evangelistic services, which were led by Oncken, who was on a missionary tour of Central Europe.”²²⁵ We will turn to the visit of Oncken shortly. What is interesting is the following: “In support of this effort the Tract Society provided the missionaries with a fresh grant of £200 towards the publication of evangelical literature in Hungarian.”²²⁶ Eibner cites a June 30, 1848, entry of the Religious Tract Society Foreign Letter Book. This can be correlated with an excerpt from Oncken’s report of his visit to Pest during late June, contained in a letter from Hamburg dated July 25, “Arrangements were made to get eight tracts in Hungarian, each of 5000 copies, printed, whilst from Hamburg 10,000 German tracts and a suitable number of bibles and testaments were to be forwarded to Pest without delay.”²²⁷ It would appear that Oncken, who was a continental agent for the Religious Tract Society, was able to arrange the funds for the publication of these tracts in Hungarian.²²⁸ Parallel efforts were made by Wimmer and the Scottish missionaries.²²⁹

Perhaps the highest moment of the first Baptist mission to Hungary was the evangelistic ministry of the father of continental Baptists, J.G. Oncken, in Pest. After a visit with Marschall in Vienna, Oncken left Vienna on the morning of June 24, and arrived in Pest on that same evening. He gave a brief description of the congregation, “Seven out of the nine, who constitute the church, are spiritual children of the church at

²²⁵ Eibner, 52.

²²⁶ Eibner, 52.

²²⁷ Oncken, “Letter of Mr. Oncken,” 389.

²²⁸ Byford, not always the most accurate witness, makes the plausible comment, “Through the liberality of J.G. Oncken, and with the aid of a grant from the Hamburg Tract Society, the first Protestant tracts in the Magyar language were printed in Budapest.” Byford, “The Movement in Hungary: Progress and Difficulties,” 101. It is possible, even probable, that the Religious Tract Society helped with the funding of the project.

²²⁹ In an entry for the week of July 22nd-29th in the “Quotidiana” of William Wingate, the journal Wingate kept during his time in Pest, he noted the instructions from Wimmer concerning the outcome of his visit to London, which read in part, “Further, he informed us that, in conjunction with our committee, we are authorized to proceed without delay with the translation and preparation of tracts and books in the Hungarian language.” Carlyle, Gavin, Rev. Life and Work of the Rev. William Wingate, Missionary to the Jews. Glasgow: R.L. Allan & Son, no date. 117.

Hamburg...²³⁰ The two people who were not associated with Hamburg were the converts baptized probably by Fritz Oncken after his arrival in Pest.²³¹ As for the seven people associated with the Hamburg church, in addition to Rottmayer, Scharschmidt, and Fritz Oncken, who had been resident in Buda-Pest, it will be shown that Woyka, Lorders, and Kruse had left Pécs to join their compatriots in Pest prior to J.G. Oncken's visit. Six out of the seven members of the congregation are thus accounted for, leaving one person to be identified.²³² J.G. Oncken made no mention of any baptisms in this letter. But in a letter addressed to Heinrich Meyer from Oncken, sent from Varel, Germany, dated September 14, 1874, Oncken wrote, "if I remember well, I baptized some into Christ's death, uniting them into the Lord."²³³ How many were indicated by "some" is impossible to say. Oncken noted in his letter that "I spent six days at Pest, preached three times to about fifty hearers at a time, and had every evening a special prayer meeting with the church."²³⁴ It is possible that through the course of his preaching in Pest that some converts were gained through J.G. Oncken's ministry and were baptized by him.

Another important aspect of Oncken's visit concerned strategy and planning with regard to the literature work, which constituted their primary evangelistic method. Oncken described the situation as he found it and his counsel for the work:

I found that the brethren here were all deeply interested in the spread of the gospel, and that since the great political changes they had begun to circulate tracts publicly in the streets; which had been well received. As, however, the people are still under the great political excitement, I dissuaded the brethren from this mode of doing good, as it might be the occasion of raising a mob, and thus expose themselves to danger, and the cause to unnecessary opposition. I advised them to divide Pest into districts, and leave one or two tracts in every house without calling for them again, that by this means the whole population might at least have so

²³⁰ Oncken, "Letter of Mr. Oncken," 388.

²³¹ Oncken, "Mission to Germany," 275.

²³² One possible suggestion is the noteworthy absence of any mention of the presence of Hornung in Vienna by Oncken, only Marschall and the two converts baptized by Fritz Oncken are noted. Since Hornung was later noted to have spent the latter part of his life in Budapest, it is possible that he was present in Pest for Oncken's visit. Another possibility is that Rottmayer's wife was counted among the seven. Of course Mrs. Rottmayer was more naturally seen as a child of the Berlin church of G.W. Lehmann, although this distinction may not have been important enough for Oncken to have noted it.

²³³ Mészáros, "A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)]," 22.

²³⁴ Oncken, "Letter of Mr. Oncken," 389.

much of revealed truth in their possession, that by the Spirit's teaching they could be made acquainted with the only name given among men whereby they must be saved. This suggestion was adopted, and has been enacted upon by the brethren.²³⁵

That the brethren indeed followed Oncken's counsel is confirmed by an excerpt from Wingate's *Quotidiana*, dated 14 July, 1848, just a couple of weeks after the visit of Oncken:

The Baptist brethren from Hamburg, while engaged in distributing tracts from house to house, were stopped by a person of mark, asked if they knew that martial law was proclaimed, and that they might be hanged for what they were now doing. They said, if it be so, we will not be very great losers, in dying for such a cause. Priests and lawyers were sent for to examine the tracts, and after reading two of our Hungarian tracts about half through, translated by Mr. Bauhofer, the presiding magistrate said, 'these are very good; where did you get them?' 'From the Protestant minister of Ofen; he gives them to any who will take them, and they are very thankfully received.' 'Go on my friends,' he said, and they were immediately dismissed.²³⁶

The brethren were in the process of distributing the tracts house to house as Oncken advised, and yet were still exposed to the possibility of punishment for their activities. Fortunately in this situation, the magistrate was duly impressed with the evangelical literature as of benefit to the people in their present agitated state, perhaps he believed it would serve to turn their attention from political to spiritual matters. It is interesting that Wingate refers to the literature the Baptist brethren were distributing as "our Hungarian tracts", which were translated by Rev. Bauhofer. These were the tracts funded by a grant in the mid-1840's from the Religious Tract Society. As previously mentioned, Oncken reached the decision with the brethren during his visit to seek funding for the printing of Hungarian tracts within the country, an effort also championed by Wimmer in cooperation with the Scottish missionaries. What appears is a network of relationships between the Scottish missionaries, the Baptist brethren and Oncken, and Hungarian Protestant pastors Bauhofer and Wimmer who were all engaged in producing and distributing evangelical literature to the Magyar and German populations of the country.

This network of relationships united in a common cause was noted by Oncken, who wrote:

²³⁵ Oncken, "Letter of Mr. Oncken," 389.

²³⁶ Carlyle, 116.

The moral and religious condition of the people is most deplorable; but it cannot be otherwise, as, alas! there is no spiritual life in the Protestant churches, and the poor Catholics are given up to the grossest ignorance and superstition. The little band of believers at Pest, along with the missionaries laboring for the conversion of the Jews and a pious minister in the Lutheran church, who has rendered our brethren essential service, are almost the only lights by which the impregnable darkness is broken.²³⁷

Only Wimmer was not mentioned by Oncken, but it must be remembered that Wimmer was not based in Pest, rather he relied upon the Scottish missionaries to oversee the literature work in Pest of the British societies for which he was the Hungarian agent.

One last aspect of Oncken's visit is of historical note, which is that on his return to Vienna from Pest he spent the night at Pozsony with a view towards seeking an audience with Maria Dorothea. He wrote,

On my way back up the Danube, which was exceedingly tedious, owing to the slow progress of the steamer against the powerful current, I remained a night at Pressburg, with a view to call on the Grand Arch-duchess, widow of the late Palatine of Hungary. I had an hour's interesting conversation with this truly pious lady, who is deeply interested in all that bears on the advancement of Christ's kingdom. Our brethren at Pest and br. Marschall at Vienna had previously seen her, and been encouraged by her in the spread of the scriptures. The arch-duchess had, when at Vienna, supplied br. Marschall with bibles, which it would have been impossible to obtain from any other quarter. Thus our God can dispose even the heart of princes and princesses, when such are required for the accomplishment of his own purposes.²³⁸

It is not surprising that the brethren in Pest had had the opportunity to meet with the arch-duchess, given their mutual association with the Scottish Mission, but that she had aided Marschall in Vienna with a donation of bibles to be distributed under the very eyes of the zealously Catholic Habsburg court is surprising. Oncken was likely encouraged by the Baptist brethren to seek this audience, and it appears that it was a mutually stimulating encounter. Oncken's narrative is further proof of the evangelically-oriented ecumenical disposition of Maria Dorothea, and supports claims that she intervened on Rottmayer's behalf at one point following the imposition of martial law.

²³⁷ Oncken, "Letter of Mr. Oncken," 389.

²³⁸ Oncken, "Letter of Mr. Oncken," 389.

4.2. Johann Woyka and the Baptist Mission in Pécs

4.2.1. Woyka's Background

According to the most likely reconstruction, Johann Woyka was born to Caspar and Katharina Piller Voyka²³⁹ on December 25, 1827, in what was then Rácváros Németürög, a village next to Pécs (Fünfkirchen to the Germans). He was born into what Hungarians called a *sváb* family, the descendants of German Catholic colonists brought in from Habsburg ruled lands to repopulate the devastated southern regions of Hungary, particularly the Banat, reconquered from the Ottomans during the early decades of the eighteenth century. However, in the Hamburg *Taufbuch* Woyka's date of birth is May 6, 1824. An alternative date, based upon the Pécs-Rácváros Roman Catholic baptismal register, is May 26, 1824.

Where then does the December 25, 1827, date come from? According to the research of Mészáros, there were five sons born to this set of parents in this particular baptismal register, and in none of the neighboring parish registers do we find another Vojka family having children christened. The difficulty arises in that there were two boys with the name of Johann born to the Vojka's. Underneath each entry was the note, "Private baptism given by mid-wife Katalin Geiger."²⁴⁰ The Hungarian phrase for "private baptism" could literally be translated as "necessary baptism", that is, the mid-wife judged that these particular infants would not survive long, and so quickly performed the baptismal rite for their eternal benefit.

Mészáros concludes the following logical scenario. The first Johann died, while the second survived. At a later date Woyka went to the parish to seek information about his birth and was mistakenly given the first date of May 26, 1824, without either person realizing the mistake. This leaves the issue of the May 6, 1824, date given in the Hamburg *Taufbuch*. Mészáros argues that since Woyka likely dictated this date to whoever wrote it in the *Taufbuch*, he holds it to be the correct date, the date in the birth register was thus the result of a clerical error.²⁴¹ But if Woyka could determine that this date was a clerical error, why then did he need to research his date of birth? Much more

²³⁹ There are several forms of Woyka's name attested. Woyka is the anglicized version of his name that he used once he moved to Scotland, whereas Voyka appears to be the German spelling used by his family. The various forms of the name shall be fully discussed shortly.

²⁴⁰ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 294.

²⁴¹ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 293–94.

likely is that either the clerical error occurred with the Hamburg *Taufbuch*, or that Woyka simply misremembered his birth date when giving it in Hamburg.

As for the place of his birth, in the baptismal register it is given as Rácváros Németürög. That is not the name of the district today. Some background is necessary to understand the apparent discrepancy.²⁴² Following the expulsion of the Turks, the priest and sheriff of Pécs was the so-called “soldier-priest” Mátyás Radnay (1687-1703), known for his forced conversions. The *Rác* or Serb population, belonging to the Orthodox Church, did not want to convert to the Latin rite. So they left the city to settle its western border next to the village of Ürög, and their settlement became known as Rácváros. After the time of Maria Theresia, German settlers began to buy up land and property in the area until they outnumbered the Serbs. Thus Rácváros became Németürög (German-ürög), while the original village became Magyarürög (Hungarian-ürög). After the 1848 Revolution, the district received the previous name of Rácváros back, and today is known as Pécs-Rácváros.

The final issue concerning the origins of Johann Woyka is his family name and its permutations. According to the research of Mészáros, there were three main permutations to this originally slavic name.²⁴³ In the birth register the phonetically Hungarian “Vojka” is attested. In town records the German variant of “Voyka” is found in reference to Johann’s father. The final form is the anglicized “Woyka”, which he adopted when he emigrated to Scotland. It is this version that he later used in his correspondence, for example, with Heinrich Meyer and the Hungarian Baptists.²⁴⁴ In accordance with Woyka’s own custom when writing to his German-speaking Baptist brethren in Hungary, I will use the hybrid Johann Woyka.

Like Rottmayer, Woyka was a journeyman carpenter attracted to Hamburg after the fire by the hope of finding work. Not many specifics are known about Woyka’s conversion other than he came under the influence of the Baptists’ preaching of the

²⁴² Mészáros, “Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka],” 294.

²⁴³ Mészáros, Kálmán. A pécsi baptista gyülekezet története [The History of the Pécs Baptist Church]. Diss. Budapest: N.p., 1978. 42.

²⁴⁴ In his correspondence with his German-speaking friends, Woyka would still use “Johann” instead of “John”, which he adopted in Scotland. In the Baptist literature the Hungarians use the Hungarian “Vojka János”, whereas the German Baptists use the anglicized “Woyka.” In the English Baptist literature from the beginning of this century both “Woyka” and “Voyka” are found.

gospel and was baptized by J.G. Oncken in the Elbe on October 31, 1844.²⁴⁵ In the Hamburg *Taufbuch* Woyka is the 318th entry. Woyka was seventeen when he was baptized, and was the youngest member of the team that returned to Hungary in 1846.

4.2.2. Woyka's arrival in Pécs: Opposition from family and the Catholic clergy

Woyka and J.H. Lords likely arrived in Pécs towards the end of May, 1846.²⁴⁶ Woyka's companion Lords was born on June 25, 1824, in Allermöhe near Hamburg, and was baptized in 1843. He was thus a young convert much like the brethren he volunteered to help. Lehmann reported that he worked as a shoe-maker to support his mission work in Pécs.²⁴⁷ Woyka's homecoming was not a pleasant one. His parents were zealous Catholics and did not understand the spiritual change their son had undergone during his time in Hamburg. Not only was Johann kicked out of the family home by his parents, his father also disinherited him.²⁴⁸ It is possible that Woyka's step-mother, Anna Krecinger, played a role in this affair, which no doubt only deepened the wound experienced by Johann.²⁴⁹

These difficulties underline the wisdom of Oncken in sending out missionary pairs. Certainly it would have been very hard indeed for Woyka to have continued in his work alone when faced with the total rejection of his faith and his person by his family. But with the support of his companion J.H. Lords, the two left Woyka's home village for Pécs and continued their work with literature distribution and a discreet evangelistic witness as the opportunity afforded it.

Opposition came not only from Woyka's family, but also from the Catholic clergy. As previously cited in the discussion of the work in Pest, Woyka stated in a pamphlet that great caution needed to be exercised in their witnessing because the priests

²⁴⁵ Mészáros, *A pécsi baptista gyülekezet története [The History of the Pécs Baptist Church]*, 43.

²⁴⁶ This is based upon the reconstruction of Szabadi, who argued that Rottmayer arrived in Pest on May 20, 1846.

²⁴⁷ Lehmann, J.G., 424.

²⁴⁸ Mészáros, *A pécsi baptista gyülekezet története [The History of the Pécs Baptist Church]*, 44.

²⁴⁹ Anna Krecinger was the mother of the youngest son born to Caspar Woyka, Josef, whose birth fell on February 16, 1830. According to the birth register, five sons in all were born to Woyka's father, two sons named Josef, two named Johann, and Karl. Obviously one Josef and one Johann died. With the living Johann excluded from the inheritance, Krecinger's Josef would be able to split it with his step-brother Karl. See: Mészáros, "Woyka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 297.

“were in league with the authorities, and policemen could arrest anyone who attempted to propagate opinions which were contrary to the state religion.”²⁵⁰ While the tradition has been handed down that Rottmayer was arrested in the course of distributing tracts, no such tradition has been passed on concerning Woyka or Lorders, although lesser difficulties with the authorities was not improbable.

4.2.3. The arrival of Kruse, the close of the mission to Pécs

J.G. Lehmann wrote, “In Hungary all the brethren found themselves together again in Pest, where as a result they began to be roused. They wrote to Hamburg for help, and so F. Oncken from the church [in Hamburg] was chosen for the work of the mission in Hungary, and G. Kruse from Radbruch near Lüneburg was appointed as his companion. Oncken stayed in Pest, Kruse travelled to Fünfkirchen.”²⁵¹ No reason is given for why Woyka and Lorders travelled to Pest. Perhaps they needed to confer together, yet what is certain is that given the various troubles they had all undergone, the need for fellowship and mutual encouragement was reason enough for the meeting in Pest. Their fellowship evidently rekindled their zeal, for they wrote to Hamburg requesting more workers. Based upon the previous discussion of the arrival of F. Oncken and Kruse in Hungary following the baptisms Oncken performed in Vienna, it is reasonable to assume that Kruse arrived in Pécs in early November of 1847.

Nothing specific is known about the progress of the mission in Pécs. The assumption is that the work proceeded on as before with literature distribution and discreet evangelization, possibly even evangelistic meetings or bible studies held quietly. While seeds were planted through their ministry, no mention is made of any harvest, of converts gained. In any case the three missionaries only had some months of work in Pécs before the mission was shut down. Certainly Woyka and his companions were in Pest when J.G. Oncken visited Hungary in the end of June, 1848, and possibly a few months earlier after the beginning of the revolutionary events in March of 1848. Mészáros argued in one article for an early close to the mission in Pécs, “Thus all three returned to Pest-Buda in the second half of 1847, where undoubtedly the missions prospects looked more encouraging. Also Joseph Marschall and Anton Hornung, who returned home with the group to Vienna and worked there, because of the harassment of the clergy thought it

²⁵⁰ Woyka, John, 2.

²⁵¹ Lehmann, J.G., 213.

better to transfer the place of their work to Pest-Buda. This substantially strengthened the situation of the mission there. Their experience was that the Magyar region along the banks of the Danube offered greater possibilities for the propagation of the gospel than either Pécs or Vienna.”²⁵² Mészáros is certainly correct that Pest offered a more promising prospect for mission work than either Pécs or Vienna, particularly during the legal phase of the revolution, as demonstrated by the successful week-long evangelization of J.G. Oncken during June of 1848. Still, the fixed date of the October 1847 baptisms performed by Fritz Oncken in Vienna argue against such an early close to the mission in Pécs. As for the transfer of Marschall and Hornung, it has already been shown that J.G. Oncken visited Marschall in Vienna before moving on to Pest, which would suggest that Marschall did not abandon the work in Vienna until later. However, the fact that Oncken did not mention Hornung as being present in Vienna with Marschall does leave open the possibility that Mészáros may be on more solid ground in that aspect of his argument.²⁵³ We do not know if the three workers thought their relocation to Pest was only temporary or not. As events unfolded, their departure from Pécs turned out to be permanent. In fact, Woyka would soon end up emigrating from his homeland.

5. The Impact of the Revolution on the Hungarian Baptist Mission and the Missionaries

5.1. The Mission to Pécs and the Fate of Woyka

There does appear to be some inconsistency between the freedom the initial course of the revolution brought and the closing of the mission in Pécs. In Woyka’s 1894 pamphlet he spoke of the freedom the initial phase of the revolution brought to the Baptist work, and had glowing words for Kossuth. If so, why was the work in Pécs abandoned? What can explain this apparent inconsistency?

To begin with, the situation in Pécs was likely very different than in Pest. Remember that early on in 1848 Wimmer’s work in Oberschützen, close to the Austrian border, was threatened by “seditious bands”. When Wimmer joined the *Hónvéd* in September of 1848, it was to join the fight against Ban Jelačić of Croatia, who crossed Hungary’s southern border to put down what he deemed the Hungarian rebellion.

²⁵² Mészáros, Kálmán. “Hitvalló baptista - az elsők közül [Believing Baptist - One Among the First].” *Emléklapok* 3. Budapest: Magyarországi Baptista Egyház, 1972. 59.

²⁵³ See the previous discussion on the identity of the seven people from Hamburg in the Pest congregation.

Wimmer saw in this a real danger to the gospel. As early as the end of April there had been a breakdown in relations between the Ban and the Hungarian government.²⁵⁴ Thus Pécs early on was close to a center of conservative and Catholic reaction, namely Croatia-Slavonia, and in fact was to see various imperial forces pass through it during the course of the war. Thus the situation could have become less favorable to the missionaries' work from as early as April or May of 1848.

Another important point is that Pest had a strong Protestant presence in it, whereas Pécs had no official Protestant presence at that time, the Protestants had been either driven out or forcibly converted by Bishop Radnay at the end of the 17th century.²⁵⁵ The Reformed and Lutheran churches would not establish a formal presence in the city until after the Compromise. The work of the Baptists there was truly a pioneering effort, with literature distribution playing an important role in propagating the fundamentals of the gospel message. It is little wonder that no conversions were recorded by these pioneering efforts, it seems as if their work was destined to lay a foundation for later work under better circumstances.

These factors help explain the decision to leave Pécs for Pest in anticipation of Oncken's visit, perhaps only until more favorable circumstances existed for resuming the work there. However, events only turned towards the worse, and a resumption of the work proved impossible. Despite this retreat from Pécs, Woyka was to enjoy a period of fruitful ministry in Pest until events there took a turn for the worse as well. Even so, Woyka remained in the city during some dark days when the battle was raging around him and the brethren. Mészáros speculates that Woyka may well have taken part in the revolutionary effort, as did many from the German artisan class, perhaps in caring for the sick or wounded, or in helping with logistics.²⁵⁶ Without direct testimony to corroborate this, however, such participation remains a matter of probabilities. Perhaps the best argument for it is not Woyka's social origin, but the fact that he emigrated from his homeland. It remains an open question.

Leaving aside the work of Woyka in Pest and the particular circumstances of his decision to emigrate for the following discussion, the next firm date concerning Woyka appears in the Hamburg *Taufbuch*. According to the *Taufbuch* on October 16, 1849,

²⁵⁴ Deák, István, 219.

²⁵⁵ Bauhofer, 251–52.

²⁵⁶ Mészáros, A pécsi baptista gyülekezet története [The History of the Pécs Baptist Church], 47.

Woyka and Wilhelmina Elvin were engaged. It is therefore quite likely that Woyka had arrived back in Hamburg a few months previously. They were married on June 12, 1850, with J.G. Oncken performing the ceremony.²⁵⁷ Before the end of the year Woyka would return with his new wife and her family to their home in Glasgow, Scotland. Woyka's later life in Scotland and his ongoing interest in the Baptist mission in his homeland shall be the subject of further discussion.

5.2. Progress suppressed: The work in Pest and the loss of the German brethren

At first the events of March and April of 1848 brought beneficial results to the various missionaries active in Buda-Pest, whether it be the Scottish missionaries or the Baptist brethren. And as the work of the Scottish Mission expanded during this time, so the Baptist effort in Pest was expanded through the addition of the missionaries from Pécs. The concentration of all six workers in Buda-Pest benefited not only the visit of J.G. Oncken in June, but also the cooperation with the Scottish Mission in literature distribution. As noted previously, an aggressive program of literature distribution was undertaken, including house to house tract distribution by the Baptist brethren.

Concerning the flowering of their difficult work during this period Woyka wrote:

Still their testimony had its effect on not a few, and a small congregation was gathered by the year 1848, which was the year of revolution when Hungary for nearly twelve months enjoyed self-government and independence of Austria. Louis Kossuth became President, and, being a Protestant, proclaimed full religious liberty to all creeds. The Baptists took full advantage of this liberty, and circulated their tracts in the open streets and markets, offering them even to priests if they came in their way, who generally accepted them without a word of remonstrance. All were now freely invited to their meetings, which resulted in a large addition to their numbers - even Madame Kossuth honored them with a visit.²⁵⁸

The one slightly misleading aspect of this description is that the Baptists enjoyed their greatest freedom only after Kossuth proclaimed Hungarian independence, which in fact was not formally declared until April of 1849. But as shall be seen, this event was somewhat overshadowed in Pest by the siege of the Castle Hill by the Hungarian forces and the bombardment of Pest, the successful capture of which was quickly followed by the news that the Russians were coming to Austria's aid. Moreover, it must be

²⁵⁷ Mészáros, Kálmán. "A 'Vojka-kutatás' további eredményei [The Further Results of Woyka Research]." *Theologiai Szemle* 35.5 (1992): 292.

²⁵⁸ Woyka, John, 2.

remembered that religious equality was part of the package of April Laws. In fact the greatest period of freedom and stability was during the legal phase of the revolution in the spring of 1848, and then during the summer of 1848 when there was a power vacuum in Vienna. It was likely during the summer of 1848 that the Baptists were visited by Madame Kossuth. What Woyka's narrative demonstrates is that during this early phase of Hungary's attempt to leap from feudalism and submission to Austria to a modern democratic bourgeois civil society with autonomous political institutions, Hungary's Baptists enjoyed an unprecedented opportunity to share their faith, and they enjoyed a measure of success as well.

The cooperative work with the Scottish Mission continued until the Scottish missionaries decided to depart from Pest. The final decision to leave came shortly after September 11, 1848, when Ban Jelačić and his Croatian army crossed Hungary's southern border heading for Buda-Pest.²⁵⁹ Smith did not give a detailed chronology of the events that lead to their departure, noting only that "Our work had been interrupted during the period of the war."²⁶⁰ However, the wisdom of this decision was demonstrated by Smith's description of the horrors of the war: "The fortress of Buda was taken and retaken several times by the contending forces. Pest was three times bombarded. One bomb-shell passed right through my own house, and fell in the court behind. Another exploded in my study, and set fire to my furniture and books."²⁶¹ Oncken also noted in a September 28, 1848, letter to the Baptist Missionary Magazine that the Scottish missionaries had already left the country.²⁶² However, the Baptist brethren bravely attempted to carry on the work despite the danger. The situation was described by Oncken as follows:

From Hungary we also have cheerful news, as far as the zeal and constancy of our brethren are concerned. At Pest an outbreak was every day expected, which, if it took place, might expose strangers to much danger. The Scottish missionaries had already left, but our brethren were resolved to maintain their post as long as possible. Five new tracts in Hungarian had just left the press, and the brethren were zealously engaged

²⁵⁹ Eibner, 52.

²⁶⁰ Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Year's Mission in Hungary," 810.

²⁶¹ Smith, Robert, Rev., "Personal Narrative of a Ten Year's Mission in Hungary," 810.

²⁶² Oncken, J.G. "Letter of Mr. Oncken." Baptist Missionary Magazine XXVIII.12 (Dec 1848): 454.

in sowing the seed.²⁶³

This is clear proof that the efforts to have Hungarian tracts printed, which Oncken decided to do in consultation with the brethren during his visit to Pest the previous June, were in fact successful despite the growing chaos in the country. Having just received the tracts from the press, the brethren were loathe to abandon the field of work. However, circumstances would soon change the situation described by Oncken.

The first person to leave Pest would be Fritz Oncken. In the same letter cited above, J.G. Oncken wrote of the progress of the work of the brethren in Vienna.²⁶⁴ The revolutionary events sweeping through the empire had created an unprecedented opening for gospel work in Vienna. Oncken wrote in his September letter, “The opening in Austria for the spread of the Gospel, has ever since my visit to Vienna last summer occupied me much. Since then we have received gratifying intelligence from our brethren, stating that in about four weeks nearly 10,000 tracts had been distributed at Vienna, which had been eagerly received, and that there was a cordial desire expressed by those who heard me there, that I might return.”²⁶⁵ Oncken himself did not return to Vienna, but other workers did make the attempt. As a result, wrote Oncken, “These favorable indications, the fact itself that at the Austrian capital we have free access to the people, and above all that they are without the scriptures and the preached gospel, have been such powerful considerations with us, that we have requested br. Hinrichs, at Stettin, to proceed to Vienna without delay.”²⁶⁶ In addition, two shipments, one of tracts and another of scriptures, were forwarded to Vienna. The increasingly dark picture in Hungary and the unprecedented openness in Vienna convinced Fritz Oncken to return to the city where he had performed the first baptisms of the Austrian work. Donat wrote, “Under these circumstances F. Oncken held it advisable to go from Pest to Vienna. He arrived there shortly before the outbreak of the bloody fight between the citizens and the

²⁶³ Oncken, “Letter of Mr. Oncken,” 454.

²⁶⁴ Oncken had been very moved by the response he experienced to his work in Vienna. Of his final departure from Vienna following his return from Pest he wrote, “If ever there was a spot to which I would like to go and labor, it is Vienna; gladly would I have remained here two or three months, if necessity had not compelled me to return home.” Oncken, “Letter of Mr. Oncken,” 389.

²⁶⁵ Oncken, “Letter of Mr. Oncken,” 454.

²⁶⁶ Oncken, “Letter of Mr. Oncken,” 454.

military, even before Hinrichs.²⁶⁷

The second revolution in Vienna broke out on October 6, 1848, and the imperial forces were obliged to retire from the city for approximately one month. During that period Fritz Oncken was able to openly hold large meetings in which some people came to faith. Hinrichs unfortunately only arrived in early November, shortly before Field Marshall Windisch-Graetz retook the city. Fritz Oncken was forced to leave Vienna for Hamburg in the middle of November. He was to participate in the first *Ausbildungskursus*, or instructional course, offered by J.G. Oncken and his associates.²⁶⁸ This course was offered during the winter of 1849-1850.²⁶⁹ Hinrichs was able to quietly minister in Vienna until he was expelled in February of 1849. Donat reported that J.H. Lorders was also forced to leave Hungary, and that he too participated in a missions course of instruction, but he did not specify when these events took place.²⁷⁰ Both Fritz Oncken and J.H. Lorders continued to do mission work in Germany.

While the immediate threat from Ban Jelačić, now promoted to Lieutenant Field Marshall, was averted at the battle of Pakozd in late September of 1848, darker days were to befall the city. A brief chronology of the course of events in Buda-Pest will help to understand the difficulties the Baptist brethren underwent. Buda-Pest was in Hungarian hands until the revolutionary government evacuated the city on New Year's Eve of 1848. Windisch-Graetz occupied the city in the beginning of 1849. During April of 1849 Pest again came under the control of the Hungarian forces, but it took a few more weeks to capture the Buda fortress. The government of independent Hungary was again in the capital, but the entry of Russian forces into the fray on Austria's side spelled the doom for the cause even at this time. On July 8, 1849, the revolutionary government left Buda-Pest for the final time, by August final defeat had come. The bombardment that destroyed parts of Smith's home also affected Rottmayer. Rottmayer Jr. recounted what he had been told by his father about the bombardment of Pest in the spring of 1849.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Donat, 424.

²⁶⁸ Donat, 424.

²⁶⁹ Rushbrooke, 43.

²⁷⁰ Donat, 424.

²⁷¹ Although he gives no date, the memory is certainly of the period in the May of 1849 when the siege of the Castle Hill was underway. The Austrian forces in the fortress held out against the Hungarian army, which controlled the rest of the city. From there they bombarded Pest which lay below them across

My dear father further spoke about those awful days when Pest was bombarded from the Buda Citadel. At that time my parents lived on Gyöngytyúk street. The women took cover in the basement, while the men served by keeping a watch-out. The capture of the Buda fortress remained deep in their memory, but here too the angels ministered to them, in that they escaped harm.²⁷²

While this siege provided the most direct threat to Rottmayer, his family, and his companions, there were further trials they were forced to endure.

A valuable piece of testimony comes from Kruse, who came to Hungary with Fritz Oncken. Yet unlike Oncken, who was back in Hamburg by the middle of November, 1848, Kruse remained in Pest to support the Hungarian brethren. This letter remains the most valuable piece of firsthand evidence we have of the situation that confronted the Baptist brethren during this difficult period, and so I wish to quote from it extensively. He wrote the following from Pest on July 24, 1849:

Through the mercy of the Lord is it permitted to us to give some news of how it is going for us. We still find ourselves well. In the horrible days we lived through here the Lord proved himself to us. As the Buda fortress was captured, Pest also was not spared; forty houses were destroyed by fire, many more were damaged. On several streets few window-panes remained whole. It was awful to see, and a great blood-bath followed when on May 20th the fortress was stormed and taken... Everyone celebrated over the victory achieved. But it did not last long, for it was said: The Russians are coming to the Austrians aid! An anxious period of waiting set in again, until on July 11th the Austrians marched in again and right after that the Russians came in and are still coming. A sad time is now here. All is quiet. Many residents from Pest and Buda have left with the army reserves, also Pastor Bauhofer. The cities were without further ceremony again cleared of Hungarians. A great misery reigns here. Everything is almost three times more expensive and there is nothing that can be done, because no businesses operate. The Hungarian banknotes, with which the whole land is flooded, are now withdrawn from circulation and - with a penalty of death - are to be surrendered. Copper coins and silver are almost not to be seen. Now a compulsory currency will be given out. Who does not accept it or counsels others not to accept it is subject to martial justice or the death penalty. All of this has brought forth such destitution, that one would gladly wish himself to be away from here. Both choices lay hard on me; I don't know what I should do. I would like to leave, because almost no hope for betterment exists. But to leave the brethren behind is also

the Danube. Rottmayer lived in a house on what is now Gyulai Pál utca, in that section of the Józsefváros district close to the inner city of Pest. Thus his house was potentially in the line of fire.

²⁷² Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

difficult. To be sure I cannot help them, participation in the affliction is all that they can have from us. With respect to the religious situation there is nothing encouraging to share. The hearts of the people are so filled with the war, that the word of the Lord can hardly find a place in them. Bibles are still plentiful, but it would be a difficult task to achieve the freedom to distribute the Word of God. In these times we really cannot risk it, because everything is not merely strictly dealt with, but rather according to martial law.²⁷³

Several valuable bits of information can be gleaned from this account. First, Kruse's letter confirms the testimony from Rottmayer Jr. concerning the danger the Baptist brethren experienced during the siege of the Buda Citadel. Perhaps Kruse was one of the men described by Rottmayer Jr. who kept a watch-out above while the women hid in the basement. Given the damage done to many of the houses in Pest described by Kruse, it is possible that Rottmayer's house also suffered some minor damage.

It is also evident that great distress was caused not only by the imposition of martial law, but further by the severe economic disruption which accompanied it. These conditions were enough to severely disrupt the ministry of the Baptists. Just as troubling, though, was the severe malaise that set upon the hearts of the people as the war dragged to a close. Ministry was hopeless, according to Kruse, after the reentry of Austrian troops into the city in early July of 1849, when martial law was imposed upon the populace. But it would be reasonable to assume that ministry was nigh impossible from the beginning of the year, as the city was contested by both sides. We know from Oncken that still in September of 1848 the brethren wished to continue with their literature distribution work despite the uncertainty of the situation. Yet it must have become increasingly more difficult as war anxiety began to tighten its grip upon the people.

Finally, this report gives some insight as to how many of the Baptist brethren remained in Buda-Pest until the final retaking of the city in July. Of the three natives of Hungary, Rottmayer, Scharschmidt, and Woyka, only the latter left the country in 1849. Yet at the time of writing, Kruse made no mention of any of the three Hungarian brethren having left. In fact his stated motivation for wanting to stay was to provide moral support to the brethren, since indeed no practical work could be ventured. It is known that Woyka was in Hamburg by at least October of 1849, when his engagement to Wilhelmina Elvin was recorded. It appears that Woyka's departure fell some time between the end of July and the end of September. An educated guess is that it followed upon the final surrender

²⁷³ Donat, 427–28.

of the Hungarian forces in early August, when all hope was lost and the brutal process of pacification adopted by the Habsburgs began in earnest.

Of the three Germans sent by J.G. Oncken to Hungary, J.H. Lorders, Fritz Oncken, and G. Kruse, Fritz Oncken was the first to depart Hungary in October of 1848. It also appears that J.H. Lorders was in Hamburg by 1849 or 1850 to take part in one of the first instructional courses offered by J.G. Oncken, his companion in Hungary Fritz Oncken took part in the first such course which was held during the winter of 1849-1850. But it appears from Kruse's letter that Lorders was still in Pest in July of 1849. The key phrase in the letter comes after Kruse expressed his agony over whether to leave, as he would like, or to stay and support his brothers in Christ. Expressing his own helplessness in the face of such trying circumstances, Kruse then switches from the first person singular to the plural when he argued that participation in their afflictions is all that the Hungarian brethren "can have from us." The clear implication is that another German brother was still there with Kruse. Since Fritz Oncken was clearly gone by this point, Woyka's original companion in Pécs, J.H. Lorders, must have been present. Bányai mentions that during the Bach Period Rottmayer's house was searched, in which correspondence from Lorders was discovered. In describing this incident, Bányai states that Lorders worked in Hungary from 1846 to 1849.²⁷⁴ When exactly Lorders left is difficult to determine, but a reasonable guess is that he accompanied his friend Woyka back to Hamburg. If this is the case, then he returned to Hamburg in August or September of 1849.

If the mission to Pécs was a casualty of the Hungarian Revolution, the mission to Pest was able to weather the storm only with great difficulty. To be sure the pair of Rottmayer and Scharschmidt continued to work in their home city. It is even possible that the German brother Kruse remained in Pest for a while longer. Yet the zeal and hope which characterized the work in the spring and summer of 1848 was replaced by anxiety and a quiet determination to carry on in the face of a repressive and hostile environment after August of 1849. An even darker picture was painted by Woyka:

The small band of believers was soon broken up and scattered, and those who were prominent among them were hunted till they had to flee for safety from home and kindred. Thus the light was apparently put out again, and many felt the darkness hard to bear, and became "wearied and faint in their minds." This state of matters lay heavy upon the hearts of the four believing Hungarians, who, in consequence of the fierceness of

²⁷⁴ Bányai, "Az első hitvalló baptisták [The First Believing Baptists]," 26.

persecution, were separated from each other, and thus bereft of mutual encouragement and advice, and for the time being were utterly put to silence by the ruling powers.²⁷⁵

Obviously this narrative was from the perspective of one who was chased from house and home, and felt constrained to leave his homeland. For the time being Rottmayer and Scharschmidt were not separated from each other. Woyka also stated that there were four Hungarians who were scattered, and that some became wearied and faint. The identity of the fourth Hungarian remains problematic, it may refer to Hornung. It is also known that both Hornung and Marschall ended their lives in Hungary and both fell away from the Baptist community for a time due to the intense pressures they faced as sectarians. These are issues that will be more fully discussed later. But for Rottmayer and Scharschmidt, the focus of the post-revolutionary work would be to maintain congregational life against great odds, while evangelism was reduced to a quiet and cautious witness as an opportunity presented itself. They were silenced by the authorities, but never broken.

6. The last man standing: Rottmayer and the Baptist mission in Pest under Neo-Absolutism, 1849-1866

6.1. Martial law and the Bach Period, 1849-1859

Following the suppression of the revolution, intense pressure and scrutiny was brought to bear upon the whole of Hungarian society, but particularly upon her Protestants. Protestantism was equated with rebellion. Therefore it should be no surprise that police scrutiny also fell upon the so-called sects. The more numerous Nazarenes bore the brunt of these repressive measures, but the Baptists were also subject to state persecution. Although the Baptists were of a different character than the Nazarenes, neither state nor church authorities distinguished between the two movements.²⁷⁶ Bányai

²⁷⁵ Woyka, John, 2–3.

²⁷⁶ The Nazarenes, like the Baptists, would experience their greatest growth after the Compromise. But they did enjoy more success under neo-absolutism than did the Baptists and did not experience a break in their mission as the Baptists did when Rottmayer moved to Kolozsvár and the congregation in Pest dissolved. More attention shall be given to the Nazarenes in the next chapter, but some background is in order now to understand the concern of the authorities. Both the Baptists and the Nazarenes enjoyed most all of their success among the lower classes, which always raised worrisome memories of previous mass movements of dissent among the political and religious elites. What set the Nazarenes apart was the particular focus of their preaching. The Nazarenes often preached from the Old Testament prophets, because they had a special interest in the prophetic message against social injustice and in biblical eschatology. Likewise because they awaited a speedy end to the world, they appealed to the picture of final

referred to the research of the Lutheran pastor Lajos Szimonidesz in the Military Archives of materials from the Bach Period, in which he discovered many references to proceedings against the Nazarenes and Baptists. From one search of Rottmayer's house the entire correspondence with his former co-worker J.H. Lorders was discovered, and from this the authorities discovered the names of the Baptist brethren in Vienna.²⁷⁷ As a result, Rottmayer took extra precautions against future searches. In a letter that appeared in the May 1856 issue of the Missionsblatt, Rottmayer spoke of the opposition of a Lutheran minister, who had some of his Bibles confiscated. He went on to say, "I now no longer have a secure place for the literature, so I have found at least eight different places here and there for it, because I am afraid of a search of my house. For the moment it is quiet, still I fear it is the quiet before the storm."²⁷⁸

Rottmayer continued to hold meetings in his house, but this was now done secretly so as not to draw attention to their activities. Again drawing upon the research of Szimonidesz, Bányai wrote:

A significant finding is that despite the strict regulations against it, in Rottmayer's Józsefváros house gatherings were held in secret at which not only the Rottmayer family, Carl Scharschmidt from Buda, and Antal Hornung, but also the so-called "candidates for membership" took part. Among these three names were found in the reports: Kristóf Lorenz, Tamás Dávid, and János Erhard. All three belonged to the industrial working class. These men became known, because the authorities on the basis of an informant broke into an evening gathering by surprise.²⁷⁹

No specific date is given for this event, although it must have happened before 1856, when Scharschmidt left Hungary. A likely date would place this event early in the Bach

judgment in Revelation. Baptist preaching, by contrast, maintained a more traditional evangelical focus upon the cross of Jesus Christ. Because of the central role eschatological expectation played in Nazarene thought, they were very bold and came under close scrutiny because of their success among the impoverished classes: "The church leaders indeed observed the activities of the Nazarenes, but they did not understand the social background of these activities. What they did discern is that the Nazarenes endeavored to live according to the Bible. At the end of the 1850's one columnist at a large Protestant weekly verified that the Nazarenes were 'superior workers, and endured with a martyr's courage.'" Bíró, Bucsay, Tóth, and Varga, 380.

²⁷⁷ Bányai, "Az első hitvalló baptisták [The First Believing Baptists]," 26.

²⁷⁸ Rottmayer, Johann. "Brief aus Ungarn." Missionsblatt 13.5 (May 1856): 10.

²⁷⁹ Bányai, "Az első hitvalló baptisták [The First Believing Baptists]," 26.

Period, perhaps between 1850 and 1854. This account brings into sharp relief the difficulties encountered by Rottmayer and the Baptists during the Bach Period. They could be denounced by almost anyone. In a society hemmed in by spies and informers, soldiers and police, the pressure upon the band of believers was intense.

One question that arises from this account is the presence of Antal Hornung at this meeting. This remains a problematic issue.²⁸⁰ The difficulty stems from a brief report in the May 1861 issue of the Missionsblatt. The joyful news was given by Mrs. Woyka that “The dear h.....g, who for 13 years had gone astray, has become again our brother, and sings the praises of the mercy that he had at one time enjoyed, and that to him now has become dear again.”²⁸¹ If Mrs. Woyka was correct in her report, then Hornung fell away sometime around 1849. This in turn raises doubts about the presence of Hornung at this meeting. Still it is not inconceivable that Rottmayer and Scharschmidt continued to reach out to their troubled brother, much as the Woyka’s obviously did by correspondence. The sects came under the suspicion of the authorities in part because they were fearful of communist or socialist agitation, and the sects appealed to the same constituency. With the discovery by the authorities of socialist secret societies in Pest, the government wanted to keep an eye on the Nazarenes and Baptists. However, repression was not the only tool the authorities hoped to employ against the sects. In a letter sent to the police chiefs on January 26, 1851, by the Religion and Public Education Minister, he wrote in part,

As with every developing sect, so with the ones in question religious fanaticism permeates them and therefore every decree directed against them is resisted, indeed they only serve to strengthen them in their opinions. In so far as the royal and imperial government continues to keep an eye on this phenomenon, to this end, the only possibility of hindering the spreading of the sects through tireless proselytism is through the zealous and thorough teaching and religious instruction of the people...

²⁸⁰ Without restating the argument concerning the true destinations of the original pioneers, the possibility has been discussed that at some point before Oncken’s evangelistic tour in 1848 Hornung may have removed himself from Vienna to Pest. The source of the confusion regarding Hornung may stem from Heinrich Meyer. In his autobiography Meyer described Rottmayer and Hornung as coming from Budapest, Woyka from Pécs, while Marschall and Scharschmidt were described in terms of where Meyer had met them during his travels. In another passage Meyer mentions the Hornung brothers spiritual condition in Pest after Rottmayer had left the city. This may explain why later Baptists believed Hornung had come to Pest in 1846. If the research of Szimonidesz is correct, then we have confirmation that Hornung was in Pest by the early 1850’s.

²⁸¹ Woyka, Wilhelmina. “Ungarn.” Missionsblatt 19.5 (May 1861): 78.

Thus it can hopefully be expected that the people will not listen to those temptations which want to separate them from their faith.²⁸²

To this end the relevant religious authorities were notified of the problem, since education was largely in the hands of the churches. As shall be seen, the irony of the situation was that Protestant leaders would increasingly call upon the authorities to intervene on their behalf, to use force to halt the spread of the sects.

This is not to say that the sects did not experience government persecution. One tradition from this time recounts that Rottmayer was rescued from trouble by Maria Dorothea. As Csopják reported the event, “Rottmayer nevertheless continued to be active until finally one time he got into serious trouble. The police confiscated from him a box of religious literature and only with the intervention of an aristocratic lady did he get it back.”²⁸³ The situation was a bit more grave than just the loss of the literature. Elsewhere Csopják noted that “he almost landed in prison.”²⁸⁴ This possibility was forestalled by Maria Dorothea. Unfortunately, no specific date has been passed on for this event other than it occurred after the crushing of the revolution in 1849, when it was “not possible to work openly, because the Austrian government of that time saw spies and revolutionaries in all those people who would gather together at some place.”²⁸⁵ The *terminus ad quem* of this incident is before March 31, 1855, when Maria Dorothea died during a visit to Pest.²⁸⁶ While it is possible that the incident took place during her last visit to Buda-Pest,

²⁸² Szigeti, Jenő. “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches].” *Theologiai Szemle* XIX (New Series).3–4 (1976): 72.

²⁸³ Csopják, *Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission]*, 9. Rottmayer Jr. tells a similar story, with one important difference: “After the revolution somebody informed against the distribution of Baptist literature, therefore there were several searches of my parent’s house, at these occasions Bibles and tracts were delivered up to the police. On one occasion my father received back the Bibles through the intervention of a high-ranking gentleman.” Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26. It is unclear from Csopják’s account if the confiscated literature was found on his person or in his house. Also, Rottmayer Jr. describes the confiscated literature as bibles, not tracts. These are small differences. The major discrepancy is that Rottmayer Jr. described an aristocratic gentleman who intervened, not a lady. It is possible that Rottmayer Jr. described a second unknown incident. More likely is that he mistakenly attributed the intervention to a gentleman, when in fact it was Maria Dorothea who came to Rottmayer’s aid.

²⁸⁴ Csopják, Attila. “Az első zsengek [The First Fruits].” *Békehírnök* XIX.12 (June 30 1913): 179.

²⁸⁵ Csopják, “Az első zsengek [The First Fruits],” 179.

²⁸⁶ After the death of her husband the Palatine in 1847, Maria Dorothea was required to move back to the Royal Court in Vienna, where the Habsburgs could keep an eye on her. Still she maintained her

it is much more likely that it took place some time between 1850 and the middle of 1851. This would place Rottmayer's encounter with the police during a time when the Scottish missionaries operated a bookshop in the city with the cooperation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Royal Tract Society, and the Free Church of Scotland. The bookshop was closed in the summer of 1851, and the missionaries were expelled in January of 1852. It is possible that Rottmayer received the confiscated literature from the depot, or it could have been leftover stock that was published during the revolution. Whatever the provenance of the literature, Rottmayer's close association with the still legal work of the Scottish missionaries gave Maria Dorothea a basis to appeal for Rottmayer's lenient treatment.

Another account of police persecution comes from the journal of the Rev. Georg Bauhofer, dated February 18, 1854:

A [few] weeks ago they confiscated a Bible from the engine fitter Kobura - who was a Baptist and for a long time held secret prayer meetings in Pest. They held him in custody though for four weeks, because he did not want to tell from whom he got the Bible. These Baptists became worthy of suspicion before the government, because not only did they hold secret meetings, but also because they split from each other into two groups, like in Münster, reminding them of its ruffianism. Most of them are from Hamburg and their conversions originated there. Almost all belong to the industrial class. There were about twenty, but they distributed Bibles and other smaller religious literature about so zealously, indeed they displayed such audacity, one would think they numbered several hundred. Some of them worked so foolishly, they employed such assertions against the Catholic and Lutheran churches, that the government expelled the foreigners.²⁸⁷

On its surface, this appears to be an invaluable piece of contemporary testimony from an observer's perspective, and that from someone who could not be characterized as a polemical opponent of the movement. As such it has led to various speculations concerning the split Bauhofer mentioned, as well as to the identity of the "foreigners" who were expelled, presumably some of the workers sent by J.G. Oncken from Hamburg.

friendships with Protestant leaders in Hungary. She played a restraining role once the Austrian forces retook Hungary, pleading for the merciful treatment of her Protestant brethren. She even went to Buda-Pest several times to visit her Protestant friends "incognito" Kiss, Áron. Török Pál élete [The Life of Pál Török]. Budapest: Hornyánsky Viktor Cs. és Kir. Udv. Könyvnyomdája, 1904. 46.

²⁸⁷ Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 18.

Mészáros, for example, stated that the two expelled foreigners must have been Fritz Oncken and J.H. Lords.²⁸⁸ But this is impossible since both of them were back in Hamburg by 1849. As for the split, no tradition of an early split among the Baptist ranks has been passed on. Finally, there was no knowledge of Kobura outside of Bauhofer's journal. Thus while Bauhofer's testimony has been accepted for the most part, there have been difficulties with certain aspects of it.

The impasse over Bauhofer's testimony has recently been broken by the research of Olivér Szebeni, who has followed up on the earlier work of Szimonidesz at the Military Archives in Budapest. Although he could not discover materials mentioning Rottmayer, they had apparently disappeared since the research of Szimonidesz, he did uncover material relevant to Bauhofer's journal. Among the minor corrections he makes to Bauhofer's testimony is the actual name of "Kobura", which was Emmánuel Kobera²⁸⁹, and the length of his incarceration, which was actually four months rather than four weeks. The significant information that Szebeni has uncovered is that Kobera was not punished for colportage, but for "taking part in forbidden religious meetings and collaboration [in them]."²⁹⁰ But these meetings were not Baptist meetings, but rather the sects followers, all former Catholics, were identified by the authorities as "Christian-Catholic". Szebeni connects this group with the Old Catholics, and specifically with the Swiss variant of this movement, the *Christkatholische Kirche*. Of course the Swiss movement, as well as the broader Old Catholic movement, was in its formal structure organized in reaction to Vatican I and the proclamation of papal infallibility in the early 1870's.²⁹¹ Which raises the question whether Szebeni's identification is anachronistic? In any case, the Christian-Catholics were not considered sectarians by the authorities, because the police called in priests to render remedial religious instruction to those arrested. The problem with this particular coterie was apparently that they were a splinter group who called themselves "followers of Christ". This was the illegal sect the

²⁸⁸ Mészáros, "A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)]," 23.

²⁸⁹ The basis for the mistake was probably the similarity between the two vowels in the Gothic handwriting of the time.

²⁹⁰ Szebeni, Olivér. "'Krisztus követői' hadbírótság előtt [‘The Followers of Christ’ Before the Military Tribunal]." *Szolgatárs* III.6 (Dec 1994): 46.

²⁹¹ Visser, Jan. "The Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht." *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 3.1 (2003): 71–72.

authorities were trying to put a stop to through their punitive measures. In terms of their beliefs they demonstrated many similarities with the Nazarenes, who, Szebeni notes, also had their origin in Switzerland.²⁹² They also maintained international relationships with fellow congregations in the Austrian empire, Switzerland, and France, with whom they were in touch through correspondence. Szebeni identifies from the archives three separate waves of arrest from 1852 to 1854. Kobera was actually among those arrested in the first wave. After exploring the history of these arrests, Szebeni concludes:

These legal documents do not provide significantly more appreciable church historical information about the Baptists, because they do not answer the primary question: were there any Baptist believers at all among the convicted? The explanation to the following enigma is also a great problem, who can be considered the descendants of the “Followers of Christ”? The identification of the Christian-Catholic with the Old Catholic Church does not given any answer at all.²⁹³

These people were neither Baptist nor Nazarene, and no trace of the fellowship remains in Hungary today.

What then of Bauhofer’s testimony? It is apparent that Bauhofer mistook this sect as a splinter group from the Baptists, and likely confused their various activities. Thus Bauhofer knew the Baptist pioneers were baptized in Hamburg, and he had an intimate knowledge of their literature distribution work, because he personally came to their aid prior to the revolution when they were arrested for distributing literature he had translated in cooperation with the Scottish Mission. He knew the social composition of the Baptists. But it is difficult to imagine that Rottmayer and his companions engaged in polemical attacks against the Catholic and Lutheran Churches. Rottmayer himself was an irenic individual who maintained a good relationship with Bauhofer and the Calvinist leadership of the Scottish Mission, as evidenced by his positive comments about them in his 1884 Wahrheitszeuge article.²⁹⁴ In fact, Rottmayer later was a founding member of the

²⁹² The group held their faith to be the only true faith, all others outside their group were considered sinners. They rejected all tradition in favor of a reliance solely upon what the Scriptures teach. In their fellowship they called each other “brother” and “sister” in conversation with one another. They rejected infant baptism for believer’s baptism. They rejected all compulsory methods in relation to spiritual matters, which were practiced by the state churches. They did not espouse any particular political ideology and were content to obey the state as long as it was in conformity with the Scriptures.

²⁹³ Szebeni, “‘Krisztus követői’ hadbírótság előtt [‘The Followers of Christ’ Before the Military Tribunal],” 48.

²⁹⁴ Rottmayer, Johann, “Weiteres über Ungarn,” 171.

Protestantische Landes-Waisenversorgungs-Verein established under Bauhofer's leadership, certainly evidence that Rottmayer was not considered a virulent sectarian.²⁹⁵ Surely it was the members of the Followers of Christ who engaged in the polemics against the Catholic and Lutheran Churches²⁹⁶, and since police found proof of their close contacts with brethren from abroad, it is also evident that the "foreigners" expelled were members of the sect. Szebeni rightly notes that during the early years of the Baptist mission they were continually mistaken for or lumped in with the Nazarenes.²⁹⁷ Thus it is understandable that since the Baptists were the "sect" that Bauhofer was most familiar with through their mutual work with the Scottish Mission, he then confused this separate group with similar beliefs as a splinter group from the Baptists who landed in trouble with the authorities because of their polemical activities. An example of the same thing comes from no less a person than Johann Woyka. He speculated about the origin of the Nazarenes, who seemed to have exploded upon the Hungarian religious scene towards the end of 1860's. "Where this growth of primitive Christianity derived its seed has not been satisfactorily discovered, but it is not improbable that it may have been some of the seed which was brought into the country and scattered by the four Hungarian brethren already referred to and those associated with them, though it took so many years to make its appearance."²⁹⁸ The Nazarenes assuredly did not have their origins with the first Baptist mission, though the Baptists through their literature distribution work may have planted seeds that the Nazarenes harvested. But that one of the Baptist pioneers could speculate such a thing helps to explain how it was possible that Bauhofer could be so mistaken

²⁹⁵ Bányai, "Az első hitvalló baptisták [The First Believing Baptists]," 26. Bányai wrote this on the basis of research by Szigeti, but dates the establishment of the orphanage at 1861. A more accurate date comes from Áron Kiss, who mentioned that among the founding members were Tivadar Biberauer and Adrian van Aniel, both figures that were mentioned by Heinrich Meyer in reference to Rottmayer's work in Pest. He wrote: "On May 17th, 1859, under Georg Bauhofer's chairmanship, Lutheran minister of Buda, the first founding meeting was held." Kiss, Áron, 219. Rottmayer must have been one of the founding members of the society, because "within the course of one year a crisis arose, in that a number of new members, among them the liberal Mór Ballagi, took over leadership from the founders, which even forbade the orphans to read their Bibles." Kool, 111. This crisis set in motion a series of events that would result in the founding of the evangelical German Reformed affiliated Church. Rottmayer would become a frequent attender of this church even as he continued with his Baptist mission.

²⁹⁶ That the Reformed Church was not a target of the Followers of Christ is proof of their ethnic origins. Most were Germans born in Czech or Moravian areas, now working in Hungary.

²⁹⁷ Szebeni, "'Krisztus követői' hadbírótság előtt [The Followers of Christ' Before the Military Tribunal]," 48.

²⁹⁸ Woyka, John, 3.

about the “Baptist” Kobera.

If Bauhofer’s journal is not as helpful as it first appears in providing information about the Baptists during the Bach Period, valuable firsthand insight comes from a letter from Rottmayer to Oncken published in the May 1856 Missionsblatt.²⁹⁹ The entire tenor of the letter is one of stoic perseverance tinged with a note of spiritual exhaustion. Thus Rottmayer implored Oncken: “O pray, dear brother, further for me and for us all, that his holy name will be exalted and the Devil will not succeed in winning the victory over us.”³⁰⁰ Rottmayer’s despair can be heard in his complaint: “The dear Saviour has according to his wise counsel lead us into this desert and he certainly had his great purpose in this; but we are so inept in the fight for the honor of our Lord, we do not pray and inquire earnestly enough. It has been twelve years since we were converted from the error of our ways through the mercy of God, and we have been here for nine years, and what fruit have we had?”³⁰¹ By this time the promise that had attended their work in 1848 had become a distant memory, and the successes of that time had slowly been strangled by the repressive weight of the Bach regime. Another complaint was the situation among the people they were trying to reach, “It is of course not easy to witness for the Lord among these people, who are so ensnared in sin and especially in recent times are so diligently cultivated and watched over by the priests of Rome.”³⁰² It must be remembered that in 1855 the Concordat with the Vatican was concluded by the Emperor that gave the Church unprecedented power. Rottmayer’s complaint reflects this new reality. He spoke longingly of his desire to have the opportunity one more time to share the gospel with someone who would be open to his testimony.

Rottmayer still attempted to work under these difficult conditions, but great discretion was required:

If we were not very careful in tract distribution and speaking about the things of the Lord, they would have long ago taken all of our literature; this is freely humanly spoken, but my human fear often finds a ground to be careful and to keep silent, where I should speak. I still have around ... Hungarian tracts, which we share as the opportunity arises. We have dispatched some of these in various districts. I have only a few examples

²⁹⁹ The letter was published anonymously, but it is generally recognized by Hungarian Baptist historians as coming from Rottmayer’s hand.

³⁰⁰ Rottmayer, Johann, “Brief aus Ungarn,” 10.

³⁰¹ Rottmayer, Johann, “Brief aus Ungarn,” 10.

³⁰² Rottmayer, Johann, “Brief aus Ungarn,” 10.

left of the larger pieces of literature such as Mrs. Judsons Memoirs and a few New Testaments. We could sell many bibles, because they have become quite rare, but we haven't had any for a while.³⁰³

The number of Hungarian tracts was kept hidden, but a footnote stated that it was “a good number.” Rottmayer was obviously torn about the need to be so discreet. He apparently believed that upon occasion he had missed opportunities to share literature and his testimony, opportunities that he should have taken advantage of were it not for his fear.

Nevertheless, there were good reasons to be careful, which he shared with Oncken:

The outlook by us appears always bleaker and we do not know what the future will bring us. Even the preacher of the Lutheran Church here had all the Bibles taken away and trampled underfoot on the pretext that they were false Bibles.³⁰⁴

It is interesting to note that it was a Lutheran minister, and not a Catholic priest, who had Rottmayer's Bibles confiscated. This was a matter of some discouragement to Rottmayer. He does not state who the minister was, but it could not have been Rev. Bauhofer of Buda, for this would have been entirely out of character for him. Moreover, it is likely that “here” designates Pest, not Buda across the Danube. This leaves Michael Lang, the German rationalistic minister in Pest, or the Hungarian minister József Székács, who along with Bauhofer and Pál Török, the Reformed minister in Pest, was closely associated with the work of the Scottish Mission.³⁰⁵ Rottmayer does not explain what led to this incident. However, given that Bauhofer could mistake the Follower's of Christ for Baptists, and these individuals were directing some of their polemics against the

³⁰³ Rottmayer, Johann, “Brief aus Ungarn,” 10.

³⁰⁴ Rottmayer, Johann, “Brief aus Ungarn,” 10.

³⁰⁵ Following the repression of the revolution, all the Lutheran Bishops were removed from office. Székács was elevated to the position of Bishop possibly after the facade of a return to normalcy was made by the governor-general of Hungary, Archduke Albrecht, and then endorsed by the Minister of Cults in Vienna, Count Leo Thun, in late 1854. He was a Bishop by 1860, when he and the radical rationalistic Professor Mór Ballagi took over control of the orphanage from Bauhofer. He was described by Bucsay as “mildly liberal” with a “conciliatory piety”. Bucsay, Mihály. “125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859–1984).” *Kirche im Osten*. Ed. Peter Hauptmann. Studien zur osteuropäischen Kirchengeschichte und Kirchenkunde [Band 28]. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985. 19. Given his closer association with the Scottish Mission than Lang (both took part in the weekly ministerial conferences), his more open attitude to evangelical renewal, and also the possibility that by 1856 he was not merely a “preacher”, but may have been a bishop, it does not appear likely that he was responsible for the destruction of Rottmayer's Bibles. This leaves Michael Lang as the leading candidate. A leading voice in rationalistic theological circles, he would have been less than sympathetic to the activities of the “sects”.

Lutherans, it is not difficult to surmise that Rottmayer became a target of the Lutheran minister's ire as well.

Rottmayer's final complaint concerned the impending loss of a valuable brother that would leave him alone. The departure was a blow not only to the mission, but to Rottmayer personally. He wrote,

A dear brother will soon depart from here, whereby I and my wife will remain alone here. We have also cherished the wish to move away from here to a place, where we spiritually speaking would not be so bad off, but we believe we may not go until we are sent away. But when the dear brother and sister are gone, it will very difficult for us, because they were the only ones with whose blessed fellowship we could refresh ourselves.³⁰⁶

Donat identifies the brother as Carl Scharschmidt from Buda, who with his wife departed for Bucharest, Rumania, in April of 1856 to work among the German diaspora of the area.³⁰⁷ Nearly ten years after their arrival in Buda-Pest, Rottmayer's original companion was leaving for a more promising field of work, leaving Rottmayer and his wife alone. He was the last man standing among the original pioneers. Other believers were also reported to be leaving by Rottmayer, which compounded his sorrow. The small congregation that Rottmayer had labored so hard to establish was slowly melting away.

As noted previously, Bányai took Rottmayer's remark about his desire to leave to suggest that he could not do so until the Scottish Mission sent him away; in other words, that Rottmayer was in the employ of the Scottish Mission during this time. However, this is not the likely meaning of Rottmayer's thought. Certainly if Scharschmidt was sent by anyone at this time, it was Oncken and not the Scottish Mission. Bányai held that Rottmayer's departure in 1866 for Kolozsvár was thus not the beginning of his work for the Scottish Mission, but merely a transfer of his field of service.³⁰⁸ But this contention revolves around his belief that Rottmayer was sent to establish the National Bible Society of Scotland depot in the city, and in this Bányai is incorrect. In fact Rottmayer was employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is this unforeseen turn of events in

³⁰⁶ Rottmayer, Johann, "Brief aus Ungarn," 10.

³⁰⁷ In 1859 Scharschmidt reported to Oncken: "Because there is full freedom of religion here in Rumania, we have taken the opportunity to establish a Tract Society. Eight families already contribute to it, and we have already printed 3000 tracts. There are around 20,000 Germans here, and there is no-one to lead them to Christ." Donat, 429. Already a couple had presented themselves for baptism, and so Scharschmidt requested that an ordained brother be sent to establish a congregation. Oncken fulfilled this request in 1863, when he sent August Liebig to Bucharest.

³⁰⁸ Bányai, "Az első hitvalló baptisták [The First Believing Baptists]," 26.

1866 that was the belated fulfillment of his desire to be provided with an open door in 1856 to leave his difficult field of service. The irony was that by this time Rottmayer had taken advantage of the increasing freedom following the demise of the Bach regime to rebuild the congregation in Pest, and he would not have left his home if economic necessity had not forced him.

No open door was presented to Rottmayer to leave his home in Pest, no opportunity for service elsewhere was offered to him for the remaining three years of the Bach regime. Despite the departure of Scharschmidt, he continued to quietly minister alone in Pest.³⁰⁹ In 1859 he was a founding contributor to the orphanage established under Bauhofer's leadership, which provides early evidence of his lifelong concern for children. He quietly persevered and did what he was able to do during this difficult period. If further Baptist workers were not sent to help him following the demise of the Bach regime, at least the revival of the work of the Scottish Mission in 1859 would provide him with like-minded individuals with whom he would enjoy pleasant fellowship.

6.2. From the Patent Fight to the Eve of Dualism: Rottmayer's Renewed Cooperation with the Scottish Mission and the Baptisms of 1865

The end of the Bach regime in 1859 ushered in a strange period of transition for Hungary's Protestants. While the vast network of police, informers, and spies had been discredited and was eventually to be scrapped, shortly after this retreat by the Crown, a new crisis was unleashed. This crisis was precipitated by the promulgation of the Protestant Patent by Minister Thun in September of 1859. Thus while the historic Protestant churches were engaged in a struggle for their independence and ancient liberties with the support of broad segments of the society, a freer atmosphere prevailed for Rottmayer and the Baptist remnant to resume their activities. Moreover, foreign personnel were allowed back into Hungary to resume the work the Scottish missionaries were forced to abandon in 1852. The situation of all of Hungary's Protestants improved in 1860 when the fight over the Patent was won; in addition, the *de facto* repeal of the 1855 Concordat was realized that same year when it slipped into constitutional limbo. Rottmayer Jr. wrote: "On Sundays my dear father transformed his work place into a

³⁰⁹ Hornung was almost surely in Pest at this time, but he would not return to active fellowship until 1861, according to the letter from Mrs. Woyka. Thus while Rottmayer was not strictly the last of the early Baptist pioneers in Pest, he was the last one engaged in ministry.

chapel, where soon people would gather together to hear the word.”³¹⁰ Csopják dates this at 1860, and further mentions that Rottmayer began to organize a Sunday school.³¹¹ Of course Rottmayer had held secret meetings in his home previously, but there appears to be a qualitative difference between those secret prayer meetings and the worship services held in his workshop at which Rottmayer would preach. Rottmayer Jr. also spoke of the foreign missionaries of the Scottish Mission and their services in a hall they rented, “We heard the preaching of Van Andel, Hefter, König, and Rev. Moody, and we became fond of them.”³¹² Heinrich Meyer also commented on this relationship, but it is clear that he was unsure about the dates and organizational structure of the Scottish Mission. He wrote: “Andel rented for himself a place and held regular meetings. Rottmayer joined forces with Andel and worked together with him. Andel planned with Rottmayer to set up a free church congregation. Probably it was similar to the German free church congregations. With the exception of Rottmayer and Antal Hornung, no baptized believers belonged to it.”³¹³ Meyer’s account of events has not been fully accepted by later Hungarian Baptist historians.³¹⁴

What then is the most likely reconstruction of events surrounding Rottmayer, Van Andel, and the founding of the new congregation? In 1859 Van Andel came to Pest to take over responsibility for the Scottish Mission school.³¹⁵ However, “This Van Andel

³¹⁰ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

³¹¹ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 9. He gives no date for the beginning of the Sunday school, but we know from other sources that it did not begin until 1865.

³¹² Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

³¹³ Meyer, Heinrich. Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919]. Ed. F. Gusztáv Szabadi. Trans. Gyula Fejér. Budapest: Privately printed, 1963. 31. 1909.

³¹⁴ For example, Szebeni explained the relationship between Van Andel and Rottmayer in such a way that Meyer’s testimony was reinterpreted. “During [Van Andel’s] time the Scottish congregation united with the German Reformed people in Pest, and Rottmayer also frequently turned to the absorbed biblical fellowship, indeed he even received certain rights to preach as well. Meyer also remarked that he joined Van Andel and they planned to organize a free church congregation.” Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 19. Thus Meyer’s account which describes Van Andel and Rottmayer founding a free church congregation, in Szebeni’s account becomes an unrealized plan. Szebeni’s version is much closer to the truth, although it still seeks to incorporate Meyer’s testimony, which should be confessed to be unreliable on this point.

³¹⁵ The school was administered by the Hungarian Reformed pastor Pál Török from the time of the expulsion of the Scottish missionaries until 1859 “when they [the Free Church of Scotland] sent Van Andel

nevertheless interfered in the church's inner life."³¹⁶ What Van Andel did was to collect around him dissatisfied German-speaking evangelicals, not only those who were temporary residents in Hungary, but also German-speaking Hungarian Reformed families and even some Lutheran families to form a new congregation.³¹⁷ Heinrich Meyer was incorrect in his assertion, however, that Rottmayer was the second leading figure in this endeavor.

In fact the other driving force behind the congregation was Theodor Biberauer, who would prove to be a central figure in Hungary's Protestant mission movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century.³¹⁸ It was this same person that Heinrich Meyer would complain was such an irritant to him in his ministry.³¹⁹ Biberauer claimed the inspiration for the decision to form a new congregation came from evangelical friends from abroad after he shared with them his disappointment that the leadership of the orphanage had been usurped by theological liberals. In a 1902 letter he wrote: "Our foreign friends advised us that we should found a separate church fellowship of the confirmed confessors of the gospel, so that we could be sure about the development of the still to be formed charitable institutions."³²⁰ According to Bucsay, "It was Adrian van Andel, the schoolmaster of the Scottish Mission in Budapest, in whom Theodor Biberauer could fully and completely support and who became the first preacher of the church from 1859 until 1863."³²¹ No mention of Rottmayer in the founding of the new fellowship has been attested outside of the writing of Heinrich Meyer. A pamphlet published in 1870, probably in Edinburgh, describing the laying of the foundation stone for the "German Reformed Church" confirms this reconstruction. In the pamphlet an address by Rev. König is described, followed by a reading by Biberauer which recounted the history of the

to Pest." Kiss, Áron, 85.

³¹⁶ Kiss, Áron, 85.

³¹⁷ Kiss, Áron, 85.

³¹⁸ Kool, 111–15.

³¹⁹ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 31.

³²⁰ Bucsay, "125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859–1984)," 19.

³²¹ Bucsay, "125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859–1984)," 19.

congregation. In this narrative it recounts the role played by Adrian van Anandel and the Scottish Mission, as well as the role of Rev. König following Van Anandel's departure; no mention of Rottmayer is made in this history or otherwise in the pamphlet.³²²

The new congregation became known as the "deutsche reformierte Filialgemeinde" (German Reformed Affiliated Church).³²³ The term "Filialgemeinde" referred to its status as a daughter church to the mother church, the Hungarian Reformed Church at Calvin Square. This subordinate status was necessary because according to Hungarian law, a new church could only be founded upon a dogmatic basis, and not for linguistic or ethnic reasons.³²⁴ The Hungarian Reformed Church at Calvin Square agreed to allow the formation of the German-speaking congregation under its care.³²⁵

While the congregation was formed in 1859, because of the Patent fight, it was not formally constituted until 1863 (although Van Anandel travelled to England where he was ordained on October 29, 1860, for the pastoral ministry of the Filialgemeinde).³²⁶ Yet the new congregation was not only tied to its mother church, it was also dependent upon

³²² An Account of Laying the Foundation Stone of the German Reformed Church at Pesth. Collection housed at the P.K. Yonge Library, University of Florida. Microfilmed 1996. SOLINET/ASERL Cooperative Microfilming Project (NEH PS-21089). SOL MN06735.03 FUG. Edinburgh, 1870. 5-7.

³²³ In Hungarian it similarly was called the Német Református Leányegyház, the last term could be literally translated as "daughter church".

³²⁴ Bucsay, "125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859-1984)," 17.

³²⁵ The core of the daughter church was drawn from foreigners attending the church at Calvin Square who hailed from Switzerland, Austria, and German lands. They had requested from the mother church the possibility to hold services and religious education instruction in German. German language services had previously been held at the church off and on since the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Bucsay noted that many of the more evangelically oriented among these German-speakers desired to begin a German-language Reformed church in the city, and he added: "Among these men Theodor Biberauer and Adrian van Anandel were probably the two most capable." Bucsay, "125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859-1984)," 18. What is interesting is that Theodor Biberauer, who worked for the Austro-Hungarian Railroad, was the son of Michael Biberauer, a Lutheran minister in Graz. He was likely one of the persons in mind when Kool observed that the founders of this church "originally belonged to the German Lutheran church" at what is now Deák Square, who left because "they could not find enough spiritual nourishment in the strongly rationalistic, liberal preaching of the pastor of that time." Kool, 112.

³²⁶ In fact Van Anandel's journey served a dual purpose. Bucsay noted: "This journey Van Anandel combined with gathering a collection for the still embryonic congregation. The donors were willing and quite numerous. Schaffhausen, Zürich, Basel, Chur, Stuttgart, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Ulm, wherever the regular assemblies of the Gustav-Adolf-Vereins took place, and further Dutch and naturally English and Scottish congregations offered support." Bucsay, "125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859-1984)," 20. This collection demonstrates the scope of the international contacts the Filialgemeinde maintained with centers of Protestant evangelical renewal on the continent and in Great Britain, and corroborates Biberauer's account of the origin of the Filialgemeinde.

the Scottish Mission for some time both financially and for its pastors.³²⁷ In the following decades the church became a center of evangelical renewal and a catalyst for a missions awakening among Hungarian Protestants.³²⁸ We know from Meyer that Biberauer severely criticized König for having opened the pulpit to G.W. Lehmann once the 1865 baptisms by Lehmann were discovered.³²⁹ Since Biberauer did not share the same irenic spirit that Van Anandel, König, and the other personnel of the Scottish Mission demonstrated in their relationships with Rottmayer and the Baptists, it is highly unlikely that Rottmayer played any significant role in the founding of the Filialgemeinde. And because it was a presbyterian and paedobaptist congregation, it is not conceivable that Rottmayer played any formal role in it. Yet it is also clear from the testimony of Rottmayer Jr. that his family frequently attended the Filialgemeinde and enjoyed the preaching and fellowship available there. Rottmayer was simply one of those people associated with the Scottish Mission who gravitated to this center of evangelical renewal.

In 1863 Van Anandel, who had come into conflict with the Hungarian Reformed pastors, was asked to leave the mission work in Hungary.³³⁰ He was eventually replaced by Rudolf König, who assumed leadership both of the Scottish Mission and the Filialgemeinde.³³¹ One year later he was joined by Dr. Andrew Moody, who would work

³²⁷ Bucsay wrote: “Also the salary of the church’s pastor for decades could only be secured in the following way, that the first pastors, Van Anandel, Rudolf Koenig and Dr. Andrew Moody, conducted their pastoral office in personal union with their teaching position in the Scottish Mission.” Bucsay, “125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859–1984),” 21. This resulted in an increase in responsibilities for the missionaries, but also in a growing evangelical life in the city: “More important was that the church work became ever more lively. In the church on Calvin Square German services were held, and in the school of the Scottish Mission on Bank Street German and English services were held.” Bucsay, “125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859–1984),” 20.

³²⁸ Kool, 112–13.

³²⁹ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 31.

³³⁰ Kool cites Gyula Forgács to the effect that “Van Anandel was an impatient and tactless person. During a meeting of the church district in his sermon delivered in the church at Calvin Square, he practiced loveless criticism on the Hungarian pastors.” Kool, 106. For this reason Török was compelled to ask for Van Anandel’s recall. Of this Kiss wrote, “There was a board of inquiry here from the mission, and while they found him to be without true sin, they still thought it better to recall him from the country.” Kiss, Áron, 85. Kiss intimates on a few occasions that at the root of Van Anandel’s conflict with the Hungarian pastors was his struggle to protect his German-language work against what he perceived to be their “exclusive magyarische particularistische Tendenzen.” Kiss, Áron, 197.

³³¹ Previous to his appointment to the work in Hungary, König was a missionary with the Scottish Mission to the Jews in Constantinople.

hard to root the work “in the context of the Hungarian Protestant churches.”³³²

Rottmayer’s friendly relations with the Scottish Mission and Filialgemeinde continued under the leadership of these men. A measure of strain was introduced only in 1865 with the adverse reaction of some in the Filialgemeinde to the baptisms performed by G.W. Lehmann.

This visit by G.W. Lehmann in 1865 represented a second apex of Rottmayer’s long and difficult work in Pest, coming some seventeen years after the visit of J.G. Oncken back in 1848. It would prove to be his last triumph in the city, as circumstances would soon require Rottmayer to leave Pest for a new field of work. A full account of Lehmann’s missionary tour was given by him in the November 1865 issue of the Missionary Magazine of the American Baptist Missionary Union. The majority of the letter was devoted to his visit to Pest.

Departing from Vienna on the morning of Friday, July 14, 1865, Lehmann arrived in Pest at eight in the evening, where Johann Rottmayer was waiting for him. For both Lehmann and the Rottmayers it was a joyful reunion.³³³ While cautioned of the “danger of persecution”, Lehmann nevertheless was eager to do “holy work” in the city: “We had, however, more freedom than I expected, more than in Vienna, where religious meetings were strictly watched. Many meetings, I learned, were held in Pest in private houses, and on Saturday evening one was held in the large room of my host. I preached to a large congregation, and had also [a lookout] before the windows in the street.”³³⁴ This sermon was on Isa. 43:11, and Rottmayer Jr. wrote that it made a great impression upon him.³³⁵ As further proof of the greater freedom that existed in Hungary, Lehmann spoke of the renewed Bible work in Pest under the direction of Edward Millard of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Vienna, who had established a depot in Pest and hired on

³³² Kool, 106.

³³³ As previously noted, Lehmann was a witness to Rottmayer’s marriage in Berlin, and the bond of friendship between them was strong. He wrote: “I found a home with a brother who had spent some years at Berlin, and married there one whom I had seen growing up from childhood. My visit awakened great joy.” Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³³⁴ Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³³⁵ “In 1865 G.W. Lehmann came from Berlin to spend some time visiting Budapest. His first sermon made such an impression upon my memory that even today, fifty years later, I still know how to recite the beginning.” Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

colporteurs.³³⁶ Lehmann sought out these colporteurs and praised their work: “I conversed with some of the colporteurs, very enterprising men, who braved the dangers and the opposition of the priests and the authorities.”³³⁷

It was in this context that Lehmann brought up the main goal of his visit: “Our Baptist friends, though only three in number, had not been idle. They had testified the full truth, and convinced several believers of their duty to be baptized.”³³⁸ The question arises: who are the three workers? As noted previously, Meyer held that Rottmayer and Van Anandel established what became the Filialgemeinde as a free church congregation. He also stated: “With the exception of Rottmayer and Antal Hornung, no baptized believers belonged to this congregation.”³³⁹ If we accept Meyer’s testimony, Antal Hornung was Rottmayer’s only Baptist co-worker. Meyer was correct that Hornung was a Baptist co-worker of Rottmayer’s, but he was somewhat anachronistic in his dating. For the Filialgemeinde was established in 1859, but the letter of Mrs. Woyka in the May 1861 Missionsblatt clearly places Hornung’s rededication to the Baptist faith two years after that. However, by the time of G.W. Lehmann’s visit in 1865, Hornung had been witnessing to his renewed faith for a few years. As for the third individual, it was likely Antal Hornung’s brother István, about whom Mrs. Woyka wrote: “Also the dear brother of br. H. lay in the dust, confessed his sins and expressed a desire for the Dove with the olive branch. He was awakened [or revived?] in the prayer-hours from the sixth to the thirteenth of this year, which were held in the congregation which Van Anandel leads in Pest, and which were a real blessing for the brethren there.”³⁴⁰ These three workers were

³³⁶ Before arriving in Pest, Lehmann had visited Millard in Prechtsdorf, outside Vienna, where he had gone with his family for rest. During the visit he had baptized Mrs. Millard and their two sons, plus one of their servants. This must have been a joyful occasion for Millard, and brought the number of baptized believers meeting in his house to ten. Speaking of the bible work in Pest, Lehmann wrote: “I rejoiced to find that Mr. Millard had begun his Bible work again in Pest, opened a depot of his treasures, and set in motion the press, and the binding of Bibles in divers languages and dialects. Even colportage had been ventured upon in the country.” Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³³⁷ Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³³⁸ Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³³⁹ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 31.

³⁴⁰ Woyka, Wilhelmina, 78. The phrase concerning István, “Er wurde erweckt...”, could be taken two ways. If the context of Mrs. Woyka’s remarks about István was the immediately preceding statement about Mrs. Hornung, then she was affirming that István too had recently come to faith. If, however, the context of her comments about István was her initial news about Antal, then like Antal she was stating that

not engaged in colportage through the Bible Society, rather they were engaged primarily in testifying to their Baptist faith.³⁴¹ The center of their activity was Rottmayer's workshop, which was transformed into a small chapel for Sunday services. The success of the work was demonstrated by the need to have Lehmann come to perform the baptisms.

Of this Lehmann wrote: "On Lord's day morning we held a conference, in reference to the administration of baptism to several with whom I had already had a brief acquaintance. It was agreed that great caution should be used, inasmuch as both friends and foes were much opposed to the ordinance."³⁴² The cause of their concern was the continuation of a problem that had caused difficulties during the Bach regime. "The authorities had frequently punished severely a kind of Baptists who have existed a few years under the name of Fröhlichianer, a sect holding strange and erroneous views, as well in regard to baptism as to other Christian doctrines."³⁴³ The term "Fröhlichianer" is another name for the Nazarenes, who by this time had grown relatively numerous and had entered into the public consciousness as an Anabaptistic sect.³⁴⁴ What is curious is that

István had returned to faith. While it is more likely grammatically that the former was the case, it is difficult to be sure. By the time Lehmann arrived, István was considered a fellow-worker with his brother and Rottmayer, which implies that he had undergone believer's baptism. Why then did Heinrich Meyer not mention that István was among the baptized believers along with his brother and Rottmayer in Van Andel's congregation? Certainly by 1869, on the basis of information from Rottmayer Jr. about the situation in Budapest, he held István to be a "church member." Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 30. But the remark itself is cryptic and hard to explain. What church? Since when? Meyer stated in the very next sentence that there was not one Baptist in Budapest at that time. Since we do not know of any baptisms which took place in Hungary between 1861 and 1865, it would appear that István was baptized before then. Perhaps he came to faith during his brother's initial period of ministry in Vienna, and like his brother fell away until they both returned to faith in 1861. Short of further information coming to light, it must remain an open question.

³⁴¹ Still it is highly likely that as did practically all the early Baptist workers, these three also used literature distribution as a means of evangelism.

³⁴² Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³⁴³ Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³⁴⁴ In fact the readers of the Missionsblatt were first informed about the Nazarenes by a reprint of an article appearing in the Evangelische Kirchenzeitung in their July 1860 issue. In the article the Nazarenes were falsely identified as Baptists and compared to English Puritans because of their separatism. The article also stated that they were active in the Carpathians, the Banat, Pest, and the Bacska, with approximately forty congregations with "practically ten-thousand souls" among them. In the editor's comments, though sympathetic to the movement, it was pointed out that these followers of Fröhlich, who actually numbered barely a thousand, "in keiner Verbindung mit unserem Bunde stehen." "Neue Baptistische Bewegung." Missionsblatt 18.7 (July 1860): 105.

even the Baptists' "friends" were opposed to the public performance of the ordinance. The concern was that a public performance of the ordinance of baptism, which because of the Nazarenes would invite the opprobrium of the authorities and the public, would then in turn strain the Baptists' friendly relations with the Scottish Mission and the Filialgemeinde.

Lehmann's negative assessment of the Nazarenes is a bit surprising, since both the Nazarenes and Baptists were offspring of the Anabaptists, not organically in terms of specific historical links, but spiritually speaking with similar views concerning faith and baptism. In fact, in a letter Rottmayer had written in the spring of 1865 anticipating Lehmann's visit, he confessed, "I am always very sorry that no union with the Fröhlichianers can take place, with whom we indeed have so much that we agree about. So far as I know, about 1000 souls in this region belong to the fellowship."³⁴⁵ No doubt Rottmayer, like Heinrich Meyer after him, attempted to establish friendly relations with the Nazarenes, but it came to nought. The Nazarenes were very sectarian in their outlook, quite the opposite of Rottmayer's evangelical ecumenism, and this was likely the stumbling block to cooperation with the Nazarenes.

Proof of the friendly relationship between Rottmayer and the Scottish Mission is provided by Lehmann, who described his visit to the Filialgemeinde for the Sunday morning service: "In the forenoon we all went to the chapel of a kind of Presbyterian church, the pastor of which is also a missionary to the Jews. In Pest alone there are 35,000 Jews. We heard a very good and Scriptural sermon from the pastor. I was afterwards introduced to him and cordially welcomed, and invited to preach in the evening, and accepted the invitation."³⁴⁶ It is evident that Rottmayer was a frequent attender at the church and had developed a good relationship with Rudolf König. It also provides us with sufficient insight as to why Rottmayer wished to exercise such caution with the performance of the baptismal ordinance. Of the Sunday evening sermon, Lehmann reported, "At six o'clock I preached in the Presbyterian chapel, according to appointment, to a good congregation, partly in great Hungarian style, with much joyfulness."³⁴⁷

³⁴⁵ Rottmayer, Johann. Missionsblatt 23.8 (Aug 1865): 112.

³⁴⁶ Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³⁴⁷ Lehmann, G.W., 399.

In part for the need to be cautious, but primarily because of the importance they attached to the ordinance, Rottmayer and Lehmann spent time examining the candidates for baptism. The first such meeting was held on Sunday following the morning service: “In the afternoon the dear disciples who wished to be baptized assembled in the house of Mr. R., and we held a regular meeting for their examination. We found time only to hear from a part of them, whose evidence of faith gave us much joy and confidence.”³⁴⁸ The process was completed the next day: “On Monday we examined two more candidates for baptism, two sisters, from Bohemia, whose evidences greatly cheered us.”³⁴⁹ Wednesday was established as the time for the baptisms. Before that further preparations were necessary: “On Tuesday, after having visited several friends, we went in search of a suitable place for administering the ordinance. Down the Danube, at an hour’s distance from town, we found a very excellent place, the river extending far and wide, and the current being not too strong.”³⁵⁰ This too points to the efforts they made to keep the baptisms as discreet as possible.

Lehmann then describes the climax of his visit to Pest, the baptismal service. As this is the earliest description of a baptismal service in the Hungarian Baptist movement³⁵¹, it is instructive to cite in full Lehmann’s account:

On the evening of Wednesday, July 19, the candidates came together at br. R.’s, where I gave them an extended address founded on Mat. 28, explaining the nature of baptism. Fervent prayer was then offered, and we proceeded to the place selected on the Danube. It was then between ten and eleven o’clock. At first the sky threatened rain; but as we came out of the city, it became quite clear. We passed the military guard without molestation, and reached the delightful river. There, under a most brilliant canopy of stars, we first united again in fervent prayer, and then separated for the purpose of changing our dresses. Another short prayer followed, and I led one of the female candidates into the water, who, with her face turned upward to heaven, manifested the deepest emotion. It was necessary to proceed some distance, in order to secure the requisite depth, and there I solemnly immersed the dear disciple of Jesus. Then followed her sister, then the third female, a married woman, and finally three male candidates. All around was calm and solemn, and in the sweet feeling of having

³⁴⁸ Lehmann, G.W., 399. The “Mr. R.” is obviously Rottmayer, it was a practice to use such abbreviations to protect the identity of workers in areas where persecution remained a possibility.

³⁴⁹ Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³⁵⁰ Lehmann, G.W., 399.

³⁵¹ Oncken did not leave a detailed account of the baptisms he performed during his visit to Pest in 1848.

fulfilled the will of the Lord, we changed our dresses, and then met again for fervent thanksgiving and prayer. Then ascending an adjacent hill, with the wide-spread flood before us and the starry sky above us, we sung without fear one of our glorious hymns. Just then a boat was drawn along by the bank of the river, just where we had baptized, but the men in charge were not allowed to disturb us, as long as we were engaged in the ordinance. Before we left the memorable place, I pointed out to our friends the beautiful constellation of the Crown (**Corona Borealis**), which I have never missed in the numerous cases where I have baptized under a starry sky, and which symbolized so beautifully the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to his faithful followers. Our sisters were so joyful on our return to the city, that they sung without fear with their fine voices one hymn after another, continuing till we reached the town. Having arrived at Mr. R.'s, we surrounded the Lord's table, where I explained at large the import of the ordinance and afterwards advised them as to their behavior amid the struggles which undoubtedly await them.³⁵²

Many things stand out from this account which bear commenting upon. Yet perhaps what immediately stands out from the narrative is the extent to which the small group went to avoid detection - the late hour at which the baptisms were performed, with only the stars to illumine the service; the far distance they walked to assure privacy, followed by a climb up a hill to sing a hymn without fear of their song being overheard. Only during the walk back to Pest did joy so overcome some of the baptized sisters that they could not refrain from singing hymns.

With regard to the performance of the ordinance of baptism, a few observations can be drawn from the narrative. The first observation concerns the changing of clothes. The idea of course was to keep one's clothes dry for after the baptism. Yet more than this, the candidates changed into special baptismal garb, usually white sheets, for the ordinance. Thus Rottmayer Jr. wrote of this baptismal service: "This was the first baptism at which I was present and it drew tears to my eyes, because I would have loved to have been among the *fehértuhások*."³⁵³ This last word is best translated by the phrase "those clothed in white", which refers to the white sheets that are still worn by baptismal candidates in Hungary and the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe today. White of course is the symbolic color of purity, and likely represented the washing away of sins that occurs when one trusts in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Baptism is the outward sign of the believer's being grafted into the death and resurrection of Christ (hence the symbolism of full immersion, cf. Rom. 6:3-4), and thus white is an appropriate

³⁵² Lehmann, G.W., 399-400.

³⁵³ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

color for the performance of the ordinance. The baptisms were performed much as in the New Testament (cf. Jn. 3:23), with Lehmann seeking a spot in the river that was sufficiently deep for full immersion baptism, yet without a swift current that would imperil anyone. He found a spot without a swift current, but he and the candidates were required to go some distance from the shore to attain the requisite depth necessary for full immersion.

The final point to make with regard to Lehmann's narrative is the close connection between baptism and the Lord's table as the two ordinances commanded of the Lord. The common practice among Hungarian Baptists to this day is that believer's baptism, and not just a conversion experience, is expected for participation in the Lord's supper.³⁵⁴ This is the significance of Lehmann leading the newly baptized believers in celebration of the Lord's supper in Rottmayer's house, exhorting them to walk worthily in the faith into which they had just been baptized.

Unfortunately, Lehmann does not give us much information about the identity of those baptized. We can gather that three women and three men received baptism. No clues are provided as to the identity of the men. As for the women, two were sisters from Bohemia, while the third woman was described only as being married. An early report about the candidates comes from Heinrich Meyer, who stated that he had met four of them during his time in Hungary: "The first among these which I met was brother Marschall's wife in Nagykanizsa. She was a dark blond woman and tormented her husband to the end. The second person was brother Rottmayer's second wife whom I met in Kolozsvár, a truly wicked woman about whose wickedness I had heard of even in Budapest. The third was Mrs. Rottmayer's older sister, whom I met just once during one of my rounds of visiting, when I sought out her younger sister in Pest. She was a Czech. Later I came to know of a fourth person, a Nazarene gentleman, who sought to make his daily bread from the boats on the Danube."³⁵⁵ This report has been followed by subsequent Hungarian Baptist historians. Meyer was undoubtedly correct about Magdolna Basteczky and her older sister from Bohemia. Nothing can be ventured about the Nazarene man, one may assume Meyer was correct. But he was surely incorrect about Mrs. Marschall. When Lehmann left Pest after the baptismal service, he went to

³⁵⁴ Almási, Mihály. *Az úrvacsora mint szolgálat [The Lord's Supper as Service]*. Budapest: Magyarországi Baptista Egyház, 1995. 156–66.

³⁵⁵ Meyer, *Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919]*, 32.

Nagykanizsa to “seek the restoration of a brother.”³⁵⁶ This brother was Marschall. Consequently it is impossible that Mrs. Marschall was the married woman who received baptism. Bányai later attempted to build upon Meyer’s account by suggesting a fifth person among those baptized by Lehmann in Pest, Henry Millard, the son of Edward Millard.³⁵⁷ But as noted previously, Lehmann had baptized Mrs. Millard and her two sons in Prechtsdorf outside Vienna, before he arrived in Pest. Thus the only two people who can confidently be identified among the baptismal party are Magdolna Basteczky and her older sister.

A speculative proposal as to the identity of the married woman that I would like to suggest is the wife of Antal Hornung, whom he had apparently married during the time in which he was no longer living as a Baptist. I base this proposal on the 1861 letter of Mrs. Woyka to the Missionsblatt, in which she adds after describing Hornung’s return to the Baptist faith: “Also his present wife has written to me that the Lord Jesus has become dear to her soul and that she has with her husband begun to follow the narrow path to Zion.”³⁵⁸ If she was still walking on the path that her husband was following at the time of Lehmann’s visit, it is possible that she would want to present herself for baptism.

The question then becomes how Meyer could mistake Mrs. Marschall for Mrs. Hornung? Both men married their wives during a period when they were no longer living as Baptists, and both men had subsequently experienced a reawakening of their Baptist faith and had realized some success in witnessing to their wives. The difficult issue is that Antal and István Hornung both lived in Pest during the period of Meyer’s ministry, and István apparently was a member of Meyer’s church. The similarities in the course of Antal Hornung’s and Marschall’s lives may explain the confusion, but then how could Meyer continue in his misapprehension given his relationship with István Hornung? The one thing that I may add in defense of my suggestion is that it is evident that despite his insistence to the contrary, Heinrich Meyer did not prove to be an astute student of the Baptist work that had been undertaken in Hungary prior to his arrival in Budapest.

Immediately after the baptismal service, Lehmann left for Nagykanizsa: “Only an hour or two remained for a little rest. At five o’clock, A.M., I left Pest by the train, after a

³⁵⁶ Lehmann, G.W., 400.

³⁵⁷ Bányai, “Az első hitvalló baptisták [The First Believing Baptists],” 26.

³⁵⁸ Woyka, Wilhelmina, 78.

most cordial leave from the newly-won brethren and sisters.”³⁵⁹ Thus he had already departed when it was discovered by members of the Filialgemeinde that Lehmann had baptized six persons. Heinrich Meyer reported that great acrimony and recriminations greeted the news of the baptisms:

In 1865 brother Rottmayer urged brother G.W. Lehmann to come to Pest and baptize those souls who were in König’s congregation. At the same time Rottmayer was a preacher in this congregation. Pastor König was not informed about this from brother Rottmayer, and only in that way could it come about that he received brother Lehmann into his house and invited him to preach. Still it elicited great anger and rancor in the congregation, especially among the members of the presbytery, when they learned that five to six souls were baptized. They severely judged brothers Rottmayer and Lehmann. Especially a Railroad Inspector named Biberauer stepped forward in a very determined manner against the Baptists in the pastor’s apartment. When I baptized the first fruits of my missionary work and they found out, these men once again came into conflict with me. As a result I had to suffer through much opprobrium and hostility.³⁶⁰

The account from Meyer differs in some respects from that of Lehmann. The first difference is that Meyer maintains that Rottmayer was a preacher in what Meyer called the “Scottish church” founded by Van An del, and that the candidates for baptism were attending the church. This of course places Rottmayer’s decision to call for Lehmann to perform these secret baptisms in a different ethical light, one could accuse him of deception. If Rottmayer was indeed a preacher in the church, how could he ethically keep König in the dark about his intentions? This of course highlights the second difference, which is that Meyer explicitly states that König was not aware of the reason for Lehmann’s visit, and that is why he was received so warmly by König. Yet Lehmann only stated that the brethren decided to exercise “great caution” in performing the ordinance. He never addressed the issue of whether König was aware of the reason for his visit. Meyer stated that when he was facing similar opposition to his work, he felt badly for Lehmann because he again became a target for their opprobrium: “I wrote to him and asked him how the first baptisms at the Scottish church took place.”³⁶¹ Lehmann responded, but Meyer did not discuss what he wrote.

³⁵⁹ Lehmann, G.W., 400.

³⁶⁰ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 31.

³⁶¹ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 32.

Even so, it is clear that Meyer's understanding was not completely accurate. At this time there were two preachers available to the Filialgemeinde, but the second was not Rottmayer. Rather it was Andrew Moody from Scotland, who came to help with the school in 1864.³⁶² Between these two men the German service at the Calvin Square church and the German and English services at the Scottish Mission school were divided up.³⁶³ Both these men would have known about the previous cooperation of Rottmayer and the Baptist company with their predecessors. Rottmayer Jr., it will be remembered, mentioned how his family enjoyed the preaching of König and Moody. But neither he nor Lehmann gave the impression that Rottmayer was a fellow minister in partnership with these men.³⁶⁴ The distinction between friendly cooperation and formal partnership must be maintained.

Given this separate, distinctly Baptist work that Rottmayer led, Meyer's contention that Lehmann was not aware of the reason for his visit must remain merely a speculation on his part. Meyer's reason for maintaining that Rottmayer did not lead a distinct Baptist work following the end of the Bach regime may be discerned from his claim that when he came to Budapest in 1873 as a colporteur and travelled extensively throughout the region, "I found no trace that there had once been Baptists here, although here and there a person or two turned up who knew Rottmayer's name, or who knew about the brethren's work before 1848."³⁶⁵ Meyer was at pains to show that he began his ministry in Hungary with a clean slate. By denying the distinctly Baptist character of Rottmayer's work after 1859 and understating the measure to which Rottmayer's work

³⁶² Kiss, Áron, 219.

³⁶³ Bucsay, "125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859–1984)," 20.

³⁶⁴ Undoubtedly Rottmayer enjoyed a close relationship with König and Moody, and he and his family frequently availed themselves of the opportunity to hear them preach, yet Rottmayer never abandoned his distinct and separate Baptist work. Lehmann's visit is the proof of this. Nevertheless, Meyer's spin that Rottmayer joined up with Van Andel and his successors remained influential. In a 1915 church history text-book for highschool readers published by the recognized Baptists, it was explained that "During this time some Baptist brothers visited Hungary and preached the word. There was no Baptist congregation in Budapest then, so Rottmayer joined the Scottish Church, but even so his work bore results, because when G.W. Lehmann from Berlin came to visit Budapest in 1865, he baptized six individuals in the quiet of the night in the Danube." Balogh, Lajos, and Attila Csopják. *Egyháztörténet [Church History]*. Vezérfonal a középiskolák magasabb osztályai részére. Budapest: Magyar Baptisták Könyvnyomdája, 1915. 381–82.

³⁶⁵ Meyer, *Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919]*, 31–32.

prepared the ground for his own, Meyer could maintain that the Baptist mission in Hungary truly began with his pioneering effort.

The anger of Biberauer and others in the leadership of the Filialgemeinde was not necessarily that some of their members had been baptized away by Lehmann³⁶⁶, but rather that their center of evangelical renewal within the historic Protestant tradition may have been brought into disrepute through association with the “sects”, as noted by Lehmann when he mentioned that “both friends and foes were much opposed to the ordinance” because of the Fröhlichianers.³⁶⁷ With the baptisms by Lehmann, a new Baptist congregation was in its formative stage (contra Meyer), and some in the Filialgemeinde did not want their new congregation to be associated with it.

This, however, did not discourage Rottmayer, because shortly after the visit of Lehmann, the Baptists were visited again by August Liebig, who was on the way back to his pioneering work in Bucharest. At this visit the desire of Rottmayer’s son was fulfilled:

Two months later on their way through August Liebig and his wife spent some time with us at my parent’s house, and at that time the hour arrived when I found peace, for this pastor baptized me on the 22nd of September. Blessed be the holy name of the Lord, who so faithfully lead me and preserved me. I will never forget that day...Following the baptism in the Danube I happily, joyfully stepped into life... Tears of joy trickled from my dear mother’s eyes when she pulled me towards herself and kissed me.³⁶⁸

Rottmayer Jr. was a teenager at the time of his baptism³⁶⁹, and so at an early age he entered upon the same path as his father for a lifetime of Christian service.

³⁶⁶ We do not know if any of the baptismal candidates had been evangelicals associated with the Filialgemeinde who became convinced of the Baptist message, or if all were nominal Christians of various denominational backgrounds that came to faith in Christ through the Baptists evangelism. The few clues we have suggest that the latter was the case.

³⁶⁷ This despite the fact that in many respects the Baptists stood closer theologically to the Filialgemeinde than to the narrow, sectarian outlook of the Nazarenes. As noted previously, Biberauer maintained close contacts with European centers of evangelical renewal, such as the Evangelical Alliance. Before J.G. Oncken became convinced of the Baptist position, he was described as working along Evangelical Alliance lines by Rushbrooke, and he only had words of praise for the work of the Scottish Mission from his 1848 visit. Thus except for the obvious similarities with regards to the ordinances and eccesiology, the Baptists stood closer to the Filialgemeinde than to the Nazarenes. König and Moody apparently understood this, as did Smith, Wingate, and Van Andel before them, whereas Biberauer did not.

³⁶⁸ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

³⁶⁹ Johann Rottmayer and Emilie Stibler were married on August 6, 1847, thus on September 22, 1865, they had been married just over eighteen years at the time of their son’s baptism. Accordingly, Rottmayer Jr. was no more than seventeen years old when baptized.

6.3. The End of Rottmayer's Work in Pest

The baptism of Rottmayer's oldest son was the last triumph he was to experience in his ministry in Pest. Indeed, Rottmayer Jr. remembered that the two years from 1865 to 1866 "was a period of heavy trials." A time of crisis swept over the Rottmayer household that brought many changes: "great loss was caused by a neighbor who declared himself bankrupt."³⁷⁰ This personal crisis, along with a cloudy political future following Austria's defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1866, "brought to maturity in my father the thought of emigrating to America."³⁷¹ The period of Rottmayer's ministry in Hungary was almost brought to a premature close. "In the midst of this the recommendation arrived that he should go to Transylvania as a Bible colporteur."³⁷² In this manner was Rottmayer's ministry in Hungary given a new lease on life.

Rottmayer set about with characteristic vigor to pursue this new path when tragedy struck again. As Rottmayer Jr. recalled the event: "

He sold his carpentry workshop³⁷³, packed furniture, everything was ready, when immediately before departure death took away my dear mother. Her last words were, "Hush, hush! Soon my dear Redeemer will take me home." At the burial pastor König spoke about "Call the workers and give them their wages."³⁷⁴

The fact that it was König who ministered to the devastated family in their time of need demonstrates that Rottmayer's friendship with König survived the troubles that followed upon Lehmann's visit. The theme of König's burial sermon suggests that Mrs. Rottmayer was esteemed as a valuable helpmate to her husband in ministry, and would receive the

³⁷⁰ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26. Rottmayer Jr. did not elaborate on the connection between his father and the neighbor. Szebeni portrayed the crisis differently, "The carpentry industry went into bankruptcy." Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 20. Perhaps Rottmayer, through his neighbor, fell victim to an economic crisis that took hold of his trade?

³⁷¹ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

³⁷² Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

³⁷³ Szebeni adds the detail that only by selling his tools could Rottmayer and his family "embark on their very long journey" Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 20.

³⁷⁴ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

reward of her Christian service from her Lord. Certainly in death as in life she was a witness to her faith in Jesus.

Despite the tragic loss, it was too late to change plans, and so Rottmayer forged ahead:

The grave remained an orphan in the Kerepesi Cemetery. My dear father travelled to Kolozsvár with the children and a nursemaid. From Nagyvárad we travelled further into the mountains by carriage, which we had to criss-cross through, because Nagyvárad was the [train's] end-station.³⁷⁵

The circumstances under which Rottmayer would begin his new work were very difficult indeed.

The question naturally arises: who did Rottmayer work for and how did he acquire his position? The near consensus of contemporary Hungarian Baptist historiography is that Rottmayer was given a position with the Scottish Mission,³⁷⁶ or more specifically, the National Bible Society of Scotland.³⁷⁷ In an extended presentation of this view, Mészáros discusses the long cooperation between the Scottish Mission and the Baptist pioneers, beginning with the invitation of the Baptist company by the Scottish Mission in 1846 to Rottmayer's friendly relations with Van Andel and König.³⁷⁸ He also pointed to the cooperative relationship between Woyka's future father-in-law, a medical missionary to the Jews of Hamburg from the Scottish Free Church, and J.G. Oncken to demonstrate the close relationship between Continental Baptists and the Scottish Free Church, and in particular the Scottish Mission to the Jews. Finally, he argues that Scharschmidt was the first Baptist to be taken on as a colporteur of the National Bible Society of Scotland, when he was sent to Jassy in Rumania in 1856.³⁷⁹ He was followed by Rottmayer ten years later, who was sent to Kolozsvár.³⁸⁰ Mészáros is correct in what he argues except

³⁷⁵ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

³⁷⁶ Mészáros, "A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)]," 26.

³⁷⁷ Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 19.

³⁷⁸ Mészáros, "A 'Vojka-kutatás' további eredményei [The Further Results of Woyka Research]," 292–93.

³⁷⁹ Mészáros, "A 'Vojka-kutatás' további eredményei [The Further Results of Woyka Research]," 293.

³⁸⁰ An early presentation of this view that has no doubt influenced later scholarship is that of

for the most important pieces of the puzzle he attempts to piece together - his assertions about Scharschmidt and Rottmayer. It was previously noted that Scharschmidt and his wife moved to Bucharest in 1856, where they had the freedom to witness to the German diaspora there. I will argue later that only in 1866 did the Scharschmidts move to Jassy, where he worked as a colporteur for the British and Foreign Bible Society, not the National Bible Society of Scotland.

What is curious about the argument that Rottmayer worked for the National Bible Society of Scotland is that it discounts the testimony of Rottmayer Jr., who stated that his father worked for the British and Foreign Bible Society.³⁸¹ Meyer less clearly appeared to affirm the same when he wrote that when he met Rottmayer in Hamburg in 1867, “Brother Rottmayer probably did not live anymore in Budapest, but in Kolozsvár, where the Bible Society had entrusted him with a small depot.”³⁸² Meyer himself worked for the British and Foreign Bible Society, and often referred to it as the “Bible Society” or simply the “Society”. But the final say must be given to the official publications of the two societies. In the 1866 Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Edward Millard announced, “I have now recently accomplished an exploratory tour through Transylvania, which I have long had in contemplation.”³⁸³ Why undertake such an arduous journey?

My chief object in undertaking this long journey was not solely to visit and stir up our correspondents, but principally to investigate the ground more closely, and to examine whether an impression which I have had for years of the necessity for a special Depôt for Transylvania was correct. The result of my inquiries is decidedly in favor of such an arrangement. Not only is the country totally distinct and isolated from the rest of Austria, but

Bányai, who based his conclusions largely on the basis of the testimony of Gusztáv Szabadi Jr., the final leader of the Budapest depot for the BFBS. He wrote that Rottmayer could not have worked for the BFBS because “this society did not have a depot in Kolozsvár”: Bányai, Jenő. “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission].” Theologiai Szemle 9 <new series>.1–2 (1966): 26. He backed this assertion up by examining accounting records of the NBSS in the archives of the Reformed Theological Academy in Budapest, which indicated monthly payments to Kolozsvár starting in the late 1860’s. Although no name was associated with these payments, Bányai assumes that they went to Rottmayer.

³⁸¹ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

³⁸² Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 30.

³⁸³ The Sixty-Second Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1866. 67.

it has peculiarities of its own, which make operations from without extremely difficult.³⁸⁴

In particular he pointed to the primitive transportation and communication infrastructure which existed in Transylvania that made operating from the nearest depot in Pest, already a long distance from Transylvania, a very difficult proposition indeed. Millard had spoken of Transylvania as “a little world in itself - an Austria in miniature”, and this ethnic and religious diversity provided the impetus for Millard’s desire:

If we are enabled to open a Depôt, and if God raises up the right man, he may exercise a most blessed and salutary influence for and by the dissemination of the Scriptures, and, I doubt not, but gradually ways and means may even be found for the organization of a system of Colportage just as we are now doing in Hungary. It is likewise only by a local Depôt and by local influence that the abuse, now so common, of selling our books at a profit, and thus paralyzing the work, can be counteracted.³⁸⁵

Millard’s arguments were received positively at the Bible Society, and consequently the Committee “sanctioned the opening of a Depôt at Klausenburg [Kolozsvár] as soon as the preliminary arrangements can be completed.”³⁸⁶

In the following Report in 1867, it was reported, “After prolonged, but eventually successful negotiations, your Agent received permission to open a Depôt at Klausenburg, the capital of Transylvania; and the sales, during seven months, have reached 9,575 copies.”³⁸⁷ The new Depository was clearly identified in the 1869 Report, “Mr. Rottmayer, the Depository at Klausenburg, states that 9,547 copies have been sold during the year, in his sphere of labor.”³⁸⁸ What then of the NBSS? In the 1866 Annual Report of the National Bible Society of Scotland, it was reported:

After the war between Austria and Prussia had terminated, greater facilities for colportage existed in this region of the world. The Directors, accordingly, authorized the Reverend Rudolph Koenig to employ two other colporteurs. One of them, Matherny, was dispatched into Transylvania, where the British and Foreign Bible Society has recently

³⁸⁴ 1866 Annual Report, 68.

³⁸⁵ 1866 Annual Report, 68.

³⁸⁶ 1866 Annual Report, 67.

³⁸⁷ The Sixty-Third Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1867. 89.

³⁸⁸ The Sixty-Fifth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1869. 99.

established a depôt in Klausenburg; but no colporteur had ever previously been employed.³⁸⁹

It is clear that Szabadi Jr. unfortunately argued the opposite facts of the case, it was the National Bible Society of Scotland that did not open a depot in Transylvania because the British and Foreign Bible Society had just opened one. However, because of the cooperative relationship between the two societies, and also between König, Rottmayer, and Millard, we find that König, who was the Depositary for the National Bible Society of Scotland in Pest in addition to his responsibilities with the Scottish Mission, sent Matherny as a colporteur to Transylvania to take advantage of the newly established British and Foreign Bible Society presence there. Thus the accounting records Bányai found in the archives of the Reformed Theological Academy must have been remittances to Matherny. Perhaps the root of Szabadi Jr.'s misunderstanding was that by the time Rottmayer retired from the Bible Society, Transylvania had become so integrated into Hungary through improvements in the transportational infrastructure that the Kolozsvár depot was closed down and consolidated with the depot in Budapest.

The rest of the story is clear. At some point in 1866, Edward Millard, after his journey through Transylvania, paid a visit to Rottmayer. It must be remembered that in addition to his work for the Bible Society, Millard was the focal point for Baptist life in the hostile Catholic environment of Vienna. Millard found his Baptist brother in dire financial difficulties, and in this situation he saw God raising up “the right man” for the job. Rottmayer undoubtedly saw a way of escape from his financial troubles that would allow him to stay in his homeland and continue serving God. In this way Rottmayer’s period of ministry in Pest came to a close and a new chapter opened for him in Kolozsvár.

One question now remains, and that is what happened to the congregation-information that had gathered around Rottmayer? Heinrich Meyer painted a stark picture, “I found no trace that there had once been Baptists here, although here and there a person or two turned up who knew Rottmayer’s name, or who knew about the brethren’s work before 1848.”³⁹⁰ Bányai characterized this report by Meyer as reflecting more his ignorance of the work which Rottmayer and the early pioneers accomplished than the

³⁸⁹ Annual Report of the National Bible Society of Scotland. Edinburgh, 1866. 27.

³⁹⁰ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 31–32.

actual impact of their labors.³⁹¹ The observation of Szebeni is more to the point, namely, with the departure of Rottmayer the “congregation slowly wasted away.”³⁹²

Of particular curiosity is the fate of Antal Hornung, one of the original Baptist pioneers sent from Hamburg, who had begun his ministry with Joseph Marschall in Vienna. I have argued previously that the three brethren at work in Pest at the time of G.W. Lehmann’s 1865 visit were Rottmayer, Antal and István Hornung. This was based upon the 1861 letter of Mrs. Woyka to the readers of the Missionsblatt, in which she reported that Antal Hornung had rededicated himself to the Lord, and his brother István had experienced a spiritual renewal through the prayer meetings held by Van Andel.³⁹³ However, Antal Hornung apparently did not attempt to replace Rottmayer as the center of Baptist life in Budapest. Heinrich Meyer wrote that when he was about to depart for southern Russia in May of 1869, he received some news from Rottmayer Jr., who was living in Hamburg at that time, about the situation in Budapest. Specifically his news was about István and Antal Hornung, namely that the “former was a church member, while the other had fallen away. In Budapest at that time there was not one Baptist.”³⁹⁴ This cryptic remark is hard to interpret. If there was not one Baptist in Budapest at that time, how could István be a “church member”? It is difficult to say when István became a Baptist, although it appears he was one by the time of Lehmann’s visit. However, it is clear that Antal had returned to faith in 1861, and Meyer was simply incorrect to assert that by 1869 he had fallen away. The actual situation has been clarified by Mészáros, who stated that with no Baptist fellowship to sustain him, Antal Hornung “joined the Scottish-German Reformed Affiliated Church.”³⁹⁵ This fellowship remained his church-home for his remaining years. He still maintained his relationships with his Baptist friends, despite his church affiliation. Mészáros noted that as Hornung fell into economic hardship in his

³⁹¹ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 32.

³⁹² Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 20.

³⁹³ Woyka, Wilhelmina, 78.

³⁹⁴ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 30–31.

³⁹⁵ Mészáros, “Hitvalló baptista - az elsők közül [Believing Baptist - One Among the First],” 60.

latter years, he received from time to time financial support from Woyka in Scotland. István Hornung, on the other hand, became a member of Heinrich Meyer's church.³⁹⁶

With no leadership to keep the Baptist fellowship together and moving forward, it evaporated. It is little wonder that when Heinrich Meyer arrived in 1873, seven years after the departure of Rottmayer, there was no formal Baptist existence in Budapest. Even so, it is an exaggeration to say that Meyer began with a clean slate at his arrival. The heroic work of Rottmayer and the Baptist pioneers in literature distribution and evangelism had sown seeds that would later be reaped.

³⁹⁶ Personal correspondence from Olivér Szebeni, April 4, 1998. Szebeni stated that Hornung even helped with the making of the benches for the church.

Chapter 4

The Hidden Years

Johann Rottmayer, Antal Novák, and the Baptist Pioneers

The first attempt to plant a self-sustaining Baptist mission was a failure, not for lack of effort on the part of the Baptist pioneers, but rather because of the harsh political climate they faced. Johann Rottmayer was the last of the original pioneers still at work in Hungary after the departure of Carl Scharschmidt and his wife to Bucharest in 1856. The irony of the economic crisis that beset Rottmayer in 1865 was that he had established the nucleus of a Baptist congregation around him when he had to abandon the work. If not for his forced departure from Pest just before the political climate would change for the better, it is entirely possible that Rottmayer, and not Heinrich Meyer, would be recognized as the founder of the first continually existing Baptist congregation in Hungary. Antal Hornung, who had fallen away for thirteen years before returning to the Baptist faith and joining Rottmayer in his work in Pest in 1861, was unequal to the task of taking over leadership from Rottmayer and he quickly joined the Filialgemeinde for spiritual sustenance. A more difficult fate, as shall be seen, was experienced by Hornung's original partner in Vienna, Joseph Marschall, who also ended his years in Hungary. While no discernible lasting contribution was made to the Hungarian Baptist movement by Carl Scharschmidt either, he did become a pioneer of the Baptist mission in Rumania. By contrast Johann Woyka, from his new home in Scotland, did continue to contribute to the Hungarian Baptist mission as he could.

However, Rottmayer and one of his converts, Antal Novák, through their work with Bible colportage, prepared the fields for harvest by later Baptist pioneers. This is the hidden story that stands behind the efforts of Heinrich Meyer, Mihály Kornya, Mihály Tóth, and the other early workers of the Baptist movement in Hungary. It is a background narrative that needs to be explored before one moves on the second pioneering period of the Baptist movement in Hungary. First, the story of the other pioneers will be followed through to the end. Then an exploration of the life and ministry of Antal Novák will follow. Finally, the latter years of Rottmayer and his work in Transylvania will be examined in detail.

1. The Latter Years of Scharschmidt and Marschall

First I wish to examine the later lives and very different paths taken by Carl Scharschmidt and Joseph Marschall.

1.1. Carl Scharschmidt

In 1856 Carl Scharschmidt and his wife left their home in Buda and the difficult circumstances of their work and ministry to become the first Baptists in Bucharest, the capital of Wallachia. Their target was the sizable German diaspora resident there. Since their Baptist witness was confined to the German minority, the Rumanian authorities did not interfere with Scharschmidt's efforts. Thus Scharschmidt enjoyed more freedom for his ministry in Bucharest than in Budapest. The Scharschmidts reported in 1859: "Here in Rumania full freedom of religion exists, so we have seized the opportunity to form a tract society. Eight families contribute to it; we have already printed 3000 tracts. There are around 20,000 Germans here, and there is no one who can lead them to Christ."¹ This freedom was put to good use, and in time some converts were won. This presented Scharschmidt with a problem, since he was not ordained for the ministry. He therefore wrote to Oncken: "Could not a brother be ordained who could visit us here and found a church according to God's order?"² Scharschmidt's request found favor in Hamburg, and in 1863 August Liebig was sent to Bucharest to minister to the believers there. The fellowship began with twelve baptized believers. The congregation continued to grow, and in 1865 the Magistrate of Bucharest granted the congregation the right to keep their own registers.³ Ten years after their arrival in Bucharest, the Scharschmidts moved again, this time to Jassy, the capital of Moldavia.⁴ Their work in Moldavia was of a slightly different character. Having worked hard to establish a tract society in Bucharest, it was a logical progression for Scharschmidt to become a colporteur for the British and Foreign Bible Society in Jassy.⁵ Scharschmidt worked for many years in this capacity.⁶

¹ Donat, 429.

² Donat, 429.

³ Donat, 429.

⁴ Donat, 429.

⁵ In the list of active colporteurs for Austria and the Balkans in the 1877 Bible Society Annual Report, we find under those serving in Rumania the name Scharschmidt, who had eleven years of service.

Unfortunately, the trail concerning Scharschmidt's later work ends here.

1.2. Joseph Marschall

More is known about the last years of Marschall by Hungarian Baptist historians. At some point during the Bach Period Marschall left Vienna to settle in Nagykanizsa, Hungary.⁷ Why he went there is not known. It is likely that Marschall married after his departure from Vienna. What is evident is that Marschall did not marry someone who shared his Baptist faith and lifestyle, a decision he later regretted.

The next news of Marschall comes from Lehmann's account of his trip to Hungary in 1865. After he performed the baptisms in Pest, Lehmann went on a personal mission to Nagykanizsa. "My object in this visit was to seek the restoration of a brother, excluded from the church several years ago, but now understood to be truly devoted to the Lord. I found both the brother and his wife in a hopeful condition."⁸ Since there was no formally constituted church in Austria or Hungary at that time, Marschall must have been excluded from the church in which he was baptized, Oncken's church in Hamburg. Thus it is likely Lehmann was asked to undertake this particular mission by the church in Hamburg. Why Marschall was excluded from the church is difficult to say specifically. At some point the church leadership in Hamburg believed Marschall was no longer living a life consonant with Baptist faith and practice. The impetus for the visit came from Marschall himself, because he was seeking to reestablish fellowship with his Baptist brethren. Moreover, Lehmann found that Marschall's witness to his wife was also bearing fruit. However, there is no indication that Lehmann baptized Mrs. Marschall during his visit. The seriousness of Marschall's desire to renew his fellowship can be gauged from

This corresponds exactly with the year Donat gave for his departure for Jassy, 1866.

⁶ The last list I found in which Scharschmidt was still listed in active service was the 1881 Annual Report, some fifteen years after his work in Moldavia began. There are likely later lists in which one could find Scharschmidt listed among the active colporteurs.

⁷ It is possible that Marschall left in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday raid of April 20, 1851, in which the police stormed the apartment in which the fellowship was meeting. The apartment was thoroughly searched, the participants arrested and imprisoned. Finally, those members who were not born in Vienna were expelled from the city "and with this our mission in Austria's capital city was brought forcefully to an end." Donat, 426. Marschall was not from Vienna, but from a village outside the city.

⁸ Lehmann, G.W., 400.

Lehmann's comments: "He lives separated from all Christian intercourse, not knowing of one soul converted to God...The brother whose case brought me here has an extensive business in the place; but he proposes to remove to Vienna, preferring to sacrifice his business in order to save his soul and to live amongst brethren."⁹ Of course Lehmann had just been in Vienna, where he had baptized a few people, and would have relayed news of the growing fellowship gathering around Edward Millard to Marschall. Perhaps this stimulated in Marschall a desire to return to the scene of his early ministry, to join the growing Baptist life in Vienna.

This move never materialized. However, Marschall did travel up to Hamburg in 1867 for the celebration of the opening of the Baptist chapel, where he met with his old friends and fellow Baptist pioneers Johann Rottmayer and Johann Woyka.¹⁰ Rottmayer Jr. travelled to Hamburg with his father and recalled the joy of the reunion his father had with the friends of his youth, Marschall and Woyka.¹¹ That Marschall would make such a long journey is proof of his desire to renew his fellowship with his Baptist brethren, and the joy that greeted his return demonstrates that he was received back into fellowship.

Further proof of Marschall's readmittance into Baptist fellowship is that he was listed among the "communicant Baptists" when the Vienna church was constituted in 1869.¹² His place of residence was still Nagykanizsa. However, Marschall's wife was not listed among these communicant members¹³, which suggests that whatever hope Lehmann held out for Mrs. Marschall during his visit in 1865 had not come to fruition four years later.¹⁴ When Heinrich Meyer travelled from Zagreb to Pest by train in March of 1873 to take up his new position, he stopped off in Nagykanizsa for a few hours to visit Marschall. In his diary he described his visit with Marschall and his wife as "very

⁹ Lehmann, G.W., 400.

¹⁰ A picture of Marschall, Rottmayer and Woyka graced the cover of the June 30, 1913, issue of the Hungarian Baptist magazine Békehírnök, under the title "Az első zsengék" [The First Fruits].

¹¹ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

¹² Wagner, 92.

¹³ By contrast, Rottmayer's second wife and oldest son were listed among these communicant members.

¹⁴ Heinrich Meyer was incorrect in writing that Mrs. Marschall was baptized by Lehmann during his visit to Hungary. The fact that she was not listed among the communicant members of the Vienna church suggests that she in fact was never baptized by any Baptist minister.

friendly.”¹⁵ Meyer’s view of Mrs. Marschall changed with the benefit of hindsight, and when he later mentioned this first opportunity to meet her, he commented that “she tormented her husband interminably.”¹⁶ At the root of the problem was that “Marschall’s wife became a drunkard, despite the fact that she was baptized by Lehmann.”¹⁷ In the end Marschall’s witness to his wife was unable to overcome her excessive drinking, and as time went on she likely became increasingly ensnared by alcohol.

The last years of Marschall are shrouded in obscurity. However, the story has been passed on that on his death-bed, Marschall requested an “eminent visitor” so that he could share with the caller his “tragic fate.”¹⁸ His purpose in this was so that his respected caller could share Marschall’s testimony as a “cautionary example” of what happened to him as one “unequally yoked in marriage”; the point of this testimony was that his ministry had begun with promise, but it was brought to naught by an unbelieving wife who displayed no understanding of self-control.¹⁹ The identity of the visitor and the date of Marschall’s death has been lost in the transmission of the account.

2. Johann Woyka’s Later Life and Continuing Involvement in the Hungarian Baptist Mission

When Johann Woyka left Hungary in September of 1849, he would never return to his homeland except for brief visits. He left Pest to return to Hamburg and to his

¹⁵ Meyer, Heinrich. Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893]. Diary. Ed. F. Gusztáv Szabadi. Budapest: Historical Collection of the Baptist Archives, no date. 5.

¹⁶ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 32.

¹⁷ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 28. The substance of Meyer’s assertion was correct, but again he was mistaken in his assertion that Lehmann had baptized Mrs. Marschall. Further proof that Meyer’s memory was faulty at this point was that he stated that Hornung and Scharschmidt lived in Nagykanizsa at this time. The Hornung brothers lived in Budapest, while Scharschmidt was a colporteur in Moldavia.

¹⁸ Mészáros, Kálmán. A magyarországi baptista egyház vázlatos története [A Brief History of the Hungarian Baptist Church]. A Baptista Theologiai Szeminárium Egyháztörténeti Tanszékének Jegyzetei [Lecture-notes for the Church History Department of the Baptist Theological Seminary]. Budapest: Privately published, 1985. 29.

¹⁹ As if to emphasize the point, Mészáros editorialized, “Young believers, do not marry unbelievers!” Mészáros, A magyarországi baptista egyház vázlatos története [A Brief History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 29.

church home there. Shortly after his arrival in Hamburg, his engagement to Wilhelmine Elvin on October 16, 1849, was noted in the Hamburg *Taufbuch*.²⁰ The wedding was on June 12, 1850, with J.G. Oncken presiding. Ms. Elvin was the daughter of Dr. J. Elvin, a medical missionary to the Jews of Hamburg sent by the Scottish Free Church. Dr. Elvin was also a friend and helper to Oncken in the founding of the Sunday School movement.²¹ This connection between Oncken and Dr. Elvin explains how Woyka came to marry Wilhelmine. In September of 1850 Woyka and his wife were accompanied back to Glasgow by her parents, who had decided to give up their commission to return home.²² Woyka wasted no time in joining himself to a Baptist fellowship in Glasgow. His name was entered into the membership registry of the John Street Baptist Church in 1850 (entry number 1824); he eventually was in a leadership position in this church.²³

In addition to his ministry in the John Street Baptist Church, Woyka also proved to be a successful entrepreneur. In 1854 he founded John Woyka & Co. Ltd. The genesis of the company and its early history was described in a pamphlet the company put out for its 125th anniversary in 1979, “The original John Woyka started humbly in Main Street, Gorbals working in the cabinet making trade. Soon the emphasis was on supplying cabinet makers’ needs, and this developed into timber importation. The founder was joined by his two sons, Gustav E. Woyka and John W. Woyka, in the 1870’s and from then the company developed rapidly.”²⁴ The twin concerns of ministry and business kept Woyka very busy.

However, Woyka never forgot his homeland and kept in touch with his Baptist friends. A few examples of this have already been mentioned. For example, Woyka attended the opening of the Baptist chapel in Hamburg in 1867, where he was reunited

²⁰ We do not know if Woyka had met Ms. Elvin during his previous residency in Hamburg, or if they only met after his arrival back in the city in 1849.

²¹ Mészáros, “A ‘Vojka-kutatás’ további eredményei [The Further Results of Woyka Research],” 293.

²² Mészáros, “A ‘Vojka-kutatás’ további eredményei [The Further Results of Woyka Research],” 292–93.

²³ Mészáros wrote of his research in Glasgow, “He would be ordained an elder of this congregation in 1855, and eventually an assistant pastor.” Mészáros, “A ‘Vojka-kutatás’ további eredményei [The Further Results of Woyka Research],” 293. In Woyka’s 1894 pamphlet to raise support for the Hungarian Baptist mission, he describes himself as a “Deacon in John Street Baptist Church” Woyka, John, 8..

²⁴ John Woyka & Co. Ltd. “John Woyka & Co. Ltd. 1854–1979.” [Glasgow]: Privately printed, 1979. 1.

with his former companions in ministry Rottmayer and Marschall. Yet beyond a continuing attachment to old friends was a desire to see the Baptist message planted in his homeland. This found expression through an informal society he organized to support the Baptist mission in Hungary. This society, the Hungarian Mission Support Group, gained notice in Hungary for the funds it funneled to Heinrich Meyer for the building of the Wesselényi Street chapel, Budapest's first Baptist church building, and the mission in Pécs.²⁵ In conjunction with a Baptist associate in Glasgow, David Lockhart, Woyka sought subscribers for his society from among the Scottish Baptists, and then transferred the funds raised to Meyer to be disbursed as he saw the need.²⁶ In his 1894 pamphlet, A Voice From Hungary, Woyka noted: "Christian friends in Scotland, hearing of the good work of Mr. Meyer was engaged in, have also strengthened his hands with annual contributions for the last twelve years."²⁷ This would place the starting date of Woyka's efforts on Meyer's behalf at some time in 1882.

These efforts gave rise to an ongoing correspondence between Woyka and Meyer. Eight letters from Woyka to Meyer have been preserved in Hungary dating from May of 1883 to December of 1894.²⁸ Unfortunately, no German language letters or documents relating to Woyka now remain in the Woyka family possession in Scotland, they were destroyed during World War II by family members because they feared reprisals should they have been discovered.²⁹ What remains are the English pamphlets.

²⁵ Mészáros, "A 'Vojka-kutatás' további eredményei [The Further Results of Woyka Research]," 294.

²⁶ Thus Woyka's 1894 pamphlet concluded, "Any whose heart the Lord may move to help Mr. Meyer and coadjutors in carrying on this great work, may have an opportunity of doing so by sending contributions to the writer of this article..., or to David Lockhart." Woyka, John, 8.

²⁷ Woyka, John, 4.

²⁸ The letters are in the Dr. Imre Somogyi Collection, presently in the possession of Dr. Kálmán Mészáros. These letters were translated into Hungarian by Gusztáv F. Szabadi. I obtained a typed copy of the March 1, 1893 letter from Woyka to Meyer from the Heinrich Meyer Collection of the Baptist Archives in Budapest. This letter was based upon Szabadi's translation, prepared by Gyula Fejér on April 10, 1979. Unfortunately, I found that when I compared this letter with the excerpts of the letter cited by Mészáros in his 1980 article on Woyka, these latter excerpts far exceeded the length of the example prepared by Fejér which I had in my possession. I do not know how to account for this. Since I have been unable to obtain photocopies of the original German letters, I have been very circumspect in my use of the excerpts provided by Mészáros in his 1980 article. Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 296–97.

²⁹ Mészáros, "A 'Vojka-kutatás' további eredményei [The Further Results of Woyka Research]," 294.

Naturally much of Woyka's correspondence with Meyer was filled with exhortation, consolation, and pastoral advice. Moreover, it is apparent from the context of the letters that Woyka was often responding to news or complaints from Meyer. For example, in a March 1, 1893, letter Woyka wrote: "I received your kind letter, and I am very sorry that you bear such a heavy burden on your shoulders which give rise to such sufferings."³⁰ He counseled Meyer that he was working too hard, and this physical exhaustion would lead to spiritual exhaustion. He also knew of the Promontor incident³¹ and inquired after Mrs. Meyer's condition.³² It also appears that Woyka's knowledge of the Baptist mission in Hungary was filtered through Meyer's perspective, and as a result his letters mirror Meyer's prejudices. For example, Woyka expressed his sorrow in a letter written December 26, 1893, that the two seminarians who returned from Hamburg, Balogh and Udvarnoki, did not submit to Meyer's authority, but broke with him to pursue autonomous ministries.³³ In a subsequent letter dated June 9, 1894, after he had received a copy of the minutes of the May 11, 1894, *Landes-Konferenz* of Hungarian Baptists held in Budapest, he advised Meyer not to expect everyone to respect and honor his leadership and work on behalf of the Baptist mission in Hungary. He must have learned from Meyer that his leadership was called into question at the conference, so he counselled Meyer that his only goal should be to have a clear conscience before God and man, so that he could be at peace when mistakes in his work were pointed out.³⁴ One wonders that if Woyka had remained in Hungary, or if had close contacts with the Magyar Baptists as did Rottmayer, perhaps his opinions would not have mirrored Meyer's so closely. Like his

³⁰ My translation of the letter prepared by Gyula Fejér in the Heinrich Meyer Collection of the Baptist Archives in Budapest.

³¹ In Promontor, modern Budafok, Meyer and his wife met with stiff opposition to their evangelistic meetings from the fiercely Catholic population, and on one occasion they were stoned on the street and barely escaped with their lives.

³² Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 296. This incident was also described in Woyka's 1894 pamphlet, in which he concluded, "Days of rest and hiding had to pass before they could again appear in public." Woyka, John, 5.

³³ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 33.

³⁴ I have a photocopy of the conference report, which reveals that after some discussion, Meyer's leadership was finally reaffirmed with some modifications. In his pamphlet Woyka mentioned this conference and the division of Hungary into mission districts, leaving Meyer to focus on his work in Budapest. He remained in everyone's perception, though, a first among equals. Woyka wrote that Meyer "feels greatly rewarded for the self-sacrifice which was required to cope with the many difficulties and obstructions which he met with at the beginning." Woyka, John, 7.

fellow pioneer Rottmayer, maybe he would have been more sympathetic to the Hungarians' concerns.

A good deal of Woyka's correspondence with Meyer concerned his support-raising efforts on behalf of the Hungarian Baptist mission. Often they discussed what Woyka needed from Meyer to aid his fund-raising endeavors. Early on in his support-raising work, Woyka reminded Meyer in an 1883 letter that it was important to acknowledge receipt of moneys and to keep him and his subscribers informed of the mission's progress.³⁵ After the opening of the Wesselényi Street chapel in 1887, Woyka asked in a December 27, 1888, letter for reports of conversions to encourage those who had contributed for its construction.³⁶ Finally, in a letter dated March 24, 1894, Woyka expressed his displeasure that Meyer had not bothered to confirm the receipt of the last dispatch of money and wondered if this was an expression of the lack of regard in which Meyer held his efforts; he suggested that Meyer find a secretary to help him with his correspondence.³⁷ On at least two occasions Woyka and Meyer had the opportunity to spend time together.³⁸ The first came in 1884 when Meyer travelled to Scotland. In the spring of that year Meyer was in Hamburg for the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Baptist mission in Germany. While there he spoke of his plans for the construction of a chapel in Budapest. As he describes it, "Brother Braun encouraged me that I should visit brother Woyka in Scotland, because he was of Hungarian origin. His wife was the director of the family, and as such she fulfilled a more important role than her husband. That is to say, she did not have a friendly disposition towards brother Braun and nearly became indignant about the pretext on which he sent me to Scotland. After all this, I only spent two days there and received very little money."³⁹ Setting aside for the moment the question of Meyer's poor impression of Mrs. Woyka, it is apparent that he was not particularly appreciative of Woyka's exertions on his behalf because of the small amount of money raised during this visit. He must not have voiced his displeasure very openly,

³⁵ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 295–96.

³⁶ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 296.

³⁷ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 296.

³⁸ This does not include the opening of the chapel in Hamburg in 1867, at which both were present. This was before Meyer began his Hungarian mission.

³⁹ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 67.

because Woyka's letter of December 27, 1888, shows that he continued to raise funds for the construction of the chapel even after the work was completed.

The second opportunity came when Woyka returned to his homeland in 1890 with his wife and two daughters.⁴⁰ Kristóf Domokos suggested that Woyka had returned to his home on a few occasions, and that his last visit in 1890 was motivated by the desire to confirm personally the news that a Baptist church had been planted in his home city of Pécs.⁴¹ After their arrival by ship in Budapest on August 19th, where they were met by Meyer, the family proceeded on to Woyka's relatives in Rácváros, next to Pécs.⁴² Meyer travelled down on September 11th to visit Woyka and his relatives in Rácváros, and then spent the next day in Pécs.⁴³ Although Meyer did not specifically record where he stayed in Pécs, it is likely that Meyer was hosted in the home of the Eilinsfeld sisters on Anna Street 18, who formed the nucleus of the church in Pécs and served as its hosts.⁴⁴ Woyka undoubtedly availed himself of the opportunity to engage in ministry in the fellowship gathered in the Eilinsfeld home, and he formed a warm friendship with the Eilinsfeld sisters and the believers who comprised the Baptist church there. In a letter to Meyer dated December 31, 1894, the last known letter Woyka wrote to him before his death, he mentions his correspondence with Emelia Eilinsfeld about the progress of the church in Pécs.⁴⁵ He told Meyer that he would send money for the harmonium that the church requested to aid in the worship at their gatherings, and asked Meyer to arrange for its purchase; Woyka went on to thank Meyer for his labor of love on behalf of his home city. The harmonium was delivered to the church in Pécs, but unfortunately it arrived after

⁴⁰ It appears his sons remained in Scotland to run the family business.

⁴¹ Domokos, Kristóf. "Vojka János." Emléklapok. Jubileumi füzetek 2. Ed. Imre Somogyi. Budapest: Magvető, 1948. 27.

⁴² Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 58.

⁴³ Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 58.

⁴⁴ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 298.

⁴⁵ Mészáros records that Woyka wrote, "Not long ago I received a letter from sister Emilia Eilinsfeld in which she reported about the work in Pécs, that the brother [Heinrich Meyer] travels there and holds great meetings at which around 1000 people take place. Blessed be the Lord for this. The sister asked us if we could aid them in acquiring a harmonium, because without it the singing goes with difficulty. We promised we would help, because we have had such experiences and indeed we hold this to be important" Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 298:.

Woyka's death in April of 1895. Meyer had a little tablet made that was attached to the harmonium which read, "Zum andenken von Geschwister Johann und Wilhelmine Woyka in Schottland 1898."⁴⁶

By Saturday, September 20th, the Woyka family had returned to Budapest, and Johann attended a service at the Wesselényi Street chapel that day. However, his wife and two daughters did not attend because, as Meyer remarked of Mrs. Woyka in his diary, "She wanted to be free."⁴⁷ On Sunday, September 21, Woyka spoke at the church for which he had labored so long to raise construction funds. The next day Meyer escorted the Woyka family to the train station for their trip back to Scotland.

Meyer's negative comments about Mrs. Woyka left a rather skewed impression of her to later Hungarian Baptists that was not corrected until the recent research of Kálmán Mészáros in Scotland. Concerning Meyer's remark that Mrs. Woyka was the "director" of the family, Mészáros argues that given Woyka's work in his business and his ministry in the John Street Baptist Church, it is understandable that Mrs. Woyka was called upon to take greater responsibility in the home.⁴⁸ As for why Mrs. Woyka did not attend the church gathering on Saturday, an omission that offended Meyer, Mészáros reasons that all of her husband's time was spent with Meyer in discussions or ministry, leaving other affairs to her care. Since their time in Budapest was so brief, and unlike her husband who had lived in Budapest for a time, Mrs. Woyka and her daughters had not had the opportunity to see the city, it should not be a great surprise as to why she wanted some free time.⁴⁹

During the last year of his life, Woyka redoubled his efforts to raise money for the Hungarian Baptist mission. In addition to the arrangements he made with Meyer to provide a harmonium for the church in Pécs, he published an eight page pamphlet in 1894 entitled A Voice from Hungary, to encourage contributions to the mission.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁶ Translated the tablet reads, "In memory of Johann and Wilhelmine Woyka in Scotland, 1898." Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 298. The harmonium is still in the possession of the Pécs Baptist Church.

⁴⁷ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 298.

⁴⁸ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 295.

⁴⁹ Mészáros, "Vojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 295.

⁵⁰ The pamphlet was subtitled "A Short Account of Mission Work Carried on by the Baptists in Hungary from the year 1846 to 1894, by John Woyka, Glasgow." The last date mentioned in the pamphlet is the March 1894 conference previously discussed. We know from Woyka's letter to Heinrich Meyer,

pamphlet gives a brief overview of the pioneering work he and his compatriots attempted, but the primary focus is on the work of Heinrich Meyer.⁵¹ Two reasons were given as motivation for the renewed appeal contained in the pamphlet. The first was that despite the great progress of the Baptist mission in Hungary, there was still much more work to be done. Writing from a decidedly evangelical point of view, Woyka decried the spiritual condition of the great mass of Hungary's millions:

Their condition is most deplorable. The religion in which they are brought up and matured, while containing some items of truth from the Word of God, yet is so overlaid with error, idolatry, superstition, and the doctrines and commandments of men as to degenerate into a mere system of formalism and will worship, "after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Their teachers are "blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." What an opportunity is thus presented to the people of God in this highly favored land of ours, of sending the gospel to those poor benighted Hungarians. The cry of those who are laboring there under many difficulties and discouragements is the old Macedonian one, "Come over (into Hungary) and help us."⁵²

Contained within this polemic are many themes Protestants have traditionally raised in protest of Roman Catholicism, although Woyka also had similar criticisms for Hungarian Protestantism.⁵³

dated June 9, 1894, that he received a letter from Meyer, dated May 11 of that year, which included a report of the March *Landes-Konferenz*, the same conference Woyka mentioned in the pamphlet. This places the publication of this pamphlet in the second half of 1894.

⁵¹ Woyka summarized, "From all that has been related of the Baptist Mission in Hungary it is evident that God's smile and approval have rested on the feeble undertaking of its first missionary, Mr. Meyer, to an extent seldom witnessed in modern times." Woyka, John, 7. It is striking that Woyka, who described himself as one of the original "converts" to work in Hungary in the pamphlet, nevertheless called Meyer the "first missionary" in Hungary. If so, what then were Woyka, Scharschmidt and Rottmayer, not to mention Lorders, Oncken and Kruse? The only other person to be mentioned by name in the pamphlet besides Meyer was Kornya, to whom Woyka devoted a paragraph.

⁵² Woyka, John, 7.

⁵³ At the beginning of the pamphlet Woyka described the religious situation in Hungary as follows: "The state church of Hungary is the Roman Catholic, and although there are some Protestant Churches, to be found mainly in the district of Transylvania, they are neither lively nor aggressive, and can be distinguished only by their simpler form of worship, their lives are being lived on the same moral (or immoral) plane as their Roman Catholic neighbors... for the Protestants-ministers and people alike-are freely denying the divinity of our Lord and Saviour, and the Roman Catholics are fast drifting into infidelity itself." Woyka, John, 1.

Apart from the Macedonian call, recent political events also motivated the call for help. After noting that the persecution faced by the Baptists in times past had largely subsided, Woyka noted the progress made by those political forces in Hungary seeking “religious equality” with a measure of hopefulness.⁵⁴ Woyka, who had suffered so much at the hand of the priests and authorities during his time of ministry in Hungary, believed there was a beneficial impact from the changing dynamic of church-state relations to be tapped. “A golden opportunity is thus presented of going in and possessing the land, and winning Hungary for Christ.”⁵⁵ This political opening spurred Woyka to action; he would not live to see how the new political freedoms would bring division to the Baptist movement in his homeland.

Woyka died on April 29, 1895. He was survived by his wife, two sons and three daughters. Mrs. Woyka stated after her husband’s death: “His life was meek and mild.”⁵⁶ He had also proven himself to be a valuable friend to the Hungarian Baptist mission. Meyer reported after Woyka’s death that he had “sent 700-800 florins every year.”⁵⁷ While not tremendous, neither was it a very modest sum.⁵⁸

The true character of Mrs. Woyka and her commitment to what was important to her husband can be demonstrated by the fact that after her husband’s death, she continued to support Baptists in Hungary. Mészáros brought to light a pamphlet put out by Mrs. Woyka in October of 1902 with the help of her husband’s friend and partner, David Lockhart. Entitled The Open Door in Hungary, it was a follow-up appeal to subscribers who had contributed to help defray the cost of the construction of a chapel for the Baptist congregation in Bonyhád. This church was a daughter of the church in Pécs.⁵⁹ Its pastor

⁵⁴ It must be remembered that Woyka was writing at the height of the so-called Hungarian *Kulturkampf*, when anticlerical legislation was being forced through parliament.

⁵⁵ Woyka, John, 8.

⁵⁶ Domokos, 27.

⁵⁷ Domokos, 27.

⁵⁸ By way of comparison, when Antal Novák and his wife became agents of the BFBS in 1865, they earned 35 and 30 florins a month respectively, for a combined yearly salary of 780 florins a year. This was a modest, but certainly livable wage. Bányai, Jenő. “Novák Antal.” Pt. 1. Békehírnök XII (LXII).1 (Jan. 1 1968): 5.

⁵⁹ In 1893 thirty people were baptized in the Pécs church, thirteen of whom were from Bonyhád. These people formed the core of the new church. Mészáros, “A ‘Woyka-kutatás’ további eredményei [The Further Results of Woyka Research],” 295.

was Johann Gromen⁶⁰, and Gromen's wife was Emilia Eilinsfeld. This was the same woman who was a leading figure in the church in Pécs, and had become a friend of the Woyka's when they visited Pécs in 1890. Mrs. Woyka wrote of her, "She is, indeed, a true helpmate, and has meetings amongst the women there, by whom her labors are much appreciated. We met her at such a meeting in Fünfkirchen reading a translation of C.H. Spurgeon's Sermons to women, to which they listened with rapt attention."⁶¹ This explains why Mrs. Woyka was so happy to offer her help to the financially burdened church. The main goal of the appeal was to raise sufficient funds to pay off the debt incurred from the construction of the church. Yet the hope was also expressed that even more could be raised to help support Gromen and his family, who "has to eke out a living with a salary of £60 per year, provided by the members of the Church, and he feels it rather difficult to serve all sufficiently."⁶² Any additional monies would go towards Scripture distribution. At the end of the pamphlet a "List of Subscriptions" is provided of previous benefactors. Among the most generous was Mrs. Woyka herself, followed shortly thereafter by Mr. G.E. Woyka and Mr. J.W. Woyka, her two sons.⁶³ In this manner Woyka's love for what he once described in a letter to Heinrich Meyer as "my beloved Hungarian homeland" survived even his death.⁶⁴

3. Antal Novák: Pioneer of the Magyar Baptist Mission

Among the early Baptist pioneers, Antal Novák has been described as a "great unknown".⁶⁵ Perhaps that is because he sowed the seeds that others, particularly Heinrich Meyer, reaped. Yet for the Magyar Baptist mission, Novák is a figure of seminal importance. He has also been described as a bridge figure. He was a bridge between

⁶⁰ Gromen will be introduced during the discussion of Rottmayer's work in Kolozsvár. He was converted by Rottmayer and became a Bible Society colporteur attached to the Kolozsvár depot. He was baptized by Heinrich Meyer.

⁶¹ Woyka, Wilhelmine. "The Open Door in Hungary." Glasgow: Privately printed, 1902. 2.

⁶² Woyka, Wilhelmine, 2.

⁶³ We do not know the married names of her three daughters, but it is not unlikely that some of them were also represented among the subscribers.

⁶⁴ Mészáros, "Wojka János élete és munkássága [The Life and Work of Johann Woyka]," 297.

⁶⁵ Szigeti, Jenő. "Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák's Death]." *Theologiai Szemle* 21.1-2 (1978): 54.

Rottmayer's work in Pest and that of Meyer. More importantly, he was a bridge between the German-oriented mission of Meyer centered in Pest, which enjoyed a measure of success among the German petty bourgeoisie, and the "flowering people's congregations" of the last half of the nineteenth century among the Hungarians of the Alföld, or Great Hungarian Plain.⁶⁶ As Szigeti put it: "This was the Baptist mission's first great change of fortune. Perhaps in Antal Novák was it first brought to consciousness that these Protestant biblical fellowships, who were the faithful guardians of the puritan traditions, represented the fertile soil of the Baptist mission."⁶⁷

According to the *Mitglieder-Register* of Heinrich Meyer, Antal Novák was born into a Catholic family on January 17, 1828, in Cilli in Austrian Steiermark (modern Celje in Slovenia).⁶⁸ The region was a mixture of Slovenian, German, and Magyar inhabitants. This is the probable explanation of Novák's facility with languages. He apprenticed as a tailor, and continued in this profession until his mid-thirties.

When he left Celje or came to Pest exactly is not known. It was assumed for a time that Novák did not come into contact with Rottmayer until the 1860's, shortly before he became a colporteur for the British and Foreign Bible Society. However, that misconception has been corrected by Rottmayer's 1884 article in Der Wahrheitszeuge. In it he reminisced: "In the meetings which the brothers Oncken and Lorders held, came a brother Novák, who was later baptized in Vienna and worked very zealously for years in Hungary as a colporteur."⁶⁹ This would place Novák in Pest by at least the middle of 1848. Attila Csopják, who likely gained some of his knowledge of Novák from Rottmayer⁷⁰, did not mention this fact. What he did describe was a close relationship between Novák and Rottmayer. "He was in contact with Rottmayer, he received literature from him and even work once or twice."⁷¹ In the light of Rottmayer's article, this sharing of literature with Novák must have begun during the early phase of the Baptist work

⁶⁶ Szigeti, "Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák's Death]," 54.

⁶⁷ Szigeti, "Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák's Death]," 54.

⁶⁸ Bányai, "Novák Antal," 4.

⁶⁹ Rottmayer, Johann, "Weiteres über Ungarn," 171.

⁷⁰ Towards the end of Rottmayer's life, Attila Csopják became his son-in-law, and no doubt asked many questions about the early history of the Baptist movement in Hungary.

⁷¹ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 10.

between 1847-1848. Szigeti, unaware of this article, reflected the common judgment of how to judge Csopják's account: "He came into contact with Rottmayer in Pest during the 1860's and visited Rottmayer at his Gyöngytyúk Street house."⁷² Novák undoubtedly did visit Rottmayer at his house, because they enjoyed a friendship. Why? Csopják stated, "Rottmayer lead Novák to a knowledge of the faith."⁷³ This formed the basis for their friendship. While Csopják reported the substance of Novák's conversion, he did not give the date when it occurred. If Novák came to faith during the time he was attending the meetings held by Oncken and Lorders in Rottmayer's home, it occurred when Novák was still a young man around twenty years of age.

What is admittedly odd about Rottmayer's witness to Novák was that while it resulted in the latter's conversion experience, it did not result in Novák being baptized. Rather Novák turned from the familial inheritance of his Catholicism and attached himself to the center of evangelical Protestantism in Pest, the Scottish Mission. If one assumes an early date for Novák's conversion, he was drawn to the Scottish Mission during the time when the Baptist's were cooperating with Smith and Wingate in literature distribution. Rottmayer noted that "brother Novák" attended the meetings held by Oncken and Lorders, but did not submit to the ordinance of baptism until later in Vienna. The inference appears to be that while Novák underwent an evangelical conversion experience during this time, he did not become a Baptist until later. Evidence of Novák's attachment to the evangelical work of the Scottish Mission comes later from the Register of the Filialgemeinde. In the Register can be found the marriage of Novák to Catherine Ax of Pozsony on August 30, 1864.⁷⁴ This places Novák as a member of the Filialgemeinde, which of course was founded under the leadership of Adrian van Andel of the Scottish Mission. It is interesting to note that while Novák apparently had his conversion experience at an early age, he did not marry until he was 36 years old. Perhaps the explanation for marrying at such a late age was that it took some time before he found a potential life-mate of similar faith.

⁷² Szigeti, "Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák's Death]," 54.

⁷³ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 11.

⁷⁴ Szigeti attributes the discovery of this valuable piece of information to Bányai, and then cites the entry in footnote six of his study, "Anton Novak aus Cilli in Steiermark, Schneider, und Susanne Catherine Ax aus Pressburg. Wohnung Josephgasse 38. Zeugen Her. Eduard Neuman, Her. Herbst." Szigeti, "Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák's Death]," 56.

The crisis that changed the course of Novák's life came shortly after his marriage in 1865. The event is described by Csopják as follows:

At one point, however, he ran out of work, he had no revenue coming in, and he had to look for some kind of income if he did not want to go hungry. It came into his head then that they offered bibles for sale very cheaply. He thought to himself, "I'll buy these kind of books, sell them for more, and from this I'll have something to live on." And that is what he did. He went to the bible depot, bought a bible and sold it for much more in the city. After a few days he once again made a purchase, but now he bought more and sold them all one after another. These purchases continued in such a manner until his coming into the bible depot attracted their attention and they asked, "What are you doing with all these bibles?" "I sell them."
 "Well then there is another way to do this. Become our agent and then you could spread the holy books in a much wider area."⁷⁵

Novák's initiative in selling Christian literature resulted in a new career as a colporteur for the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was certainly an unusual path to the position of a Bible Society agent.

The unusual circumstances surrounding Novák's hire by the Bible Society, and particularly the manner in which Csopják described these events, have lead subsequent Hungarian Baptist historians to a false conclusion. After the above cited description, Csopják continued:

Rottmayer lead Novák into a knowledge of the faith. Afterwards the result of their conversations was that Novák converted and as a converted person he carried bibles from city to city, especially in the *Tiszántúl*.⁷⁶

This has been interpreted by some to indicate that Rottmayer lead Novák to the Baptist faith subsequent to his becoming a colporteur.⁷⁷ It is certainly a plausible interpretation of

⁷⁵ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 10–11.

⁷⁶ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 11. The *Tiszántúl* is a geographic term that refers to the Hungarian region to the east of the Tisza river. Novák's primary area of activity was the Hungarian Alföld to the east of the Tisza populated by the Magyar Reformed peasantry.

⁷⁷ For example, before Bányai became aware of Rottmayer's 1884 article which pushed back the previously assumed date of the beginning of their friendship from 1865 to 1848, he wrote, "Certainly few colporteurs began their calling this way... But one day he looked into that book with which he sought his daily bread. János Rottmayer lead him into a deeper understanding of the holy scriptures. Their personal relationship became steadily deeper. Novák now no longer sought Rottmayer out of a narrow material interest, but from a spiritual interest." Bányai, "Novák Antal," 4–5.

Csopják's narrative, but one may also attribute this impression to Csopják's compression of the narrative to make explicit the link between Rottmayer's witness to Novák and the latter's eventual service as a colporteur. How then did Novák come up with the idea of selling bibles? First, it is necessary to remember that Novák likely came into contact with Rottmayer and the Baptist company in Pest through their literature distribution work. Early on following his conversion he had seen the work of the Baptists and the Jewish missionaries of the Scottish Mission in colportage. Second, as a member of the Filialgemeinde, he was no doubt aware of the existence of the various British societies active in bible and tract work in Pest. Thus Novák's solution to his financial plight was not something completely out of character from his life or experiences.

What is especially noteworthy about this turn of events is that Novák was followed by his wife into this new calling. Bányai cited the memoirs of F. Gusztáv Szabadi:

Antal Novák entered into the service of the Bible Society on May 26, 1865, his wife though entered in the same year on July 20. He [was brought on] for a 35, she for a 30 florin a month salary. Since women were used by the Society only in the overseas territories ... the admission and employment of Novák's wife was accounted a singular distinction. Both of them were well suited to bible colportage.⁷⁸

This was a partnership in ministry that would continue until the end of their lives. It also entailed a measure of sacrifice, for when they changed their area of activity from Pest to the Tiszántúl in 1866 or 1867, Szigeti noted that they sold their home in Pest and left their children behind.⁷⁹

Their new home was in Gyoma. How was it that the Nováks were sent to Gyoma? In the Minutes for November of 1867 in the Békés-Bánáti Reformed Church-District, it is reported that the Senior Ábel Hajnal wrote to Edward Millard of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Vienna to request the Society's help in sending an itinerant pastor "who

⁷⁸ Bányai, "Novák Antal," 5.

⁷⁹ Szigeti, "Novák Antal halálának centennáriumá [The Centenary of Antal Novák's Death]," 54. This was mentioned only in passing, it is possible that the children were left behind until the couple was settled into their new base of operations. The couple had only been married approximately three years before they moved, so they likely had two children at the most who were still very young. After the death of Rottmayer's first wife he employed a nanny to care for his children. If the Novák's children were eventually rejoined with their parents, a similar arrangement was no doubt used. Yet it is also possible that they arranged for the permanent care of their children in Pest. Novák died at an early age at the end of 1877, followed by his wife 14 months later. Any children of theirs would have still been rather young, not quite teenagers, so in any case they would have needed care from others. It remains an open question.

could serve and preach a living Christianity to the reformed faithful scattered in the Bánát.”⁸⁰ Millard begged off, Hajnal noted, because the “Bible Society’s sole appointed goal was the distribution of the holy Bible for an inexpensive price,” and thus they could not accept the proposed subvention.⁸¹ Millard suggested another British society for this purpose, but he did prove more favorably disposed to sending a colporteur to the region. Thus the Nováks moved to Gyoma. It is interesting to note that Hajnal was moved to write Millard on the recommendation of Imre Révész.⁸² This new territory for Novák was a center of the peasant guardians of puritan traditions in Hungary. Unsatisfied with what they saw as the empty rationalism of their clergy and worship services, they gathered together in small home fellowships to study the Bible and other Christian literature.⁸³ Novák was sent to this promising field to seek out and provide literature and encouragement to the spiritually hungry people of the Alföld.⁸⁴ This was not a problem as long as Novák was merely a Baptist sympathizer and not yet “sectarian”. It became problematic when he himself became a Baptist.⁸⁵

For his first five years as a colporteur, Novák was Protestant and evangelical, but not a Baptist. The turning point may well have been a meeting for the Bible Society colporteurs in Pest called by Edward Millard, their agent for Austria-Hungary. The meeting was held in November 1869, shortly before Millard became the pastor of the Baptist fellowship which met in his Vienna home, the first Baptist church to be established in Austria-Hungary. Millard had two goals in going to Pest. The first was to go to the Interior Ministry to apply for the licenses needed for the colporteurs, and

⁸⁰ Szigeti, Jenő. “Egy baptista bibliaárus: Novák Antal [A Baptist Bible Colporteur: Antal Novák].” *És emlékezzél meg az útról..* [“And you shall remember all the way..”]. Budapest: Szabadegyházak Tanácsa, 1981. 64.

⁸¹ Szigeti, “Egy baptista bibliaárus: Novák Antal [A Baptist Bible Colporteur: Antal Novák],” 64.

⁸² Szigeti, “Egy baptista bibliaárus: Novák Antal [A Baptist Bible Colporteur: Antal Novák],” 64.

⁸³ Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 54.

⁸⁴ Novák sought to build a positive relationship with the Reformed Church in his new hometown through donating bibles to the Gyoma church, a gift recorded in the presbytery’s register in August of 1868. Szigeti commented that “though this was a common gesture of courtesy in the practice of the Bible Society, it still attests to the existence of a normal relationship.” Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 55.

⁸⁵ Szigeti argued the significance of Novák’s work among these people as follows: “Without these people the popular foundation of the free church mission would have been lost.” Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 54.

Millard was happy to report: “In Hungary our position, so far as colportage is concerned, is now perfectly satisfactory.”⁸⁶ The second was to meet with the colporteurs. “In November, then, I had my first general conference with the colporteurs connected with the Pest depôt; and I am sure nobody could be more surprised or more delighted than myself, to behold what only a short time ago would have been thought just impossible.”⁸⁷ Not everyone viewed the work of the Bible Society colporteurs with approval. In the pages of the Protestans Egyházi és Iskolai Lap (Protestant Church and School Paper), it was reported that a certain Roman Catholic priest had denounced the colporteurs as “antichrists”.⁸⁸ Millard sought to remind the colporteurs of the policy of the Bible Society recorded in the preface to his report in the April, 1870, Monthly Reporter: “all persons employed on its behalf will be strictly enjoined to conform to the simple and exclusive object of circulating the Holy Scriptures without note or comment.”⁸⁹ This article in the Monthly Reporter was promptly cited in PEIL.⁹⁰ It is likely that at this same meeting Millard shared his Baptist convictions with the Nováks, and perhaps this was the difference that brought a change of conscience in them. It should also be remembered that as the Kolozsvár depositary, Johann Rottmayer was also present at this conference. He possibly added his voice to that of Millard in regard to the Biblical ordinance of believer’s baptism.

By April of 1870, the Nováks were in Vienna. On April 30, 1870, they were baptized by Edward Benziger, a leader in the Baptist church.⁹¹ They also joined the Vienna church as communicant members at this time.⁹² This does not fit with the testimony offered by Heinrich Meyer. Meyer wrote that he first met Novák and his wife in Budapest in 1875 at a Bible Society conference, approximately a year after they were baptized in Vienna. He thus places their baptism in 1874, rather than in 1870. Moreover,

⁸⁶ Millard, Edward. Report to the Committee. Monthly Reporter of the British and Foreign Bible Society IX.11 (Apr. 1 1870): 107.

⁸⁷ Millard, 107.

⁸⁸ Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 55.

⁸⁹ Millard, 106.

⁹⁰ Külömfelék. Protestans Egyházi És Iskolai Lap 13.18 (May 8 1870): 534.

⁹¹ Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 55.

⁹² Wagner, 92.

Meyer's description of their baptism hardly seems plausible. "Brother Novák did not know the Baptists. He was baptized in Vienna and in this way he became acquainted with Baptist believers."⁹³ The effect of this testimony is to deny the connection of Novák to the work of Rottmayer in Pest. Bányai responded, "However, if the Nováks had not known the Baptists previously - or the small Pest-Buda fellowship lead by Rottmayer... - then they could not in turn have come to their later baptism in Vienna!"⁹⁴ Meyer's memory on this point was either the result of ignorance of the facts or was self-serving to minimize the impact of Rottmayer's work. Novák was a Baptist sympathizer because of his friendship with Rottmayer. While he lived in Pest he was content with his association with the Scottish Mission and his membership in the Filialgemeinde, the centers of evangelical renewal in the city. However, it appears that once Novák and his wife began their work outside of Pest, and experienced the poor condition of the Protestant churches in the Tiszántúl and the hunger of the peasant guardians of the puritan traditions for a more biblical and evangelical ministry, they gradually lost their confidence in the received Protestant confessions. The emphasis of the Baptists upon an evangelical ministry and a believers' church grew increasingly attractive. This is the likely context in which the 1870 Bible Society conference in Pest should be placed, at which Millard and Rottmayer were able to share their Baptist convictions with the Nováks. Once the Nováks became convinced of the need for believer's baptism, and the role it played in Baptist congregational polity and in ministry, they decided to submit themselves to the ordinance.

The 1869 conference called by Millard revealed the tension that existed within the ministry of the Bible Society. Although the Bible Society pleaded that their work was non-sectarian in nature, bible colportage was essentially motivated by Protestant and evangelical concerns.⁹⁵ This explains the fact that despite the freedom granted to the Bible Society in its Hungarian work following the Compromise, it received resistance

⁹³ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 33.

⁹⁴ Bányai, Jenő. "Novák Antal." Pt. 2. Békehírnök XII (LXII).2 (Jan. 15 1968): 12.

⁹⁵ Protestant because of their belief in the Reformation principle of *Sola Scriptura*. Evangelical because they trusted in the Scriptures as the sword of the Spirit, able to give eternal life. Thus in the preface to Millard's report in the April 1870 Monthly Reporter, it was argued: "It may be hoped that the liberty thus afforded for the free sale of the Bible, will be attended with a corresponding desire on the part of the people to possess the Word of God, for the *guidance of their faith and practice*. The more widely the truths of Divine Revelation become known and understood, the more conspicuous will be their influence in promoting loyalty, obedience to the law, social improvement, and, *above all, pure and undefiled religion*" (italics mine). Millard, 106.

from Roman Catholic and Orthodox clerics. Thus the Bible Society struggled to have their colporteurs maintain a semblance of theological neutrality. This was especially the case in Hungary, because despite the fact that they represented an insignificant portion of the general population, the “sects” were represented by more than their fair share among the ranks of Bible Society colporteurs, primarily by Baptists, but also by Nazarenes and others. These could run afoul not only of the Catholic and Orthodox clergy, but also by those of the received Protestant confessions. It is therefore somewhat ironic that a probable outcome of the 1869 conference in Pest was that the senior agent for the Bible Society in Austria-Hungary, Edward Millard, provided a catalyst for two of his colporteurs to seek baptism.

What then was Novák’s approach to bible colportage? András Lisztes, in remembering the events surrounding the first Baptist converts in Nagyszalonta, wrote:

For two months he went from house to house, offering the Bible to everybody. Whoever bought from him, the friendly Bible colporteur would look them up again in their own dwelling so that he could get new leads from them. The above-named Antal Novák gladly received this information and before long went to another village to spread the Bible.⁹⁶

In this manner Novák would attempt to completely cover an area, following up on the sales he made in order to determine where the most promising opportunities existed so that he could tailor his efforts accordingly. Statistics from among the last years of Novák’s service may give a picture of his labors. In 1872 Novák and his wife were active for 43 weeks and sold 1,554 copies.⁹⁷ For 1873 Novák was reported active for 40 weeks with 1,597 copies sold.⁹⁸ In 1874 Novák worked 51 weeks and sold 1,232 copies.⁹⁹ Novák worked 47 weeks in 1875 with sales of 1,157 copies.¹⁰⁰

For his last full year of service in 1876, Novák worked 38 weeks with sales of 389 copies.¹⁰¹ This was the year Novák was transferred from the Budapest to the Kolozsvár

⁹⁶ Mészáros, A magyarországi baptista egyház vázlatos története [A Brief History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 31.

⁹⁷ The Sixty-Ninth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1873. 101.

⁹⁸ The Seventieth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1874. 61.

⁹⁹ The Seventy-First Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1875. 54.

¹⁰⁰ The Seventy-Second Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1876. 42.

¹⁰¹ The Seventy-Third Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1877. 52.

depot, and this accounts for the drop in sales. It is evident from these statistics that Novák was a most diligent colporteur.

The character of Novák's work may well be gauged by his response to the opportunity to place the Scriptures in prison. In 1871 Millard was authorized to encourage his colporteurs to seek to penetrate the prisons of the Austria-Hungary with the Scriptures. Evidently, Millard was most impressed with Novák's efforts, for he reported them to London.¹⁰² Novák wrote: "It is delightful to see the prison transformed into a house of God, and to witness how those who, a little while ago, cursed God and their fellow men now read the Gospel attentively and search the Scriptures ... It is all the more remarkable, as generally it is extremely difficult to get any access to the gaol, and I am so freely admitted!"¹⁰³ Novák donated a New Testament to a man who had murdered his wife and had no money, he was even able to get the Bible Society to donate 25 large-print Scriptures to elderly prisoners who could not read the regular Scriptures and could not afford the large-print. His desire in all of this: "May the Lord set free the hearts of these poor prisoners and make them the willing captives of Jesus!"¹⁰⁴

In addition to reaching out to the outcasts of society, Novák desired that all people have the Scriptures available to them in a comprehensible form. Thus when he ran across elderly Rumanians who could not read the modern Cyrillic or Latin editions, Millard reported that Novák "proposed that an edition of the Ruman or Wallachian should be printed in the old black letter."¹⁰⁵ Millard was hesitant because of the limited audience for such an edition, but he did have some specimen pages printed to ascertain the desire for the antiquated script which he had distributed to the colporteurs. In the end Millard still hesitated because of the expense of the edition, but he was strongly moved by Novák's appeal.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Two accounts were presented of Novák's work in the prisons. The first was in the January 1872 Monthly Reporter, the second was an abbreviated selection from the former article in the 1872 Annual Report.

¹⁰³ "The Scriptures Presented to a Murderer and Other Criminals in a County Gaol in Hungary." Monthly Reporter of the British and Foreign Bible Society IX.32 (Jan. 1 1872): 338.

¹⁰⁴ "The Scriptures Presented to a Murderer and Other Criminals in a County Gaol in Hungary," 338.

¹⁰⁵ 1873 Annual Report, 102.

¹⁰⁶ Millard recounted the following experience which Novák reported with the sample pages: "Colporteur N. met with one old man who was quite charmed with this sample of type, only he wanted it

Finally, Novák's effectiveness as a colporteur was as much a product of his attitude towards his work as it was due to the thoroughness of his methods. In 1874 Millard reported that the Novák household was beset by poor health, which rendered Mrs. Novák too weak to work¹⁰⁷, but this did not deter Antal Novák. He wrote:

Novak has had to contend not only with prolonged domestic affliction, but his district also has been severely smitten with disease. The judgments of the Almighty have not been without effect. It is our faithful messenger's deliberate opinion that in many places people have become somewhat subdued under the fearful visitation of the season. He is personally acquainted with many that would formerly turn away from the Bible with contempt, who now buy and read it.¹⁰⁸

This perseverance in the face of adversity was a much admired aspect of Novák's work, although it possibly contributed to his premature death. In addition, Novák brought great personal charm to his work. This winning demeanor was well described by Gyula Garzó¹⁰⁹, who regretted that Novák was in his view a sectarian:

He was a very intelligent person, and among his co-workers he possessed such a striking personality that even his wife received her own stipend from the English bible-distributing society. In his character, with his clean-shaven face, such a peculiar charm overflowed, that I cannot deny that it

larger still. Then did he know the Bible? and how had he become acquainted with it? were naturally enough our colporteur's inquiries; and the old man's reply was, that in his place of abode his neighbor had a holy book of this kind (perhaps some prayer-book or mass-book with Gospel lessons), and it was the old man's habit occasionally to go into his neighbor's to get a portion read out to him, for which, however, he had to pay a small sum every time, this being the only condition on which he was permitted to come. In view of such a fate as this, we may well feel ashamed at the privileges which we often enjoy with such coldness and unthankfulness of heart. I feel the old man's case to be a strong appeal to the funds of the Society, in favor of our colporteur's proposal. Yet the expense would be so great, that I still hesitate." 1873 Annual Report, 102–03.

¹⁰⁷ In the list of colporteurs for the Pest depot provided in the 1873 Annual Report, it was noted that many of them "go out two by two," because among other reasons it served "to strengthen and cheer the hearts of these labourers in districts where little sympathy or kindness can be expected." 1873 Annual Report, 101. Among the pairs so listed were the Nováks. But from 1874, when Millard reported the illness which had beset the Novák household, and thereafter Mrs. Novák was not listed among the active colporteurs. Proof of this forced retirement came in the appeal Millard made for the support of Mrs. Novák after her husband's premature death; this appeal will be taken up later.

¹⁰⁸ 1874 Annual Report, 63.

¹⁰⁹ Garzó was a leading figure in the Reformed Church in Gyoma. He wrote a series of articles which appeared in PEIL in 1882 that detailed his struggle against the work of Kornya in his town. He began the series describing his relationship with Novák, whom he credited with Kornya's conversion.

exercised a strong influence over me as well, especially at our first meeting. Moreover, his verbal talent was so powerful, and he could relate something in such an inspiring manner, as if one's own nature would be called forth, that it would perforce ignite sparks in the hearts of those speaking with him.¹¹⁰

Novák's courage in the face of trials and his persuasive personality explain why he enjoyed such success as a colporteur.

One final aspect of Novák's work was that when the opportunity presented itself, he would offer a testimony to his own personal faith alongside of his official work as a colporteur. Csopják wrote: "Through the distribution and reading of the bible in various towns, the Protestant people in particular began to hold gatherings and brave Novák, who was only required to distribute the bible, nevertheless gave a testimony about the truth when the chance opened here and there. As a result life slowly arose in these gatherings."¹¹¹ The Bible Society, as an evangelically inspired organization, did not object to colporteurs availing themselves of the opportunity to share a personal testimony to faith in Christ. It was only when the line from personal testimony to sectarian proselytism was crossed that a potential problem could arise.¹¹²

The problem was that at times the line between personal testimony and proselytism was very thin. In general Novák adhered to the appropriate line, but in some significant instances during the last years of his service that line might have been crossed. The most prominent examples are the baptisms which Heinrich Meyer performed following the witness of Novák in Nagyszalonta and Berettyóújfalu. The events of Nagyszalonta are of such seminal importance to the history of the Baptist movement in Hungary that they will receive extended discussion later. Here I will only briefly highlight Novák's role in the expansion of the Baptist mission in Hungary to the Magyar Protestant peasantry of the Alföld.

¹¹⁰ Garzó, Gyula. "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]." Pt. 1. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 25.11 (Mar. 12 1882): 334.

¹¹¹ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 11.

¹¹² For example, in Garzó's narrative of his relationship with Novák, he related how over the course of several conversations Novák slowly revealed more and more of his own personal convictions. Garzó became concerned about the poor view Novák had of the Reformed clergy and sought to ascertain from what theological point of view Novák was coming. He began to encourage Novák to open up more and more to him, until the "suspicion awakened in me that this person was - *Nazarene*. I made him show his true colors, I thought to myself." Garzó, "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]," 334.

In April of 1875 the Nováks moved from Gyoma to Gyula.¹¹³ The reason is unknown, although a plausible assumption is so that they could be closer to where their work was taking them. Later in June of that year the Nováks went up to Budapest for the annual Bible Society conference for the colporteurs, which was attended by Mr. Bridgewide from London and Edward Millard from Vienna. This was the first opportunity for the Nováks to meet with their new pastor, Heinrich Meyer. Meyer had founded the first Baptist church in Hungary in December of 1874, and after the Rottmayers, the Nováks were the next couple in the *Mitglieder-Register* of the church, both couples having been transferred from the Vienna church.¹¹⁴ Since so many of the colporteurs present at the conference were Baptists, a separate Baptist conference was held to discuss Meyer's plan to leave the service of the Bible Society to devote himself to full-time Baptist ministry. Meyer records that at this conference Novák reported to him his work in Nagyszalonta, "where he preached the word."¹¹⁵ As a result, "there were several seekers who were searching for the truth."¹¹⁶ In August Meyer was finally persuaded to come to Novák's home in Gyula to perform the baptisms of the eight Nagyszalonta believers which "brother Novák had prepared beforehand."¹¹⁷ Among those baptized was Mihály Kornya, the most prolific missionary of the Hungarian Baptist movement.

In the following year Novák returned to the village of Berettyóújfalu for an extended visit. According to András Lisztes: "In 1876 brother Novák, as a bible colporteur, stored bibles with us and further made known to us the meaning of God's word."¹¹⁸ As a result of Novák's ministry there, András Lisztes travelled up to Budapest

¹¹³ Kirner, A. Bertalan. Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances]. Responsible publisher László Fortin. Budapest: Privately published, 1990. 48. 1945.

¹¹⁴ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 12.

¹¹⁵ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 34.

¹¹⁶ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 34.

¹¹⁷ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 34.

¹¹⁸ Bányai, "Novák Antal," 13.

to be baptized by Meyer in 1877. In 1879 Meyer travelled down to Berettyóújfalu to baptize thirteen people.¹¹⁹ While Meyer did not attribute this success to Novák, a later article in PEIL did draw the connection between Novák and Meyer: “Even in Berettyóújfalu a Baptist or Nazarene bible colporteur under the guise of selling the bible converted fourteen adult Reformed Church members, who afterwards were invited to be baptized anew by the propaganda head, Májer from Budapest.”¹²⁰

These events did not go unpunished. On March 1, 1876, Victor Bernát assumed the leadership of the Bible Society’s Budapest depot. A member of the Reformed Church, Bernát sought to reassure the Protestant confessions in one publication that the Budapest depot’s “singular purpose is the distribution of the Holy Scriptures in every language and on behalf of every denomination.”¹²¹ Sectarian proselytism was not appropriate for a Bible Society colporteur. Bernát’s fellow churchmen complained to him about Novák for breaking this rule, probably because of the effectiveness of his witness.¹²² As F. Gusztáv Szabadi put it, Bernát “quickly got fed up with the Baptist conversions (*baptistáskodás*) and transferred Novák to Kolozsvár.”¹²³ Garzó remarked of Novák: “This person later - if I remember well - came to grief, he was removed from his station because of the complaint of the Nagyszalonta Church District.”¹²⁴ Of course the Kolozsvár depository was Novák’s old friend, Johann Rottmayer. It is possible that Bernát and Rottmayer (perhaps even with Millard’s input) came to an agreement concerning the transfer. The transfer likely took place towards the end of 1876, because, as noted above, while Novák was still listed as attached to the Budapest depot, the significant drop in the number of weeks served during the year may best be explained by his transfer to Kolozsvár.

Once in Kolozsvár, Novák lost no time in renewing his friendship with

¹¹⁹ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 58.

¹²⁰ Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 55.

¹²¹ Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 55.

¹²² Bányai, “Novák Antal,” 12.

¹²³ Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 55.

¹²⁴ Garzó, “A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes],” 334.

Rottmayer. Csopják reported that the two helped one another “in some tasks.”¹²⁵ The presumption is that they cooperated in work associated with their service in the Bible Society, although in the context of Csopják’s narrative it is possible that Novák helped with the Sunday School Rottmayer established. Novák did not confine his activities to Kolozsvár. Quite the opposite, he continued his pattern of travelling far and wide, reaching as far as Brassó¹²⁶ on the border with Rumania.

Despite his transfer to Transylvania, Novák maintained close contact with his Baptist friends. On October 4, 1877, Heinrich Meyer visited the Nováks in their Kolozsvár home.¹²⁷ Shortly thereafter, Novák attended the ordination conference for Mihály Kornya and Mihály Toth that was held on November 14, 1877, in Nagyszalonta along with other Baptist workers.¹²⁸ Given his essential role in the Nagyszalonta baptisms, it was only appropriate for him to participate in the ordination. Unfortunately, this proved to be Novák’s “last public service” for the Baptist cause.¹²⁹

F. Gusztáv Szabadi recorded Novák’s death as occurring on December 17, 1877, in the vicinity of Brassó.¹³⁰ Novák’s death proved a blow to the work of the Bible Society in Hungary. The Kolozsvár depot experienced a slight dip in sales in 1877, which was reported as follows:

This is sufficiently accounted for by the sudden death of Colporteur Novak, who with his devoted wife was ever instant in season and out of season, and whose deep-wrought personal experience of the grace of God gave additional value to his services. Whilst working among the navvies on the Austro-Roumanian frontier he was struck down with fever, and in

¹²⁵ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 11.

¹²⁶ One of the predominantly Saxon cities of Transylvania, it was known as Kronstadt in German. Today it is Braşov.

¹²⁷ Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 11.

¹²⁸ Among those present were Heinrich Meyer, the visiting Fritz Oncken, who had worked in Pest with the original Baptist pioneers, Johann Rottmayer, and Adolf Hempt, a Bible Society colporteur and Baptist leader in Újvidék (modern Novi Sad in Serbia).

¹²⁹ Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 55.

¹³⁰ Bányai, “Novák Antal,” 13. Bányai draws this information from Szabadi’s manuscript, *Missziómunkások nyilvántartója [Register of Mission Workers]* for this date, and Szabadi drew the information from Meyer’s *Mitglieder-Register*.

him the Society has lost a valuable helper who will not easily be replaced.¹³¹

That Novák's death was reported under the section for "Klausenburg" demonstrates that he was attached to Rottmayer's depot that year. It is clear that despite controversy over Novák's Baptist witness, his evangelical fervor was appreciated by the Bible Society.¹³²

Antal Novák's death was most keenly felt by his wife. Her situation was of concern to Edward Millard. He wrote to the Bible Society Committee for permission to help Mrs. Novák, explaining:

For many years she was not only Novak's wife, but also his daily helper, trudging along with him through the cheerless, pathless *pusztas* of Hungary, and visiting with him the fairs, to disseminate the Scriptures among the thousands there congregated. Sometimes it was difficult to say which was the better colporteur of the two, but after a few years the weaker vessel had to yield, and leave the field through sheer bodily infirmity. Rest and a change of air did so much good that for a time I thought Mrs. Novak would be able now, after the decease of her husband, to earn a little by taking up the old handicraft; this idea has led to a little suspense and delay. It is now my opinion that on bright days and under favorable circumstances Mrs. N. may perhaps do a *little*, but even with a high percentage she could not earn enough for her support. I hope the Committee will be able as, I feel sure, they are willing, to do something for this widow.¹³³

It is reasonable to assume that some aid was forthcoming to Mrs. Novák. She spent her last few months in her home in Kolozsvár, where she remained in fellowship with the brethren in the area.

Despite the outpouring of support she received, Mrs. Novák survived her husband only by fourteen months. Szabadi wrote: "Sister Novák went to the hospital, unfortunately she died as a result of her operation. Many brethren used to gather together in her house for singing and praying. During her sickness she lay in one of the small rooms of the state hospital."¹³⁴ It is apparent that even during her short time in Kolozsvár,

¹³¹ The Seventy-Fourth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1878. 49.

¹³² When Millard wrote concerning the plight of the widow Novák, he said of her husband: "He had been in the Society's service ever since May 1865, and certainly he was one of our best laborers, instant in season and out of season; always fervent in spirit, burning with an intense desire to benefit souls and glorify his Master." "A Colporteur's Brave Wife." Monthly Reporter of the British and Foreign Bible Society X.35 (Apr. 1 1878): 344.

¹³³ "A Colporteur's Brave Wife," 344.

¹³⁴ Bányai, "Novák Antal," 13.

despite the infirmity which required her to stay at home while her husband continued his colportage, she continued to minister as she was able. On February 3, 1879, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon she was buried with Heinrich Meyer leading the funeral service.¹³⁵

What was the legacy of Antal Novák? Perhaps the best insight into this comes from a brief statement Heinrich Meyer wrote concerning a mission trip he made into Transylvania shortly before Novák's death: "On November 10th I travelled on [from Kolozsvár] to Brassó. This was the border of my working territory, because this was as far as brother Novák came as a colporteur and it was my hope that I would find a basis for further work in this area."¹³⁶ In the opinion of Bányai, Meyer here accounted Novák to the "trail-blazer" whose path he would then follow.¹³⁷ To this Szigeti concurs, adding that with Novák's "diligent colportage service and words of witness, a foundation was created for the developing Baptist mission."¹³⁸ Indeed, this opinion was expressed by Novák's good friend Johann Rottmayer, who wrote: "This brother inflamed many among the Hungarians, and God out of his great mercy richly blessed our brother's witness such that brother Meyer found a few believing souls already here."¹³⁹ In the wider context of this citation, Rottmayer explained that Novák had first heard the Baptist message in the meetings in his house held by Oncken and Lorders. Thus he implicitly describes Novák as a bridge figure between his work in Pest and Meyer's later work. Likewise Rottmayer's son-in-law, Attila Csopják, in his article entitled "The First Fruits", which was based upon the picture showing Rottmayer, Marschall, and Woyka together in Hamburg in 1867, placed his comments on Novák between the description of the 1865 baptisms by Lehmann in Pest and the beginning of Meyer's work in 1873. He wrote: "Later a colporteur named Antal Novák converted, who while travelling in the Magyar countryside, Nagyszalonta, Gyoma and other towns and villages in the pursuit of spiritual work, directed the hearts of many people such that they began to gather together to study the bible, and here and there the first fruits began to show itself, among whom many still

¹³⁵ Bányai, "Novák Antal," 13.

¹³⁶ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 52.

¹³⁷ Bányai, "Novák Antal," 13.

¹³⁸ Szigeti, "Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák's Death]," 55.

¹³⁹ Rottmayer, Johann, "Weiteres über Ungarn," 171.

live.”¹⁴⁰ Novák was the living link between the first pioneering efforts in Pest of Rottmayer and his compatriots and the later Baptist mission of Heinrich Meyer. Moreover, Meyer himself admits that during his early work in Hungary, he would retrace Novák’s footsteps in the hope that this Baptist colporteur had sown the seeds of revival that he could reap.

This leads to the more important point, which is that Novák served as the bridge between Meyer’s German-oriented work and the Baptist mission among the Magyar Protestant peasantry of the Alföld. Attila Csopják quoted a then living witness of Novák’s work: “Where Novák and his wife turned, there a great awakening arose and Novák became central Hungary’s salvation-warrior.”¹⁴¹ Novák lived to see the passing of the torch for the Hungarian mission, the fruits of his labor with the ordination of Kornya and Tóth. This indeed proved to be the “first great change of fortune” for the Baptist mission in Hungary, the planting of the Baptist message in this “fertile soil”, as Szigeti put it.¹⁴² Gyula Garzó, the Reformed Church partisan, closed the first installment of his article in PEIL detailing his struggle against the mission of Kornya in Gyoma with the following thought about Novák, whom he identified as the initiator of all that followed: “...more than once I reflected upon this question: what would have come from this person if his zealotry and truly rich gifts could have brought their influence to bear upon a church path?”¹⁴³ What was a loss for the Reformed Church in Hungary, the source of Garzó’s wistfulness, proved to be a great gain for the Baptist message. And so Hungarian Baptists can answer Garzó’s rhetorical question- truly much was gained from the witness of Antal Novák.

¹⁴⁰ Csopják, “Az első zsengek [The First Fruits],” 179.

¹⁴¹ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 11.

¹⁴² Szigeti, “Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák’s Death],” 54.

¹⁴³ Garzó, “A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes],” 335.

4. Johann Rottmayer's work in Kolozsvár

4.1. Early work and travels

Rottmayer and his children arrived in Kolozsvár in June of 1866¹⁴⁴ under difficult circumstances, following the sudden death of his wife just prior to the move. Rottmayer Jr. wrote of this period: "Once again it was necessary to start life over again under completely unfamiliar circumstances."¹⁴⁵ For Rottmayer the difficulty was compounded by the language issue. Rottmayer Jr. continued: "He began to study Rumanian, and at the same time it was necessary to practice his little-used Hungarian."¹⁴⁶ Rottmayer once wrote in one of his reports to the Bible Society: "I get on but poorly with the Hungarian language, yet I can make myself understood."¹⁴⁷ The necessity of Rottmayer adopting quickly to the local languages and cultures becomes apparent when one considers the Bible Society rules for colporteurs. As Gyula Forgács explained, colporteurs were required to "go from house to house indiscriminately and offer the Holy Scriptures to everyone."¹⁴⁸

Yet the greatest hardship for Rottmayer and his children was that he was required to travel a great deal. Rottmayer Jr. remembered: "My dear father's profession was such that time and again he was not at home for weeks."¹⁴⁹ Rottmayer was responsible for a

¹⁴⁴ According to Bányai, Rottmayer "left Pest-Buda in the summer of 1866, the scene of his pioneering work, put down his carpentry tools, and entirely consecrated his life to the spread of the Gospel." Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 26. This corresponds well with the 1867 Annual Report, which speaks of sales "during seven months." 1867 Annual Report, 89. This seven month period of activity would extend from June to December of 1866.

¹⁴⁵ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

¹⁴⁶ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

¹⁴⁷ The Sixty-Fourth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1868. 82.

¹⁴⁸ Quoted from A belmisszió és cura pastoralis kézikönyve. Cited in Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 26. Szebeni wrote that Rottmayer was the first to distribute "the Bible into the hands of the Rumanian population." Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 21. Rottmayer was likely the first to work extensively among the Rumanian population of Transylvania. At the same time it must be remembered that beyond the borders of Hungary Rottmayer's former co-worker in Budapest, Carl Schar Schmidt, had moved to Jassy a year prior to Rottmayer's move to Kolozsvár in order to work as a BFBS colporteur in Moldavia.

¹⁴⁹ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 27.

very large area, and this kept him on the road a great deal. Bányai wrote of his early labors: “This work, which required more than a trifling amount of physical and spiritual strength, was conscientiously discharged. During the first years he walked alone among the untrodden paths of Transylvania’s towns and villages. The great expanse extending from Nagybánya to Brassó, from the Háromszék to Temes¹⁵⁰ was covered by foot or, under the best circumstances, from time to time by cart. He came to such places where, apart from the pastors, the poor people perhaps never held the Holy Scriptures in their hands.”¹⁵¹ This description well expresses the significant burden Rottmayer took upon himself and the pioneering nature of the work.

An examination of the Bible Society Annual Report’s from 1867 to 1870 paint a picture of this Herculean work, highlighting the trials and everyday joys Rottmayer encountered. They also demonstrate the thirst for the Scriptures among broad portions of the population. This thirst presaged the evangelical renewal that would sweep across the Alföld and Transylvania in the following decades. The work of Rottmayer and others in the Bible Society prepared the basis for this movement.

The beginning of the work is described in the 1867 Annual Report, “After prolonged, but eventually successful negotiations, your Agent [Edward Millard] received permission to open a Depôt at Klausenburg, the capital of Transylvania; and the sales, during seven months, have reached 9,575 copies.”¹⁵² The extraordinary sales during this initial period of activity was indicative of both the pent up demand for the Scriptures and the prodigious efforts of Rottmayer. Rottmayer wrote of his experience at the “public fair” held at Beszterce (Bistrița in Rumanian): “I have sold 138 Bibles, 348 Testaments, and 97 Parts within two days, and was so besieged that not a minute was left me. If I had three times the number, every copy would have been sold; and as to the willingness with which the copies were taken, that is more than I can describe. Six pastors came to see me,

¹⁵⁰ Nagybánya is modern Baia Mare in north-western Transylvania, Brassó is Braşov on the south-eastern edge of Transylvania, both of which lie on the rim of the Carpathian mountains. The Háromszék is the region just to the north-east of Brassó on the easternmost edge of Transylvania in the Carpathian mountains. Temes refers to the region around Temesvár, modern Timișoara, where Transylvania gives way to the fertile plains of the Bánság in the south-east, which is now divided between Romania and the Voivodina region in Serbia. In short these geographical points encompass the entirety of Transylvania and then some.

¹⁵¹ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 27.

¹⁵² 1867 Annual Report, 89.

and all praised my cheap and beautiful books.”¹⁵³ The work kept pace in the following year. In the 1868 Annual Report, contrary to expectations, strong sales were reported: “It was not to be expected that the same enthusiasm which marked the first reception of the Scriptures by the inhabitants of this country would be of long duration, but if calmer feelings now prevail, there is no lack of earnestness in seeking to procure the inestimable treasure which your Society offers; and the sale of 9,697 copies is sufficient proof that in the opinion of the people it maintains its value.”¹⁵⁴ Even language difficulties did not impose a barrier to sales. Rottmayer found that despite his halting Hungarian, the literature was often sold for him:

It is not necessary at all for me to say much in praise of my books; the people who have bought them do that. On the market-place they call out to persons passing by, telling them of the beautiful books, and when the answer is, “Oh, I already have a Bible at home,” they frequently say, “Then buy one for some one else; buy one to show this good man that he has not come in vain all this distance to bring us the Bible.” Our work seems to be thoroughly understood and appreciated here, and many a blessing is invoked on the Society.¹⁵⁵

The news for 1868 was positive as well: “Mr. Rottmayer, the Depository at Klausenburg, states that 9,547 copies have been sold during the year, in his sphere of labor.”¹⁵⁶

It was not until 1869 that sales dropped due to mounting opposition to his work. When examining the receptivity to the Bible Society’s work in Transylvania, one must differentiate between the clergy and the laity as well as between the different denominations and nationalities. In general the laity of all denominations were receptive or at least indifferent to the work. Suspicion, when encountered, was generally fomented by the opposition of clergy and, more importantly, the hierarchy of certain churches. For example, Rottmayer wrote early on during his work: “Open enmity we do not meet much; it is only the Romish clergy that look at our work with a suspicious eye. One priest visited our Depôt, and spoke in no very measured terms of Luther’s version as poisonous, unfaithful, corrupting heart and soul. Still, the Roman Catholics frequently buy, and do

¹⁵³ 1867 Annual Report, 90.

¹⁵⁴ 1868 Annual Report, 81.

¹⁵⁵ 1868 Annual Report, 82.

¹⁵⁶ 1869 Annual Report, 99.

not seem to be so shy as elsewhere.”¹⁵⁷ In the following report Rottmayer observed: “Many Roman Catholics also buy the Hungarian Bible, and then the Calvinists, who have either heard of it or see it, always come with glad faces to see tell me.”¹⁵⁸ It is evident that Hungarian Roman Catholics were more inclined to purchase the Scriptures in Transylvania, which points to the greater history of religious toleration in Transylvania.¹⁵⁹

Rottmayer’s experiences reflected both the Transylvanian history of toleration and the sharp divide between the Protestant clergy on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic and Orthodox hierarchies on the other, in their attitude to the dissemination of the Scriptures among the laity. This divide was clearly expressed in the 1869 Annual Report:

It is to be regretted that the newly-elected bishop of the Greek United Church has avowed himself hostile to your operations, and has published a circular forbidding priests and people to purchase copies. In contrast with this conduct, the Hungarian bishop of the Protestant Church of Transylvania has taken his stand upon an opposite principle. At a meeting held in Somlyo, when two hundred pastors and a large number of schoolmasters were present, this enlightened bishop urged upon all the duty of encouraging the people to possess and read the Bible, referring in warm terms to the obligation under which the country was laid to your Society for its generous efforts in disseminating the Scriptures. His address produced a profound impression, and has roused many to activity who had previously taken but little interest in this department of Christian work.¹⁶⁰

In the same report Rottmayer gave evidence of this cooperative effort: “The Protestant Pastors in these parts are very willing to give us assistance. Many have written letters for me, announcing my arrival at the next stations of my journey, and warmly recommending me to their fellow-ministers.”¹⁶¹ This close cooperation was also attested to by Rottmayer’s son, who accompanied his father on some of his tours. He wrote: “As a representative of the British and Foreign Bible Society it was necessary everywhere to make use of the favor of the pastors and teachers, and this indeed produced pleasing results. On the recommendation of the pastor, who would make an announcement from

¹⁵⁷ 1867 Annual Report, 90.

¹⁵⁸ 1868 Annual Report, 82.

¹⁵⁹ See the chapter, “Synopsis of *Pax Transylvania*” in Unghváry, Alexander Sándor. The Hungarian Protestant Reformation in the Sixteenth Century Under the Ottoman Impact. Texts and Studies in Religion 48. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989. 385–90.

¹⁶⁰ 1869 Annual Report, 99.

¹⁶¹ 1869 Annual Report, 100.

the pulpit, many of those who loved to read would come and purchase the truly inexpensive Bibles, as well as New Testaments for the children. At such times an opportunity opened up to give a testimony about Christ our Lord and to urge on the reading of the Bible.”¹⁶² Because of this cooperation of the clergy, the Hungarian Reformed population of Transylvania was undoubtedly the most receptive audience Rottmayer encountered.

The active opposition of the Uniate bishop had a chilling effect upon the sales of the Scriptures among the Rumanian population. The Rumanians, the single largest ethnic group in Transylvania, were roughly evenly divided between the Uniate and Orthodox branches. Both churches played a similar role in Rumanian national life in Transylvania as other Orthodox national churches played under the Ottomans in the Balkans, they were the preservers of culture and the defenders of the national interest.¹⁶³ The hierarchies of both churches exercised, as a consequence, a great influence over the Rumanian people. This was recognized early on in the Bible Society’s work there, as the 1868 Annual Report reported: “the coldness, to say the least of it, of the authorities of the Greek church has been a barrier against the more rapid spread of the Truth.”¹⁶⁴ And this statement, it should be noted, was made before the publication of the circular.¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, during the year in which the circular was issued, Rottmayer continued to enjoy success among the Rumanian population: “The prohibition of the Ruman bishop is generally known, our Depository goes on to say, and yet on my journeyings I have always sold all the Ruman Scriptures I could take with me, and, generally, I should have sold more if my supplies had been larger.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

¹⁶³ Hitchens, Keith. Rumania 1866–1947. The Oxford History of Modern Europe. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. 222.

¹⁶⁴ 1868 Annual Report, 81.

¹⁶⁵ Interestingly enough, in the same report it was noted that the publication of the “Ruman Testament” in Cyrillic had just been completed for the benefit of older readers not accustomed to the modern Latin script. This was done “at the request of the leading men of the country.” Apparently this was done without the cooperation of the Uniate or Orthodox hierarchy, given their cold reception to the Society’s work among their laity. Perhaps this request came from the Magyar political leadership, who wished to promote literacy as a first step towards grammatical Magyarization?

¹⁶⁶ 1869 Annual Report, 100.

The largest decrease was experienced during the year following the issue of the prohibition: “The Greek Archbishop, now taking part in the Ecumenical Council at Rome, maintains unabated his opposition to the circulation of the Rouman Scriptures, and it is possible that to this source may be traced the reduction in issues from this Depôt, which have fallen from 9,547 volumes to 3,336.”¹⁶⁷ Other factors were also cited, but not the lack of diligence upon the part of Rottmayer: “The Depositary is a faithful and devoted man, and nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see his district filled with the knowledge of God’s Truth.”¹⁶⁸ To the contrary, it was the winsome determination of Rottmayer that enabled him to overcome the prejudices instilled in many people by the Catholic clergy: “There are very many Roman Catholics who, when they have once been prevailed upon to examine the book, express their surprise and dismay that they have so long been deceived by their priests. This is of frequent occurrence.”¹⁶⁹ While this clerical propaganda aimed against the work of the Bible Society predisposed many people to distrust colporteurs, it could not prevail upon all when confronted by a persistent invitation to judge for themselves as to the truth of what they had been told.

Rottmayer was also very conscientious about reaching out to the minorities of Transylvania, no matter how despised. Of particular note was his efforts to learn the language of the gypsies of the region: “On my last journey I gave myself considerable trouble to speak with gypsies, and I found a few quite willing to listen.”¹⁷⁰ The contempt and misery that attended the gypsies daily lives only elicited his compassionate concern. Rottmayer reasoned:

Something might be attempted among those gypsies that have given up their nomadic life and have fixed dwellings. Their children are now compelled to attend school. These poor people are so despised that nobody ever cares for them, and consequently they are extremely shy and fearful. They go once a year to the communion. I inquired if they understood what

¹⁶⁷ The Sixty-Sixth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1870. 76.

¹⁶⁸ 1870 Annual Report, 76.

¹⁶⁹ The Sixty-Seventh Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1871. 103.

¹⁷⁰ The example Rottmayer gave is quite touching, which recounts his visit to a public school where he sought to encourage Bible reading. As he told the story: “A gypsy boy sitting on one of the benches came up to me by and by, and said he would very much like to have such a book as I had been talking of, in which were those beautiful words. Undoing a dirty rag, he got out ten kreuzer, and begged the teacher to lend him two more. He could not read very easily, but he would give himself double pains now. May the Lord bless this Testament to the boy, and to his parents, to whom he will soon be able to read it.” 1870 Annual Report, 77.

the service meant, but I could discover only some very faint glimpses of light concerning Jesus and his sacrificial death.¹⁷¹

The ethic of Jesus, who sought out the outcasts of society, was clearly adopted by Rottmayer in his work. Despite the hurdles of language, poverty and illiteracy that attended work among the Gypsies, he persevered.

It should not be surprising, given his association with the Scottish Mission, that Rottmayer often sought out Jews to converse with along his journeys. One example that reveals the rigors of his work is the following account reported in the 1869 Annual Report:

At N___ R___, he says, it was a very poor Jew who took me in. The poor fellow had no bed for himself, but some hay was spread out on the ground, and at least it was soft and warm. There was not a bit of bread in the house; so I went to the manor-house, in the village, to beg for some provisions, but I was rudely repelled. As I turned away despondingly, the dogs rushed out against me. At last the gardener sallied forth to my rescue, and on my telling him my tale, he went to the lady of the house and procured some bread and bacon for me, and then he took me back to my lodging. I gave him a Ruman New Testament for his kindness, and I left a Hebrew Pentateuch with my Jewish host. Both were very grateful. Such is the mode of travelling, and the sort of living, which sometimes falls to the lot of the Society's agents in these countries.¹⁷²

This experience also points to the humility and gentle spirit Rottmayer brought to his work. Another example comes from the 1870 Annual Report:

In the evening I had some interesting conversation in a Jewish family. A rabbi was present, who expressed his sorrow at the deep degradation of the Jewish people. 'But is it better among you Christians?' he asked: 'are not the most of you despisers of God?' I told him what the experience of my soul had been, and had at least the satisfaction of being quietly listened to; and whatever questions were afterwards asked, or objections raised, it was all brought forward in an amicable spirit.¹⁷³

It was important to Rottmayer, not only to share his testimony, but also that after "two hours' close discussion we parted good friends."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ 1870 Annual Report, 77.

¹⁷² 1869 Annual Report, 99–100.

¹⁷³ 1870 Annual Report, 77.

¹⁷⁴ 1870 Annual Report, 77.

Apart from his personal demeanor, one way Rottmayer attempted to overcome prejudice was to meet the needs of the people to whom he desired to offer the Scriptures. Bányai recounted a method of outreach Rottmayer often employed on the basis of personal recollections from Rottmayer's daughter, Maria Rottmayer Csopják. According to her testimony, when Rottmayer arrived in a particular community,

he first inquired after the sick. His first path always lead him to those in need of comfort. At such times various medicines, bandages and teas would be produced from his medical chest which he always carried with him. In so far as the sickness was of such a nature that he could offer help, he would eagerly do so. After playing the good samaritan, he would read from the Bible, and then he would pray for the sick person. And when he finished this service, he departed to sell the Bible. In his service he did not recognize social classes, religious or ethnic differences. Naturally, this news quickly spread everywhere, and he acquired a great popularity. This servant-like, practical Christianity was worth more than the most elegant sermon.¹⁷⁵

This methodology was not merely a pragmatic tactic, but reflects his concern to follow the example of his Lord. In contemporary terminology, Rottmayer exemplified a concern to undertake an incarnational ministry, in which both the physical and spiritual needs of people could be met.

Apart from the difficulties of distrust or disdain that sometimes greeted his work, other obstacles impeded the progress of Rottmayer's endeavors. Some of these were beyond Rottmayer's control. For example, illiteracy was a frequent obstacle to the sale of the Scriptures, particularly among the Rumanians and gypsies. This fact was recognized at the beginning of the work: "Apart, however, from the hindrance to success arising from the illiterate condition of the people, Mr. Millard represents Transylvania as a fine and promising field to cultivate in the service of the Society."¹⁷⁶ In this regard the 1.5 million "Wallachians" of the region were singled out, "a large proportion of whom are totally unable to read." The Hungarian government was at pains to eliminate illiteracy through educational reform, primarily through creating a public education system to meet the need for the compulsory educational requirements they had enacted. Perhaps this is why Millard could report to the Bible Society that "even prominent members of the Government have shown a disposition to facilitate your operations" there, hoping it

¹⁷⁵ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 27.

¹⁷⁶ 1867 Annual Report, 89.

would encourage literacy.¹⁷⁷ Rottmayer often placed his hope on the rising generation who were the beneficiaries of this educational reform,

On our peregrinations this year we passed through many Rouman villages in which only a few could read at all. The others on hearing that we were selling the Gospel of the Saviour and the letters of the Apostles - of which we read out portions to them in their own mother tongue - sighed aloud at their inability to read, and would often buy a copy for their children, to be read to them.¹⁷⁸

Experiences such as this may have inspired the zeal with which Rottmayer pursued his Sunday school ministry in Kolozsvár?

Another common problem in the wider region was poverty. In Transylvania the primitive state of the economy resulted in an unusual obstacle to the work: “There is a great scarcity of money in these parts, Mr. Rottmayer says in one of his reports; the good folks have everything, money only excepted. A poor man offered to work for two days at any time of the year, for any person that would lend him money to buy a Bible.”¹⁷⁹ The capitalist transformation of Hungarian agriculture would increase the circulation of money. Yet social dislocation and the pauperization of the agricultural proletariat accompanied this transformation, such that poverty remained an ongoing problem when offering the Scriptures to the simple folk of Transylvania.

A more mundane problem that plagued Rottmayer’s work was the lack of a developed transportation infrastructure. In the first year of his work, we read: “During another tour, the Depositary complains much of the scanty means of conveyance, and, as a consequence, the expensiveness of the work.”¹⁸⁰ As this infrastructure was developed, particularly through the rapid expansion of the rail network, this particular problem would be eased, although not entirely solved.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ 1867 Annual Report, 89.

¹⁷⁸ The Sixty-Eighth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1872. 80.

¹⁷⁹ 1869 Annual Report, 100.

¹⁸⁰ 1867 Annual Report, 90.

¹⁸¹ Thus in the 1873 Annual Report it was noted: “Railways multiply facilities for locomotion, but they are only partially serviceable for the colporteur, for the orders laid upon him are to penetrate every nook and corner, and, as far as possible, offer the Scriptures at every house or hut without exception. To accomplish this mission is not easy, and the expense of conveying his boxes of Scriptures from place to place is great, and unsympathizing people, seeing that he is at their mercy, become exacting in their demands.” 1873 Annual Report, 103.

The basic problem Rottmayer encountered, however, was that there was simply too much work for one man. It was always the intention of Edward Millard to assist Rottmayer in establishing a depot in Kolozsvár, with a staff of colporteurs operating out of it. Fortunately, in this endeavor Millard had the support of men within the Hungarian government, as noted in the 1867 Annual Report: “Much valuable assistance has been received from friends at Klausenburg and elsewhere; and even prominent members of the Government have shown a disposition to facilitate your operations. Correspondence has been opened in the hope of securing permission from the Authorities for Colportage.”¹⁸² Progress was slow, however, in developing the work of the depot. Only in the 1869 Annual Report do we read that one colporteur was attached to the depot.¹⁸³ With the poor circulation results for 1869 following the prohibition of the Uniate bishop, the slow development of the depot was mentioned as a mitigating circumstance: “There is, however, only one Colporteur connected with it, and its organization is not so perfect as it is hoped to render it during the ensuing year.”¹⁸⁴ And this was despite the earnest efforts of Rottmayer, who was lauded in the report. Greater strides were made in the development of the depot during the course of the decade.

4.2. Rottmayer’s trip to Hamburg and re-marriage

From Rottmayer’s arrival in Kolozsvár in June of 1866, he spent much of his time on tour. During this time his children were in the care of the nanny he took on after the death of his wife.¹⁸⁵ There is no indication that the nanny was a Baptist convert capable of raising the children in the Baptist faith, and this perhaps explains the comment from Rottmayer’s son about his father’s decision to remarry: “My dear father’s occupation was such that he frequently spent months away from home, yet it was necessary to raise the young children. He decided that he would marry a second time.”¹⁸⁶ Rottmayer was not

¹⁸² 1867 Annual Report, 89–90.

¹⁸³ 1869 Annual Report, 100.

¹⁸⁴ 1870 Annual Report, 76.

¹⁸⁵ Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 21.

¹⁸⁶ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

satisfied with the temporary expedient of a nanny, he wanted a partner who would help him with the spiritual formation of the children.

In the early part of 1867 the news went out that the German Baptists would hold their *Bundes konferenz* in August of that year in Hamburg, during which time they would celebrate the opening of the new chapel on the Böhmkenstrasse. Because of the special occasion being celebrated at this particular conference, Rottmayer was anxious to attend. His son recalled this conference years later: “In 1867 there was the opening of the Böhmkenstrasse Baptist chapel. [My father] asked permission to travel to it. There he met his dear friends from his youth, Marschall and Woyka. My dear father brought me along too. The celebration in Hamburg was blessed. I heard many preachers, among whom was Spurgeon also.”¹⁸⁷ The conference was ten days long, with the opening of the new chapel falling on the 17th of August. In later Hungarian Baptist history the conference has often been recalled because of the reunion that took place there among the three pioneers, Rottmayer, Woyka, and Marschall.¹⁸⁸ It also provided Rottmayer an opportunity to report to the conference and in particular to his mentor, J.G. Oncken, of his work in Hungary.¹⁸⁹ When in 1869 Oncken travelled to southern Russia, he also visited Rottmayer in Kolozsvár on his way back home.¹⁹⁰

More significant for Rottmayer’s future ministry was the trip back home from Hamburg. His son describes what unfolded: “On the trip home my dear father and two close friends¹⁹¹ got off in Prague and visited sister Magdolna Bastecky, who earlier lived

¹⁸⁷ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26.

¹⁸⁸ On the cover of a 1913 *Békehírnök* issue was a photo of Marschall, Rottmayer and Woyka taken at the conference with the title of the article to follow over it, “The first fruits”. In it was written: “Rottmayer, Marschall and Woyka met with each other at the chapel-opening celebration in Hamburg in 1867 and unimaginable was the joy which permeated their hearts, when at that moment as men they could exchange Christian kisses with each other.” Csopják, “Az első zsengek [The First Fruits],” 179.

¹⁸⁹ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 27.

¹⁹⁰ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 28.

¹⁹¹ Rottmayer Jr. did not identify the two friends returning to Hungary with his father. It has been suggested that the two Hornung brothers were the close friends. This proposal has some merit. Rottmayer Jr. talks of a “reunion” at this Prague gathering, and the Hornung brothers were among those who had formed the core of the small Baptist fellowship in Pest when Magdolna Bastecky was baptized in 1865. And certainly Antal Hornung, among the original pioneers sent by Oncken in 1846, had as much incentive to attend the Hamburg conference as Rottmayer, Marschall and Woyka. The only question is why was Antal

in Budapest and was one of the six souls baptized by brother G.W. Lehmann in 1865. The joy of the reunion, the exchange of experiences lived in the meantime quickly passed the time and the three men went into the nearby woods to offer serious prayers concerning Rottmayer's situation. They went home with the knowledge that God heard their requests. My dear father made up his mind that he would ask the sister if she was willing to be his partner in life."¹⁹² When the wedding took place is not known for sure, one suggestion is that it took place in Prague in September of 1867.¹⁹³ Of his father's marriage, Rottmayer Jr. commented, "God's direction and assent became visible in that our dear father received an intelligent, thrifty, and industrious helpmate. The boys still attending school [Wilhelm and Rudolph] and the still frail little girl [Maria] received a mother."¹⁹⁴ The picture is of an unqualified blessing, yet of this assessment, Bányai, foreshadowing the trouble that was to come, stated, "But what sort of sad fate fell to the orphan's lot, he politely left unsaid..."¹⁹⁵ In fact this marriage was the source of future hardship for Rottmayer and his children.

4.3. The development of the Kolozsvár depot

It was during the early 1870's that Rottmayer was able to develop the Bible Society work in Transylvania, not only through the expansion of the ranks of the colporteurs, but also through the improvement of the depot itself. These efforts left Rottmayer with more time and opportunity to pursue other forms of ministry.

The impetus to put the work of the Bible Society in Transylvania on a more solid footing was not just because the magnitude of the task demanded it, but also because

Hornung not mentioned along with Rottmayer, Marschall, and Woyka in the 1913 BH article? He was among the "first fruits" who were the focus of the article. The answer may be as simple as the fact that he was not in the photo that inspired the article. In the final analysis, the Hornung brothers remain the most plausible suggestion, although questions remain.

¹⁹² Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 26–27.

¹⁹³ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 27.

¹⁹⁴ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 27.

¹⁹⁵ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 27.

Rottmayer knew that it was not good for his family to spend so much time away from home. This was true even after he remarried. Rottmayer Jr. spoke of the difficulties and demands of his father's work, and the effect it had upon his family: "They experienced difficult times and the upbringing of the children entailed much patience and many trials."¹⁹⁶ As the focus of Rottmayer's work moved from touring the district to managing the depot, it undoubtedly brought a measure of comfort to his children.

A significant step in the development of the Bible Society depot in Kolozsvár was the purchase of the house at Kandiagasse 6 on April 28, 1871.¹⁹⁷ Where Rottmayer lived prior to this purchase is unknown. But the house on Kandiagasse was well-suited to serve as a depot. To begin with, it enjoyed a central location close to two major thoroughfares and the square of the main city market. Rottmayer often went to the market to offer the Scriptures to people shopping there. The central location also encouraged people to visit the depot.¹⁹⁸ The size of the building also enabled Rottmayer to engage in various ministry opportunities. To encourage people to visit the depot, Rottmayer remodeled the house so that the store and warehouse were located in the corner of the building visible to the two streets it overlooked.¹⁹⁹ The large room also served to host the Sunday school Rottmayer would begin. Thus the central location and spaciousness of the building was an asset not only to the work of the Bible Society, but also to Rottmayer's other ministry interests.

An examination of the Bible Society Annual Report's during the 1870's demonstrate that as Rottmayer's focus shifted from the successful development of the depot to expanding the distribution network, he was able to slowly build his roster of colporteurs. The changing nature of his father's responsibilities was mentioned by Rottmayer Jr., "With the passing of the first few years the work of the Bible Society

¹⁹⁶ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 27.

¹⁹⁷ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 26. Bányai attributes the discovery of this purchase to the help of László Miklós, who in 1963 searched through the records of the local Registry of Deeds.

¹⁹⁸ Rottmayer encouraged such visits, because it gave him an opportunity to witness to people. Rottmayer recounted one such encounter: "A gypsy frequently visits the Depôt, and gladly listens to the message of joy through Jesus Christ; and when I told him that Christian people give their pounds and pence for the dissemination of the Scriptures, and that they pray for the gypsy people too, his joy was great." 1871 Annual Report, 102.

¹⁹⁹ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 27.

expanded and my father was entrusted with the leadership of the Bible depot. He was now not required to travel so frequently and for so long, because he had six colporteurs to assist him.”²⁰⁰ This recollection by Rottmayer Jr. concerning the number of colporteurs is quite curious. For example, during the first half of the 1870’s the number of colporteurs attached to the depot never climbed above three, and even this number was difficult to maintain because some of the colporteurs were called up for military service.²⁰¹ Towards the end of the decade well into the 1880’s the number of colporteurs hovered around four. Only in 1887 does the Annual Report list six colporteurs attached to the Kolozsvár depot.²⁰² Perhaps this recollection is then based upon the later average complement of colporteurs when the work achieved full maturity?

This recollection was taken rather more literally by Bányai, who sought to identify the six colporteurs who worked for Rottmayer. According to his reconstruction, not all six colporteurs were employed at once, but rather brought on as suitable people were found. In giving the list of six names, Bányai confesses that his reconstruction is speculative in part. He names as colporteurs János and Mihály Gromen, Fülöp Spiess, Antal Novák, Gáspár Barabás, and György Fleischer.²⁰³ Of these six Johann Gromen, Antal Novák, and Georg Fleischer are mentioned in one form or another as attached to the Kolozsvár depot. Bányai claimed that Johann Gromen’s younger brother Michael also worked for Rottmayer for a time before moving on to work in Bucharest. If he did so, it was on an informal basis. Perhaps he was a companion to his brother? I have not found him listed among the Bible Society’s colporteurs. According to Meyer’s *Mitglieder-Register*, Philipp Spiess and his brother Konrad were ethnic Germans born in Radautz (Rădăuți) in Bukovina, close to the Carpathians, who were baptized in 1872 in “Katalui, Türkei”, that is, in the Danube delta of Dobrudja.²⁰⁴ They were attached to the Budapest

²⁰⁰ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 27.

²⁰¹ This problem was mentioned in the 1872, 1873, and 1875 Annual Report’s.

²⁰² The Eighty-Third Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1887. 425.

²⁰³ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 27–28.

²⁰⁴ The Spiess brothers are entry numbers 8 and 10 in the register, their wives are numbers 9 and 11.

depot before they returned to Rumania to continue their work there.²⁰⁵ The suggestion that Philipp Spiess was attached to the Kolozsvár depot likely can be attributed to the following comment from Meyer's autobiography in which he mentions a trip to Lugos (Lugoj) in the Bánság, east of Temesvár, "brother Spiess worked there at that time."²⁰⁶ This area would appear to fall under the purview of the Kolozsvár depot. Bányai describes Gáspár Barabás as someone who played an important role in the founding of the Baptist church in Kolozsvár; unfortunately he is not listed as a Bible Society colporteur among the several Annual Reports I have examined. Is it possible that he worked for the National Bible Society of Scotland? In any case, more than six colporteurs worked under Rottmayer over the course of its existence. Among those colporteurs not yet named were Brassovanyi, Brucker, Krabovsky, Kempfner, Gogucz, Tatter and Stenner.²⁰⁷ A majority were ethnic Germans, and a few were fellow Baptists. The most prominent in later Hungarian Baptist history was Johann Gromen, who came to the Baptist faith in an unusual way. He became a colporteur under the influence of Rottmayer, and was eventually baptized by Heinrich Meyer. After his work as a colporteur, Gromen became a close co-worker of Meyer's in Budapest, and then a pastor in the Dunantúl, before returning to pastor Baptist churches among the Saxons in Transylvania.

While the expansion of the number of colporteurs did not increase the overall sales originating from the depot, which fluctuated between 5,000 and 9,000 copies during the period from 1873 to 1886, the ratio of the sales did change. Less and less of the sales came from Rottmayer's tours or correspondence sales from the depot, while correspondingly more sales came from his colporteurs. The last explicit reference to Rottmayer's practice of touring is contained in the 1873 Annual Report, "Mr. Rottmayer, the Depositary at Klausenburg, has, in conformity with his usual custom, gone out on

²⁰⁵ Heinrich Meyer recalled meeting a Baptist colporteur named "Philipp Spiess from Dobrudja" at the 1875 Bible Society conference in Budapest, which was during the time he was attached to the Budapest depot. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 33. The Spiess brothers were among the first members of Meyer's church, although, as the register testifies, they soon departed for Bucharest. Meyer's register confirms the British and Foreign Bible Society Annual Reports, which list the Spiess brothers under the Hungarian (ie. Budapest), as opposed to the Klausenburg (Kolozsvár) depot.

²⁰⁶ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 53.

²⁰⁷ These colporteur's were found listed in the tables of colporteurs and sales for the various depots given in the appendices of the Annual Reports. See for example the Annual Reports for 1877, 1879, 1881, and 1887.

Bible tours and visited places where he considered such labor most necessary.”²⁰⁸ He visited a mining district with a very mixed population, yet with no churches yet established to minister to the people: “What a field for a Missionary! What a frightful lack of Gospel agency! Mr. Rottmayer sold a goodly number of copies and left a testimony behind him.”²⁰⁹ Rottmayer commented of another visit to a village where the only gospel witness was from a man who had been jailed for stealing a horse, and then converted by a Nazarene in prison, “what need there is of evangelists and missionaries here, truly they are wanted quite as much as in China.”²¹⁰ While his touring decreased, he did find other ways of ministering to those most in need. For example, Rottmayer made a habit of taking the Scriptures into prisons. In the 1886 Annual Report, his faithful Christian service was praised, “The warm-hearted depositary, who has been a consistent Christian for forty years, has many opportunities for quietly exercising an influence for good. Prisons have been visited, as usual.”²¹¹ It is clear that Rottmayer lead by example. While his touring decreased over time, his steadfast Christian witness was noted by all, and set the tone for the colporteurs under his charge.

4.4. Rottmayer’s Sunday School and Hymnbook

With more of his time spent in Kolozsvár managing the depot, Rottmayer was able to turn more of his energies to a ministry close to his heart, a Sunday school for the children of the city.²¹² His son wrote: “In this way he was able to devote his life to a noble work with enthusiasm. He gathered children around him in a Sunday school held in the Bible depot.”²¹³ A 1917 article in Békehírnök announcing the upcoming Sunday School Day among Hungarian Baptists devoted much of the article to the centenary of

²⁰⁸ 1873 Annual Report, 104.

²⁰⁹ 1873 Annual Report, 104.

²¹⁰ 1873 Annual Report, 104.

²¹¹ The Eighty-Second Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1886. 68.

²¹² In Csopják’s brief description of Rottmayer’s work in Kolozsvár, he made a point of mentioning Rottmayer’s Sunday school: “Here Rottmayer founded a Sunday school and the ... hymnbook he published was used there and in other places.” Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 11. As his son-in-law, Csopják knew how important the Sunday school was to Rottmayer.

²¹³ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 27.

Rottmayer's birth, which would fall just before the celebration, because he was "the first Sunday school teacher in Hungary."²¹⁴ Oddly enough, the date of his first Sunday school was forgotten: "We do not know when the first Sunday school was formed, but already by 1865 it existed in Rottmayer's house in Pest."²¹⁵ Mészáros dated the beginning of this Sunday school at 1860; unfortunately he does not document how he arrived at this date.²¹⁶ According to the testimony of Maria Rottmayer, her father began his Sunday school work in Kolozsvár in the year of his arrival, which would be 1866.²¹⁷ When one considers the extensive touring Rottmayer was required to do for the Bible Society during his first several years in Kolozsvár, his commitment to the Sunday school ministry was profound.

The Békehírnök article continues, "This devout and pious man later moved to Kolozsvár and continued his Sunday school work here on a fairly large scale, such that he sometimes taught 5-6 groups in his house. In a note remaining from 1878 the names of 37 such students are listed who received Christmas presents. The gifts were comprised of pictures, religious tracts, small books and song-books."²¹⁸ Again Maria Rottmayer remembered that there were 35-40 regular students, and sometimes triple that number before Christmas.²¹⁹ The relatively high level on which Rottmayer carried out this ministry can be gauged by the reaction of Mr. Morse, Secretary of the World Sunday School Federation, on his visit to Kolozsvár in 1872. Having come to Hungary to help

²¹⁴ "A vasárnapi iskolák napja [Sunday School Day]." Békehírnök XXIII.22 (Nov. 30 1917): 294.

²¹⁵ "A vasárnapi iskolák napja [Sunday School Day]," 294.

²¹⁶ Mészáros, "A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1973)]," 28.

²¹⁷ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 31.

²¹⁸ "A vasárnapi iskolák napja [Sunday School Day]," 294. These gifts appear to have been a common Sunday school practice. In an 1881 PEIL article it was noted that Rudolf König, who in addition to his pastorate of the Fialgemeinde, also became the president of the Hungarian Sunday School Society, gave as Christmas gifts to the students of the Sunday school sponsored by the church and the Scottish Mission "pictures and youth literature." Láng, Adolf. "A magyarországi, angol rendszer szerinti vasárnapi iskolákról [The English Sunday School System in Hungary]." Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 21.15 (Apr. 10 1881): 470.

²¹⁹ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 32.

“organize” Sunday schools²²⁰, he was “amazed” to learn that a Sunday school had already been in operation for five to six years.²²¹ To this Mészáros adds that Rottmayer was especially noteworthy because his work was carried out not only among his own ethnic group, the Germans, but also among the Hungarians and Rumanians.²²²

Among the gifts distributed to his Sunday school students in 1878, mention was made of song-books. It is possible that this is a reference to the song-book which Rottmayer had published. Csopják wrote that Rottmayer had a song-book published for use in his Sunday school that found use in other locales as well, and gives as the title “Gyermeklant”, or “Children’s Lyre”.²²³ However, Bányai argues that Csopják attributed the wrong title to Rottmayer’s song-book.²²⁴ The difficulty in identifying Rottmayer’s song-book is that he did not place any bibliographical information in the published edition. Fortunately a copy of the song-book has been preserved in which on the inside cover is the following hand-written inscription in German: “This little book was written for use in the Sunday school in Klausenberg under the leadership of brother Johann

²²⁰ Heinrich Meyer spoke of that “American Sunday school person, who in 1872 established a Sunday school in the German-Reformed congregation, also visited Brassó at this time.” Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 52. This was important to Meyer because Morse organized a Sunday school there under the leadership of a gentleman named Binder. Meyer would unsuccessfully attempt to lead Binder and those around him to a fuller understanding of the Baptist faith.

²²¹ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 32.

²²² Mészáros, “A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)],” 28. Morse came to Hungary at the invitation of the Scottish Mission and the German-Reformed Church, and according to Gyula Forgács, “His work got stuck among the Germans.” Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 32. The Sunday school movement was perhaps slow to penetrate Magyar Protestantism, it appears by contrast that Rottmayer was a pioneer in establishing a multi-ethnic Sunday school. Among the names of former students listed in the 1917 BH article, many of which have been magyarized, it is clear that at the very least both German and Hungarian students are present.

²²³ Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 11.

²²⁴ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 32. *Gyermeklant* was actually published by a Reformed assistant pastor, Sándor Farkas, in two editions in 1883 and 1892.

Rottmayer Sr. End of the 1870's.”²²⁵ This is the song-book that Bányai argues was published by Rottmayer. What is most noteworthy of the little book of 39 songs is that it was in Hungarian. The title is “Énekek a keresztényi vasárnapi iskolák számára”, or “Songs for the Christian Sunday School”, published in Budapest in 1876 by Victor Hornyánszky.²²⁶ Some of the songs were possibly translated from German hymns Rottmayer long knew,²²⁷ although Bányai states that most were drawn from a Nazarene hymnal.²²⁸

How is it that Rottmayer, as a Baptist, was able to run a Sunday school ministry? Perhaps the most important observation is that Rottmayer conducted his Sunday school as he did his work for the Bible Society, that is, on a non-denominational basis. True he was inspired by evangelical zeal, but he did not use the Sunday school as a platform for sectarian proselytism. Rottmayer was also able to use the goodwill and trust he generated through his work for the Bible Society to aid in his efforts.²²⁹ Maria Rottmayer said that her father was known by many people in the city, university professors, church educators and clergy, and by other people in polite society. In fact, Rottmayer was able to obtain the help of some of the leading figures of Kolozsvár society for his Sunday school, János Molnár, a high-ranking official with MÁV (Hungarian State Railways), and Countess

²²⁵ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 32.

²²⁶ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 37.

²²⁷ The German Baptists had a hymnal of their own, entitled the “Glaubensstimme”, which was used by German Baptists in Hungary as well.

²²⁸ From a 1991 Békehírnök article cited in Mészáros, “A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1973)],” 29. The history of this hymnal in its many editions and languages, known in German as the “*Neue Zionsharfe*”, in Hungarian as the “*Új Sion Hárfa*”, has been explored by Szigeti. See Szigeti, Jenő. “A nazarénus énekeskönyv története [The History of the Nazarene Hymnal].” „És emlékezzél meg as útról..” [“And you shall remember all the way..”]. Budapest: Szabadegyházak Tanácsa, 1981. 41–58.

²²⁹ Bányai noted that according to the testimony of Maria Rottmayer’s daughter, Gyöngyi Csopják, her mother spoke of Rottmayer’s acceptance as the Bible Society depository in Kolozsvár. As he summarized: “Johann Rottmayer was honored by all kinds of pastors, teachers, and other church functionaries because - despite the fact that they knew he was a Baptist - he never stepped over the allowed boundary.” Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 26.

Vanda Radakovszky, the “former lead the Hungarian, the latter the German classes.”²³⁰ Rottmayer, it must be remembered, was not uninitiated into the realm of polite society, through his cooperation with the Scottish Mission he had become acquainted with the Archduchess Maria Dorothea among others.

That Rottmayer was so conscientious in his conduct as depositary for the Bible Society and was able to secure noteworthy support for his Sunday school has been taken to demonstrate general support for the ministry: “he was able to lead without any vexation from church or civil authorities for many years an organized and open interdenominational Sunday school.”²³¹ However, this is too positive a picture. An important description of Rottmayer’s Sunday school ministry was provided in an 1881 PEIL article examining the introduction of this “English” religious institution to Hungarian soil,²³² which reports that his Sunday school was not admired by all the religious educators of the city:

In Kolozsvár a Mr. Rottmayer pursues the work. The complaint nevertheless is that it is unneeded to hold such a Sunday school here, in which they just sing, pray, and read the Bible. The Catholic teachers threaten the Sunday school students with expulsion from school, while the Protestant teachers speak disparagingly in front of their students about the Sunday school. Nevertheless, 20 to 30 children visit the school. It is planned to divide the school into groups. They held a Christmas celebration here too, and they gave gifts of youth literature to the students furnished by their American benefactors, a Hungarian edition of “Christopher’s Hurdy-Gurdy”. Rottmayer’s longing is for a Hungarian Sunday school children’s magazine - like those found abroad - to be published, so that it would be possible to influence the parents as well.²³³

It is clear that both Catholic and Protestant educators did not care for Rottmayer’s Sunday school, which some characterized as unnecessary. Rottmayer no doubt kept the content of

²³⁰ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 35.

²³¹ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 27.

²³² The PEIL article began by stating, “Wherever the English set down their foot, they bring along with themselves religious institutions.” It then traced the history of the introduction of Sunday schools in Hungary from the British engineer Clark, the chief figure in the construction of the Chain Bridge, who brought Wingate and Smith of the Scottish Mission to Hungary, to the present leaders of the newly formed Hungarian Sunday School Society, Rudolf König, pastor of the German-Reformed Church, Andrew Moody of the Scottish Mission, and Bernhard Victor, depositary of the Bible Society’s Budapest depot.

²³³ Láng, 471.

the Sunday school very simple so as not to arouse denominational strife. But he could not escape criticism, for no matter how basic he kept the Sunday school, he could not disguise his evangelical purpose. It should also be noted that even if Rottmayer was a pioneer in the Sunday school ministry, the article makes it clear that Rottmayer joined himself to those who founded the Hungarian Sunday School Society. That is how he was able to acquire some of the same gifts which were given out at the other Sunday schools. And it is only fitting that the depository for the Kolozsvár depot should desire Christian literature for the Sunday school students. Eventually Hungarian Baptists would publish a Sunday school magazine. Finally, whatever criticism or trouble he encountered, Rottmayer remained undaunted in his efforts.

What then was the impact of Rottmayer's Sunday school work on his Baptist witness? Rottmayer Jr. noted that his father did hold a worship service for adults after the Sunday school, and that later both Heinrich Meyer and Mihály Kornya undertook mission work in Kolozsvár at his father's invitation. The import of this testimony is that Rottmayer did hold some sort of religious meeting for adults, although it is not certain that this service was conducted specifically as a Baptist mission. Bányai argues on the basis of a recollection in Meyer's autobiography that Rottmayer sought to distinguish his non-denominational Sunday school for children from his Baptist mission with adult seekers by holding the former in the depot and the latter in his private residence.²³⁴ The import of Rottmayer Jr.'s testimony does not support this conjecture, which seems to build too much upon coincidence.²³⁵ Szebeni correctly observed that Rottmayer's Sunday school "did not work with the particular goal of a Baptist mission, this notwithstanding, in time a congregation emerged on the basis of Rottmayer's fundamental work."²³⁶ However, the emergence of this Baptist mission was delayed by the non-denominational character of Rottmayer's work, which by virtue of his position with the Bible Society, he was required to adopt. Again Szebeni commented that "in the final analysis the victory of

²³⁴ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 33.

²³⁵ Meyer preached before a "small group" one evening in Rottmayer's private residence. Given both the time and intimate nature of the gathering, one would assume the private residence was a much more appropriate venue for Meyer's preaching than the depot.

²³⁶ Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 21.

the gospel in Transylvania was merely delayed by a decade.”²³⁷ Bányai agreed with this assessment, but noted that given the context of the “dry rationalism” that permeated the religious establishment of the time, Rottmayer’s approach was both understandable and yet still faithful to the “pure evangelical truth”.²³⁸

4.5. Rottmayer’s Baptist Mission in Kolozsvár and Cooperative Baptist Work

Rottmayer’s ministry to the parents of his Sunday school students and other adult seekers was described by his son, “After [the Sunday school] came the worship service for adults and many melancholy souls found relief in the word. Later from the work of Heinrich Meyer and Mihály Kornya a Magyar congregation was formed.”²³⁹ The editor of this article noted that Rottmayer’s service was in German. It is odd that Meyer is associated with the founding of a Magyar congregation, since even more than Rottmayer, who did speak Hungarian if somewhat haltingly, Meyer’s mission was very German-oriented. Rather it was Kornya and some of the Magyar colporteurs associated with Rottmayer who cooperated with him in establishing the Magyar Baptist mission. More of this later. Rottmayer Jr. did not characterize these services as Baptist, and it is likely that Rottmayer at first did not adopt an overtly denominational tone to his services lest he jeopardize his Sunday school ministry. What did separate his meetings from the offerings of the Protestant churches, steeped in rationalist theology, was the clearly evangelical, Bible-oriented focus Rottmayer adopted.

Rottmayer’s denominational identity was left in no doubt, however, by his willingness to invite other Baptists to minister at his residence. His first prominent guest was J.G. Oncken, who visited him in the fall of 1869 on his way back from a tour through southern Russian and the Balkans. His visit came before Rottmayer’s more developed work, but he nevertheless performed some kind of ministry while visiting his friend.²⁴⁰ The significant fact of this visit is that Rottmayer’s Baptist identity was clearly made

²³⁷ Szebeni, A magyarországi baptista egyház történelme [The History of the Hungarian Baptist Church], 21.

²³⁸ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 32.

²³⁹ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 27.

²⁴⁰ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 28.

known in the community by Oncken's ministry. Yet no baptisms would be performed in Kolozsvár until Heinrich Meyer began his Baptist mission in Hungary. Rottmayer himself never performed the baptismal ordinance.

The first concerted effort at Baptist proclamation in Kolozsvár came shortly after Heinrich Meyer's decision to leave the Bible Society for full-time Baptist mission work. He undertook several tours through Transylvania, and would often visit Rottmayer and hold services at his house. His first visit was a difficult one which foreshadowed future problems that would hinder his work in the city. It took place in January of 1876:

I arrived in the evening and received a warm and friendly reception from brother Rottmayer, a little bit less so from his wife. At that time when I first went there, her church membership was still not in order. Originally she belonged to the same Vienna congregation [as her husband] which was established in 1869. I received a commission from the Berlin church to examine the bad report which had spread concerning her.²⁴¹ This was not a small responsibility in the face of such a proud and haughty woman. I reprimanded her a little. When I spoke about myself in the third person, I remained calm. As she observed my calmness, she began to calm down more and more and I did not expel her from the congregation. Within me I formed the conclusion that this sister was just too nervous and I accepted this as an attenuating circumstance. At night ... in brother Rottmayer's apartment I preached the word before a small group. I visited a few families, but with no success.²⁴²

Unfortunately, this difficult visit set a pattern for later relations between Mrs. Rottmayer and Heinrich Meyer. Moreover, Meyer's ministry in Kolozsvár would continue to experience a lack of success.

For example, in a subsequent visit to Kolozsvár, Meyer complained, "On March 19, 1877, I travelled to Kolozsvár where I handed out tracts and had the opportunity to converse with several people about God's word. But all my work here proved in vain so long as more of the brethren did not take part in it. Today a large Magyar congregation is there."²⁴³ Apparently some of the brethren did take part in Meyer's efforts, but he

²⁴¹ It should be remembered that Mrs. Rottmayer was baptized in Pest in 1866 by the Berlin pastor G.W. Lehmann. Even after her return to Prague she had likely remained on the membership list of the Berlin church as a non-residential member. Even given her subsequent membership in the Vienna church along with her husband, the Berlin church would have no doubt been concerned about reports of improper conduct on her part.

²⁴² Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 36–37.

²⁴³ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–

believed he did not receive enough support from them. This complaint of course presupposes that there were some believers in the city who had become a part of the Baptist movement. Rottmayer's ministry in the city was bearing fruit. Yet Meyer was not satisfied with their zeal. This leads to another point, that later, as Meyer acknowledges, a large Magyar congregation was established in the city. This is an oblique reference to the work of Kornya and other Magyar Baptists who helped establish a strong Baptist presence in the city and the surrounding region. So while Meyer's efforts were not rewarded in the way he desired, others were able to make progress.

In other words, it was Meyer's German-oriented mission that progressed very slowly in the city. Again, in his last explicit reference to work in Kolozsvár, which took place in early November of 1878, Meyer wrote, "My work in brother Rottmayer's house unfortunately proved in vain."²⁴⁴ During this visit Meyer did baptize previous converts,²⁴⁵ but made little headway in terms of making new ones. What Meyer neglected to report in his autobiography was that in between his first visit and this visit he had exercised church discipline upon Mrs. Rottmayer. This certainly was a stumbling block to his work in the city.

Bányai suggests another reason for Meyer's lack of success, one which is drawn from Meyer's acknowledgement about the success of the Magyar mission. "The greatest reason for this lack of success - apart from the personal problems - undoubtedly was the nationality question which Meyer left out of consideration."²⁴⁶ Meyer's greatest problem, according to Bányai, was his inability to transcend his "Pan-German" attitude. This, of course, was a major factor in later dissension in the Hungarian Baptist movement. It also likely played a part in the lack of success experienced in Kolozsvár, which was a predominantly Magyar city with strong "anti-Austrian sentiments" since the time of the

1919], 50.

²⁴⁴ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 52.

²⁴⁵ For example, Johann Gromen, who was brought to the Baptist faith in part through the ministry of Rottmayer and became one of his colporteurs, was baptized by Meyer in the Szamos River on November 9, 1878. He would become one of Meyer's most trusted co-workers.

²⁴⁶ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 34.

revolution.²⁴⁷ Unwilling perhaps to make an effort to reach beyond the small German community in the city, and unable to make significant progress within it, Meyer remained frustrated in his efforts.

This having been said, there is no doubt that personality conflicts played a significant role in the lack of progress Meyer suffered through in his visits to Kolozsvár. And while he does mention a Mőse Vencel as a disruptive person that hindered the work there,²⁴⁸ his greatest conflict came with Rottmayer's second wife, Magdolna Bastecky. Meyer's first meeting in January of 1877 narrowly avoided great strife with Mrs. Rottmayer, and he attributed the bad report concerning her, which the Berlin church asked him to investigate, to a nervous condition. Bányai ascribed this bad report to the following unfortunate circumstances, which he learned of from Maria Rottmayer's daughter:

In the beginning, with their father often away for weeks at a time, the rearing of the children was entrusted to this impatient and neurotic woman, who more than once resorted to the most drastic means of discipline. Contributing to her irritability and hysterical outbreaks was the unfortunate circumstance that her little girl, who was the result of her marriage with Johann Rottmayer, only lived a short while. After this Magdolna Bastecky was not blessed with further children. This embittered woman, who was discontented with her fate, vented her frustrations upon her stepchildren, who finally fled from their parents house. From the ninth year of their marriage the Rottmayer's remained entirely alone.²⁴⁹

Johann Rottmayer Jr. had remained in Hamburg for a few years following the 1867 conference, just prior to his father's proposal to Ms. Bastecky, and spent only a brief amount of time at home before settling permanently in Vienna to work under Millard in the Bible Society depot and to serve as a minister in the Baptist congregation there. Rottmayer's other two sons, Wilhelm and Rudolf, emigrated to America. Finally, the unfortunate Maria was sent by her father to relatives in Vienna in 1875 at the tender age of eleven. Rottmayer's one comfort was said to be the Sunday school.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 34.

²⁴⁸ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 37.

²⁴⁹ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 35.

²⁵⁰ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the

Thus Meyer came to a household empty of children at his first visit in January of 1877, and exercised a measure of compassion in undertaking the commission entrusted to him by the Berlin church. However, Meyer continued to hear poor reports of Mrs. Rottmayer, and matters came to a head during his visit in October of that year. According to his diary, Meyer arrived in Kolozsvár in the evening of October 2, and “found a friendly reception from the Rottmayers.”²⁵¹ Yet the next entry, dated October 8, concerned a meeting in Kolozsvár “with the brethren about what to do about sisters Rottmayer and Lajos? I shared my view that this concerned the honor of the Lord and his fellowship, that the welfare of both demanded that discipline be exercised upon them and that for this reason the brethren may also in heartfelt love speak openly about the matter. We earnestly implored the Lord that this might succeed.”²⁵² Meyer had described Mrs. Rottmayer as proud and haughty, and in this instance her demeanor was the cause of the church discipline. She had shown “insolence” to Meyer. Meyer’s *Mitglieder-Register* reads under the entry for Mrs. Rottmayer: “Expelled on October 10th, 1877”. According to Károly Papp Sr., a close friend of Rottmayer’s during his latter years, when Mrs. Rottmayer learned of her expulsion from the fellowship to discipline her for insolence, she responded by kicking Meyer out of the house.²⁵³ And unlike other people who were expelled from the fellowship, demonstrated repentance and consequently readmitted to fellowship, the *Mitglieder-Register* does not record that Mrs. Rottmayer was ever readmitted to fellowship. In his diary entry for Monday, September 2, 1889, Meyer was in Kolozsvár and nearly twelve years after Mrs. Rottmayer had been expelled from the fellowship, a measure of peace was achieved between the two: “I spoke for a long time with Mrs. Rottmayer. A reconciliation took place.”²⁵⁴ It is odd that this reconciliation did

Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 35.

²⁵¹ Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 11.

²⁵² Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 11.

²⁵³ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 35.

²⁵⁴ Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 55.

not lead to readmittance to fellowship. Perhaps that was no longer the goal after such a long time, and the reconciliation was more personal in nature?

In any event, it is little wonder that after this incident Meyer's work in Kolozsvár experienced a lack of success. This turn of events also served to hinder the Baptist mission under Rottmayer's leadership. Little more is known of Rottmayer's German-language services. It appears that at some point during Rottmayer's ministry he began holding dual German and Magyar meetings.²⁵⁵ According to a later Békehírnök article, Kornya came to preach in Kolozsvár as early as 1880.²⁵⁶ Since Rottmayer was uncomfortable with his Hungarian language abilities, he sought the help of Magyar brethren to lead these services.

In the late 1880's Rottmayer invited the colporteur Antal Brassovanyi to help him with the Hungarian language work; baptized by Heinrich Meyer in 1879, Brassovanyi is esteemed as the first evangelist active in the Kalotaszeg (the area between Bánffyhunяд and Kolozsvár).²⁵⁷ In fact, a Brassovanyi is listed as a colporteur with the Kolozsvár depot in the 1877 and 1879 British and Foreign Bible Society Annual Reports. However, he is not listed in the Annual Reports for 1880-1883, presumably because he was engaged in evangelistic work. Yet he reappears attached to the Kolozsvár depot in the 1887 Annual Report. In any case, Brassovanyi's evangelistic work was successful enough to warrant attention from the Kolozsvár newspaper Ellenzék, which periodically chronicled his activities.²⁵⁸

Another colporteur reported to have been enlisted by Rottmayer to help with the Magyar mission was Gáspár Barabás. This is based upon the testimony of Christine

²⁵⁵ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 36.

²⁵⁶ "Kornya Mihály Kolozsváron prédikált 1880-ban [Mihály Kornya Preached in Kolozsvár in 1880]." Békehírnök 12.3 (Feb. 15 1906): 44-46.

²⁵⁷ Kovács, Géza. "A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873-1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873-1894)]." "Krisztusért járva követségben": Tanulmányok a magyar baptista misszió 150 éves történetéből ["We Are Christ's Ambassadors": Studies from the 150 Year History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission]. Ed. Lajos Bereczki. Budapest: Baptista Kiadó, 1996. 77.

²⁵⁸ Kovács, Géza, "A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873-1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873-1894)]," 77.

Rottmayer-Kessel, the daughter of Rottmayer Jr.²⁵⁹ This was occasioned by the request of András Benkő-Szász, who along with István Enyedi-Szabó attended Rottmayer's Hungarian language service. He asked that such a service be held in his house. Rottmayer asked Barabás to conduct the Magyar services. This was in the winter of 1889. By the following year interest was so great that Rottmayer invited his friend Mihály Kornya to come again to Kolozsvár to undertake mission work. In autumn of 1891 Kornya baptized Benkő-Szász and Enyedi-Szabó in the Szamos river. In this manner Rottmayer's efforts resulted in the foundation of a Magyar Baptist Church in Kolozsvár.²⁶⁰

Brief mention should also be made of Rottmayer's Baptist activities outside of Kolozsvár. At two important events in the history of the Baptist movement in Hungary Rottmayer was a participant. More will be said about these milestones, so only cursory comments are necessary here. The first was the meeting of Baptist brethren in Budapest in 1875 on the occasion of a conference for Bible Society colporteurs. In this meeting Rottmayer took a leading role in suggesting a stipend for Heinrich Meyer to make up for the loss of income consequent upon his resignation from the Bible Society in order to devote himself to full-time Baptist ministry. The second event was the ordination conference for Mihály Kornya and Mihály Toth held in Nagyszalonta in November of 1877. Rottmayer was one of those who took part in the laying on of hands for the two new deacons. That Rottmayer was among those called to participate in the ordination council confirms the esteem with which he was held among his Baptist brethren in Hungary. Rottmayer was also present at another Baptist milestone. At the constituting Conference of Baptist Churches in Austria-Hungary held in Budapest in October of 1885, Johann Rottmayer Sr. was a member of the Budapest delegation while Rottmayer Jr. was a member of the Viennese delegation (along with Edward Millard).

²⁵⁹ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 36. The testimony came in the form of a personal letter to the author, dated January 8, 1963. Rottmayer-Kessel lived in Kolozsvár all of her adult life, having married an Adventist pastor in ministry there. The only difficulty is that the name of Barabás never appears among the list of BFBS colporteurs active in Hungary. He does appear among those listed in F. Gusztáv Szabadi's *Missziómunkások Nyilvántartója (Register of Mission Workers)*, which sought to list all those active in ministry in one form or another for the Baptist cause in Hungary during its formative decades. It is possible that Barabás worked not for the British and Foreign Bible Society, but for the National Bible Society of Scotland. The two societies cooperated quite closely, and it is entirely possible that Barabás used Rottmayer's Kolozsvár depot as a base of operation.

²⁶⁰ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 36.

Finally, Rottmayer continued to maintain contacts with his brethren in Germany and to lift up the needs of the Baptist mission in his homeland. In an article he wrote for Der Wahrheitszeuge, a German Baptist publication, after recounting his early experiences in the Baptist work in Hungary, Rottmayer spoke of the needs of the Hungarian mission:

“What would contribute much more to revival and to the fortification of those awakened would be if a Hungarian magazine for edification could be published. The German brethren have so much to read that is edifying and instructive; the Hungarians have no missionary paper, no ‘Der Wahrheitszeuge’ or Sunday school paper, and yet the dear Hungarian brethren listen with great interest to the tremendous events from the sphere of faith.”²⁶¹

Naturally as one engaged in the ministry of disseminating the Scriptures, Rottmayer placed an emphasis upon the value of Christian literature. Thus Rottmayer ends his article with the following request: “Therefore pray my dear brothers for revival in my beautiful fatherland... So many dear children of God from Germany, Scotland, England and America help, advise and pray for us, and for this we feel thankful, and we ask for further help so we might soon receive missionaries and develop a Hungarian paper.”²⁶² Rottmayer would wait another ten years before this prayer for a Hungarian paper was realized.

4.6. Rottmayer’s Retirement and the Closure of the Depot

Johann Rottmayer continued with his work for the British and Foreign Bible Society into his seventies. In his last years of service Rottmayer occupied himself with the operations of the depot and his ministries in Kolozsvár, foregoing his previous practice of making tours in the region. The circumstances of his retirement were described by his son. “Having advanced beyond seventy years of age, he felt tired and desired to retire from service. There was already a rail traffic [between Budapest and Kolozsvár], Bible retailers could now be satisfied from Budapest, therefore the Kolozsvár depot closed down. He loved nature and gardens and bought a vineyard, but he had to walk far to get to it. So he sold his house in which the Bible depot was located and built another house closer to it. He lived his last years here. Next to the house was an orchard with which he was continually occupied. But he also frequently visited the poor and the sick and sought

²⁶¹ Rottmayer, Johann, “Weiteres über Ungarn,” 171.

²⁶² Rottmayer, Johann, “Weiteres über Ungarn,” 171.

to comfort them, such that everyone honored and loved him.”²⁶³ Rottmayer’s retirement was thus placed after his seventieth birthday, but a specific date was not given. This has resulted in a bit of speculation on the part of Hungarian Baptists as to when Rottmayer retired and on his activities during his last years.

An early date for Rottmayer’s retirement was proposed by Bányai, who placed it shortly after he turned seventy in 1888, although he suggested that Rottmayer continued to lead his “Sunday gatherings” in the old depot, “partly in German, partly in Hungarian with a German accent.”²⁶⁴ Mészáros concurs with this assessment, adding that the former depot had now become the home of the new Baptist church.²⁶⁵ A refinement of Bányai’s view was offered in a subsequent article, in which he argued that although Rottmayer retired in 1888, he continued to run the affairs of the National Bible Society of Scotland for a few more years until he sold his house/depot in 1893 to be closer to his vineyard.²⁶⁶ This in essence suggests a semi-retirement from sometime in 1888 until 1893, when Rottmayer fully retired from all active ministry.

Another early source concerning Rottmayer’s retirement comes from a Békehírnök article celebrating December 30, 1917, as “Sunday School Day”, in which Rottmayer’s life and ministry, particularly his pioneering work with Sunday schools, was recounted. The article furnishes the following information: “The Sunday school later grew even further and was held continually until approximately 1890; at this time in view of his move to the outer edge of the city, which proved rather disadvantageous to the Sunday school - and to which other even more disadvantageous circumstances were added - the Sunday school ceased. He was after all at that time already a 73 year old man. It was very painful to him that he could not carry on this work any further.”²⁶⁷ László Gerzsenyi follows this dating of Rottmayer’s move, suggesting that this was when

²⁶³ Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 27.

²⁶⁴ Bányai, “Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission],” 35–36.

²⁶⁵ Mészáros, “A baptista misszió megjelenése (1846–1873) [The Appearance of the Baptist Mission (1846–1873)],” 28.

²⁶⁶ Bányai, “Válasz Pechtol János és Szigeti Jenő megjegyzéseire [An Answer to János Pechtol’s and Jenő Szigeti’s Notes],” 231.

²⁶⁷ “A vasárnapi iskolák napja [Sunday School Day],” 295.

Rottmayer retired from all active ministry.²⁶⁸ It is interesting that only an approximate date was given for Rottmayer's retirement and move by this article. Among the Sunday school leaders whose name was attached to the article was Attila Csopják, Rottmayer's son-in-law, and likely the source for the biographical information about Rottmayer. Oddly enough, Gyöngyike Csopják, the daughter of Maria Rottmayer Csopják, passed on a different recollection. She stated that her mother told her that Rottmayer continued to be involved with the Sunday school until his death.²⁶⁹ Perhaps the resolution to this conflict is that the Sunday school ministry was entrusted to another person, with Rottmayer participating as circumstances permitted?

The central question then becomes: when did Rottmayer sell his house/depot in the center of town to move closer to his vineyard? It is true that the need for the depot declined as Transylvania became integrated into Hungary's rail infrastructure. In the 1886 Annual Report it was reported: "Transylvania has become so assimilated to Hungary that the necessity for treating them as distinct districts no longer exists."²⁷⁰ This certainly explains why the depot was closed with Rottmayer's retirement. Yet in the following sentence we read: "The work proceeds without any serious obstacle, and the authorities in many places show their appreciation of it... The warm-hearted depositary, who has been a consistent Christian for forty years, has many opportunities for quietly exercising an influence for good."²⁷¹ There is thus no indication that the work was coming to a close despite the change in Transylvania's material circumstances.

It was not until nearly ten years after this report that the 1895 Annual Report announced the closure of the depot in Transylvania:

The work in Transylvania is now under the management of the Budapest Depositary.
Our former Depositary, Mr. Rottmayer senior,²⁷² who served the society most faithfully and with heart and soul during twenty-eight years, was last

²⁶⁸ Gerzsenyi, "A baptista misszió önállósulása (1894–1920) [The Baptist Mission Achieves Independence (1894–1920)]," 125.

²⁶⁹ Bányai, "Válasz Pechtol János és Szigeti Jenő megjegyzéseire [An Answer to János Pechtol's and Jenő Szigeti's Notes]," 231.

²⁷⁰ 1886 Annual Report, 68.

²⁷¹ 1886 Annual Report, 68.

²⁷² The notation of "senior" was necessary to distinguish Rottmayer from his son, who was then employed in the Vienna depot, and was no doubt known to many of the Bible Society's more knowledgeable supporters.

April compelled by old age and failing strength to give up the work so dear to him. It was hard for him and his wife, the faithful sharer of all his joys and cares, to part from it and the colporteurs. May God's blessing follow them all the days of their life.

It was still his privilege to report a good circulation during the last few months of his active service.²⁷³

This places Rottmayer's retirement in April of 1894, and should be accepted as the most reliable testimony available to us. Thus at the age of 75 he was constrained to give up his work. This date comes close to the 1893 date for the sale of the house suggested by Bányai, but four years later than the tentative date given by the 1917 Békehírnök article. On the basis of the 1895 Annual Report I believe that shortly after retiring from the Bible Society in April of 1894, Rottmayer sold his house in the center of town to move closer to his vineyard.²⁷⁴

At the same time he was also constrained to give up his Sunday school work, although it is possible that someone else took over the leadership of this non-denominational ministry, enabling Rottmayer to stay nominally involved as his strength allowed. With regards to the worship service for adults held in conjunction with the Sunday school, these had certainly ceased by this time. Yet it must be remembered that by this time the Baptist fellowship in Kolozsvár had been firmly established for nearly three years following the 1891 baptisms performed by Kornya. Rottmayer had always been uncomfortable leading a Magyar language ministry, it is likely then that Rottmayer's retirement and move to the edge of the city had little impact on the growing Magyar work centered around Benkő-Szasz and Enyedi-Szabó. We know from Károly Papp Sr., a later pastor of the Kolozsvár fellowship who first moved to the city in 1895, that Kornya "never missed an opportunity to seek out brother Rottmayer as often as he came to Kolozsvár."²⁷⁵ This indicates a Magyar Baptist mission in the city which was not dependent upon Rottmayer's active leadership.

If any ministry suffered from Rottmayer's retirement, it would be the adult Baptist worship services in German, a ministry which we know from Heinrich Meyer never

²⁷³ The Ninety-First Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. London, 1895. 50.

²⁷⁴ This is confirmed by the Adventist missionary L.R. Conradi, who spoke of the move following Rottmayer's retirement. Conradi, Ludwig Richard. "Our First Baptism in Hungary." The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 72.28 (July 9 1895): 441.

²⁷⁵ Bányai, "Válasz Pechtol János és Szigeti Jenő megjegyzéseire [An Answer to János Pechtol's and Jenő Szigeti's Notes]," 231.

became firmly established. We know that Rottmayer could not have participated in German language Baptist services towards the end of his life because of a change in his circumstances. In fact, this question concerning Johann Rottmayer's involvement in the Baptist life of Kolozsvár during his final years has become a thorny issue because it is the contention of the Seventh Day Adventists of Hungary that Rottmayer ended his life as an Adventist, and should be considered the 'father' of Hungarian Adventism. This view has been promoted among Hungarian church historians by Jenő Szigeti²⁷⁶, and taken up in the West by the German Adventist historian Daniel Heinz²⁷⁷. This view has been vociferously denied by Hungarian Baptists, particularly Jenő Bányai,²⁷⁸ who have had no voice in the West. This is a shame because a preponderance of the evidence supports the Baptist claim that Rottmayer remained faithful to his Baptist convictions. With the advantage of Adventist primary source materials not available to Hungarian Baptist

²⁷⁶ Szigeti and a colleague, János Pechtol, opened this debate in a response to Jenő Bányai's 1966 article in *Theologiai Szemle* examining the work of Rottmayer and Novák in Transylvania and the Alföld. Published shortly afterwards, and borrowing its title from Bányai's, the article was entitled simply Notes on the article "The beginning period of the Baptist mission in Transylvania and the Great Plains". The aim of the article was to correct an impression that Bányai left that Rottmayer ended his life as a Baptist, arguing that in fact Rottmayer had become an Adventist in the last years of his life. This article in turn invited a response from Bányai arguing that Rottmayer was constrained to live as an Adventist because of his wife, but never became an Adventist by conviction. This ended the back and forth exchange between the two sides, but not Szigeti's interest in this subject. He returned to this theme in an article originally published in *Theologiai Szemle* in 1970 on the subject of how Steps to Christ, the most well-known evangelistic book by the founder of the SDA movement, Ellen G. White, came to be translated into Hungarian. Entitled "Steps to Christ" in Hungary, the article appeared in a revised version in Szigeti's 1981 compilation of articles on various aspects of the history of the Free Church movements in Hungary, which borrowed its title from Deuteronomy 8:2, "And remember the long way...". The significant factor in the revision was that Szigeti had in the intervening period been invited to America to undertake research at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. There he was able to examine early Adventist literature in the Adventist Heritage Center of the James White Library. As a result he briefly refined his earlier argument concerning Rottmayer's delayed conversion.

²⁷⁷ Heinz discusses Rottmayer's supposed conversion to Adventism in two monographs that appeared in the series "Archives of International Adventist History". The first was Ludwig Richard Conradi: Missionar der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten in Europa, a biography of the missionary who is credited with converting the Rottmayer family. The second was Church, State, and Religious Dissent: A History of Seventh-day Adventists in Austria, 1890-1975. In both monographs Heinz, despite his citation of earlier sources that are contradictory, nevertheless repeats Conradi's later idealized recollection of how he converted the Rottmayer family. Moreover, while the debate between Szigeti and Bányai is cited in the footnotes (in untranslated form), Heinz failed to point out that Rottmayer's conversion is a debated matter among the Seventh Day Adventist and Baptist denominations in Hungary. Thus scholars in the West who have no means of reading the relevant Hungarian language materials are left, on the basis of Heinz's work, with the mistaken impression that Rottmayer's conversion to Adventism is an established fact.

²⁷⁸ Bányai, "Válasz Pechtol János és Szigeti Jenő megjegyzéseire [An Answer to János Pechtol's and Jenő Szigeti's Notes]."

historians, I have argued elsewhere that the Adventist historiography on the origins of their movement in Hungary has incorrectly relied on the later hagiographic remembrances of Ludwig Richard Conradi, the first Adventist missionary in Europe, over his contemporaneous reporting.²⁷⁹ A cursory reading of the contemporaneous reporting of Conradi concerning the progress of his evangelistic work in Hungary flatly contradicts his later recollections of Rottmayer's quick conversion to Adventism. What is beyond dispute, however, is that Rottmayer's wife Magdolna embraced Adventism, and in fact she was described by Conradi as the "first Seventh-day Adventist member" in Hungary.²⁸⁰ With the Adventist case for Rottmayer's rapid conversion to Adventism clearly discredited, the weight of evidence from those close to Johann Rottmayer in his final years does suggest that Rottmayer was constrained to live as an Adventist by his wife, and this casts serious doubt on the veracity of his 'conversion' to Adventism. Thus I argue: "If then the Hungarian Adventists do not have a true indigenous father, the converse of this conclusion is that they do have a mother - Magdolna Rottmayer."²⁸¹

The battle for Johann Rottmayer was, unfortunately, carried to his grave. In the spring of 1901, while Rottmayer was working in his orchard pruning his fruit trees, he fell off the ladder and as a result he became bed-ridden. During his long convalescence he contracted pneumonia. Sensing that her husband would soon die, Rottmayer's wife contacted the Adventist missionary Huenergardt, who was living in Budapest at that time, to hurry down to Kolozsvár. He arrived to find an unconscious old man in his last struggle. Rottmayer died soon after. Of his father's death, Rottmayer Jr. simply wrote, "On March 26, 1901, in his eightyfourth year he closed his eyes. His return home was peaceful, his blessed memory lives on. Praised be the Lord's holy name!"²⁸² No mention was made concerning the controversy that surrounded his father's final years, or his funeral.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Kish, Alex. "Did the First Hungarian Baptist Become the First Hungarian Adventist? Johann Rottmayer and the Practice of Free Church Missions in Nineteenth Century Central Europe." Journal of European Baptist Studies 7.1 (Sept 2006): 23–43.

²⁸⁰ Conradi, Ludwig Richard. "The Demands of the German and Russian Mission Fields." The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 68.50 (Dec. 22 1891): 790.

²⁸¹ Kish, 43.

²⁸² Rottmayer, Johann, Jr., 27.

²⁸³ It is odd that Rottmayer Jr. did not directly address this controversy. One could argue that he

5. Why was no lasting Baptist mission planted at the first attempt?

Despite the persistent efforts of Johann Rottmayer, Johann Woyka, and the early Baptist pioneers, no lasting presence was established at the first attempt to spread the Baptist faith and message to Hungary. Why did the first mission not bear lasting fruit? The reason described so well by Woyka in his pamphlet *A Voice from Hungary* bears citing again. Speaking of what followed the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution in 1849, he wrote:

The small band of believers was soon broken up and scattered, and those who were prominent among them were hunted til they had to flee for safety from home and kindred. Thus the light was apparently put out again, and many felt the darkness hard to bear, and became “wearied and faint in their minds.” This state of matters lay heavy upon the hearts of the four believing Hungarians, who, in consequence of the fierceness of persecution, were separated from each other, and thus bereft of mutual encouragement and advice, and for the time being were utterly put to silence by the ruling powers.²⁸⁴

Woyka began a new life in Scotland, Marschall and Hornung despaired and married women who did not share their Baptist faith, only Rottmayer attempted to continue a Baptist witness through the dark years of the Bach period. The irony is that Rottmayer was constrained to leave Budapest in 1866 just before the political situation in Hungary would profoundly change for the better. If he had not left the city and the small circle of Baptists gathered around him for Kolozsvár, it is likely that he and not Heinrich Meyer would have been esteemed the founder of the first Baptist congregation in continuous existence in Hungary.

Yet as events unfolded, Heinrich Meyer became the self-proclaimed founder and father of the Baptist mission in Hungary. Even Woyka described Meyer as the “first

made his view known by writing of his father as he did, simply assuming that he was always a Baptist. After all his brother-in-law, Attila Csopják, did the same in his history of the Hungarian Baptist movement. Perhaps his reticence stemmed from the fact that his daughter had converted to Adventism while visiting her grandparents, and took a different view of things? Thus he was constrained by family concerns in a way that Maria Rottmayer Csopják and her husband were not.

²⁸⁴ Woyka, John, 2–3.

missionary” of the Baptist movement in Hungary.²⁸⁵ Meyer’s position as the father of Hungarian Baptists is secure. But the impression he fostered that he began his work with a *tabula rasa* is false. Not only did he claim that there were no Baptists left in Budapest when he arrived, he went on to say that during the course of his work as a colporteur in the city, which took him into the length and breadth of its many districts and various populations, “I did not find any trace that Baptists had been anywhere here, although here and there I would meet a person or two who knew Rottmayer’s name or who knew about the work of the brethren before 1848.”²⁸⁶ In the same breath in which he discounts Rottmayer’s Baptist work, he exaggerates Rottmayer’s role in the Scottish Mission and Filialgemeinde, reinterpreting Rottmayer’s relationship with Van Andel and König.²⁸⁷ By portraying Rottmayer’s relationship with Van Andel and König as a partnership along Evangelical Alliance/Free Church lines, he sought to diminish the specifically Baptist character of Rottmayer’s work. Similarly, Meyer did not seem to know that Rottmayer was instrumental in Antal Novák’s evangelical conversion and gave an inaccurate (if not implausible) picture of the circumstances surrounding Novák’s baptism.²⁸⁸

This was an interpretation Meyer promoted early on in his ministry in an 1884 letter to Der Wahrheitszeuge that also discussed his efforts to build a chapel in Budapest. He began the letter with some general comments on the dearth of religious influence in Hungarian society as a whole, and then blamed the ascendance of socialism, materialism, and atheism on the rationalism that had swept over the Protestant clergy of the country. Then in an interesting paragraph Meyer claims that this religious climate was perhaps responsible for the failure of the previous Baptist mission in Hungary. He wrote:

²⁸⁵ Woyka, John, 7.

²⁸⁶ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 31–32.

²⁸⁷ Meyer’s picture is a bit difficult to reconcile. On the one hand there was barely a trace of Rottmayer’s Baptist work in the city. Yet on the other hand, when Meyer performed his first baptisms in Budapest, the negative reaction that came from certain people in the Filialgemeinde was a result of the previous work of Rottmayer and, in particular, the 1865 baptisms performed by G.W. Lehmann. This shows to the contrary that while Rottmayer did not leave an active kernel of believers upon which Meyer could build when he came to Budapest, Rottmayer and his work was well known among evangelical circles. If Meyer suffered from the more narrow evangelical outlook of Biberauer just like Rottmayer, he also enjoyed a warmer relationship with Rev. König because of the latter’s regard for Rottmayer.

²⁸⁸ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 33.

Perhaps this general lack of religiosity is to blame for the fact that the many pains of those young Hungarians who were baptized in Hamburg in 1844 and returned to Pest in 1846 (among these was Br. J. Rottmayer, who still lives in Klausenburg), as well as those of the brethren F. Oncken and Lords who joined them for some years, had no lasting success. Likewise Br. G.W. Lehmann already in 1865 baptized some people, but soon enough all from that was dissipated, and every attempt and beginning [from that time] stands in no relationship with the emergence of the congregation now existing.²⁸⁹

On the surface this claim is in some sense factually correct, in that Meyer's Budapest congregation was built largely by his own efforts, with only a few non-resident Baptist pioneers such as Rottmayer and Novák joining the Budapest congregation by way of transfer of membership from the Vienna congregation. But this picture is misleading in that it gives no credit to how the ground was prepared for Meyer by the labors of Rottmayer, Novák, and others.

This accounts for Rottmayer's response in a following issue of Der Wahrheitszeuge, one that demonstrated his irenic spirit. In his response Rottmayer pointed out that there were many believers to be found in Hungary before Meyer arrived. He made mention of the Scottish Mission, Georg Bauhofer, the pastors of the Filialgemeinde, and especially the work of Novák. Rottmayer's contention concerning Novák, that "God had in his great mercy blessed the witness of this brother, such that Br. Meyer found some already believing souls," is irrefutable.²⁹⁰ Rottmayer then went on to praise the work of Kornya, who was proving to be a most effective missionary to the Hungarians. Rottmayer concluded with a plea to have some Hungarian brethren sent to Hamburg for training in the seminary and for support for Hungarian language Baptist literature.

Further insight into Meyer's frame of mind can be had by the response to Rottmayer's letter by one of Meyer's co-workers, Johann Gromen. The letter displays a measure of the condescending German attitude of *noblesse oblige* that came to rankle Magyar Baptists as the Baptist mission progressed in Hungary, and it also employs a more sectarian outlook than was typical of Meyer and his associates in defense of Meyer's role as founder and father of the Baptist mission in Hungary. The key passage revolves around the work of Novák and the origin of the rapidly growing Magyar

²⁸⁹ Meyer, Heinrich. "Die Baptistengemeinde in Budapest." Der Wahrheitszeuge 6.14 (July 15 1884): 151.

²⁹⁰ Rottmayer, Johann, "Weiteres über Ungarn," 171.

mission. Gromen wrote, “It is true that through the very zealous efforts of our Br. Novak, whom the Lord unfortunately called home so quickly, our first Hungarian brethren were first awoken; but it is incorrect that Br. Meyer found these same as believers when he came to Hungary. First when the educational work of the Pest congregation had begun did these souls come to belief, and when at the end of August 1875 Br. Meyer visited them for the first time, it still required enough toil and work until these first fruits from the stock of the Magyars could be baptized. One of these was Br. Kornya, who was trained under the instruction, leading, and care of Br. Meyer, [and] after several years stepped into missionary service at the latter’s wish.”²⁹¹ Gromen also added that with the exception of the Klausenburg station (begun of course by Rottmayer), all of the mission points in Transylvania were begun by Meyer. The effect of this argument is clear; whatever preparatory work was performed by others, Heinrich Meyer alone was responsible for the establishment and spread of the Baptist mission in Hungary, including the Magyar mission with its first center in Nagyszalonta. The claims rests on the fact that, with a few exceptions, Heinrich Meyer baptized and disciplined the early core of believers which comprised the Baptist mission in Hungary. In this narrow sense, Meyer was correct. But to borrow a Pauline analogy, Heinrich Meyer did not both plant, water, and grow the Baptist mission in Hungary with only God as his helper. In part he harvested what others sowed.

Perhaps a contributing factor to the ultimate lack of success in establishing an ongoing Baptist mission by Rottmayer and his compatriots can be found in the contrast between the irenic, cooperative and frequently non-denominational character of the evangelical mission work undertaken by Rottmayer and his colleagues on the one hand, as compared on the to the distinctly denominational character of the work of Meyer and the mission workers, such as Kornya, sent out and supported by Meyer and the Baptist financial partners he cultivated in Germany and America on the other hand. Rottmayer and his colleagues worked in partnership with the Scottish Mission, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the Religious Tract Society. As a result, much of their mission work was evangelical in character, but not specifically denominational. Of course, even in this contrast the ultimate explanation can be found in the political constraints which they faced, which made a more circumspect evangelistic outreach prudent. Heinrich Meyer also began his work in Hungary with the British and Foreign Bible Society, a matter to be

²⁹¹ Gromen, Johann. “Erklärung der Gemeinde in Budapest.” Der Wahrheitszeuge 6.19 (Oct. 1 1884): 201.

addressed shortly. However, when his evangelistic efforts outside of his Bible colportage resulted in baptisms, and those baptisms aroused some controversy among other partners with the Bible Society, he was encouraged by Edward Millard of the Bible Society to resign in order to devote himself to full time Baptist ministry, an option Rottmayer never had during his time in Pest.

Meyer's interpretation of his role in the history of the Baptist mission in Hungary went relatively unchallenged²⁹² until the extent and value of the work by Rottmayer and Novák was revealed by the research of Jenő Bányai.²⁹³ He argued that as colporteurs of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Rottmayer and Novák prepared the ground for the later flowering of the Baptist mission under Meyer, Kornya, and others.²⁹⁴ Concerning Meyer's own view of the matter, Bányai suggested that he "probably did not know" about the "heroic efforts" made by Rottmayer and his companions in the cause of the mission and about the "trials" they underwent, because Meyer never acknowledged them in his writings; rather Meyer "lived til the end of his life with the belief that the Hungarian Baptists came into existence because of his work."²⁹⁵ Yet apart from Meyer's own German-oriented mission focused primarily on Budapest and its environs, which enjoyed a measure of success, much of Meyer's work was spent building upon the work of others. In fact the areas of the Hungarian Baptist mission which experienced the most dynamic growth, the Hungarian and Rumanian districts of the Alföld and Transylvania, were not the fruit of Meyer's labor. These fields were sown by Rottmayer, Novák, and the

²⁹² For polemical reasons stemming from the split between Meyer and the independent Magyar Baptist mission, Meyer's role was on occasion minimized by those in the opposite camp.

²⁹³ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]". I have tried to extend Bányai's work through a more thorough examination of British and Foreign Bible Society materials he did not have at his disposal.

²⁹⁴ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 28. In an article giving a brief overview of the history of the Baptist mission in Hungary, Bányai calls the first period of the mission from 1846 to 1880 one of "ploughing and seed-sowing", in which Rottmayer and Novák played a significant role through Bible colportage. He concludes: "If our mission was for decades so successful after the beginning difficulties, we can attribute this in the first place to this methodology [of Bible colportage]! Neither the first Pest-Buda congregation, nor the one following the Bach period, nor especially the revivals among the Magyars of the Great Plains or among the Rumanians would have ever come to pass if the Word of God had not come to those seekers [who received it]." Bányai, "A 125 éves magyarországi baptista misszió korszakainak áttekintése [An Overview of 125 Years of Hungarian Baptist Mission]," 21.

²⁹⁵ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 32.

colporteurs of Rottmayer's Kolozsvár depositary, and harvested primarily by Novák's converts, Mihály Kornya and Mihály Toth.²⁹⁶ Thus Bányai argues: "The Baptist mission, which began on the modest foundation provided by Rottmayer and Novák, was broadened and strengthened by Meyer, until the walls were raised with the assistance of those fellow-workers who came to confess Baptist principles of faith upon the testimony given from the mouths of Rottmayer and Novák."²⁹⁷ The Baptist mission in Hungary crystallized around the person and work of Heinrich Meyer. Nevertheless, in a very real sense the specifically Magyar Baptist mission is a living stream that flows from Rottmayer and Novák through Kornya and Tóth into the wider river of the first early pioneers, continuing until this day.

²⁹⁶ This is not to detract from the pastoral oversight and discipleship Meyer gave to Kornya and Toth, and how he encouraged their growth in the ministry. This accounts for the fact that when the independent Magyar Baptist mission began in 1893-94, both of these leading men stood by Meyer.

²⁹⁷ Bányai, "Az erdélyi és alföldi baptista misszió kezdeti korszaka [The Beginning Period of the Transylvanian and Hungarian Plains Baptist Mission]," 36.

Chapter 5

Wandering Apostles and Prophets

1. The Impact of the Compromise on the Churches

1.1. Liberal Ideas of a “Free Church in a Free State” and the Constraints of Politics

1.1.1. Eötvös and the Legacy of Law XX of 1848

Whatever disagreements attended the 1867 Compromise, it marked a reversal of fortune for Hungarian liberals following nearly two decades of Habsburg “neo-absolutist” experiments.¹ Great hopes were expressed by liberals of all stripes for the completion of the process of building a modern Hungarian state and society begun in 1848. In few areas were greater expectations laid up than in church-state relations. After all, among the liberals’ most distinguishing principles was a belief in the individual’s liberty of conscience and the freedom and equality of the Churches in the law. For example, a prominent hallmark of Hungarian liberals was their desire to enact civil equality for the Jews and to work towards the legal recognition of their religion. They also rejected anti-semitism in political life.

Yet on the part of many liberals, particularly among the Protestant gentry of the opposition, a strong element of anti-clericalism also existed. This did not serve as an impetus to reform but actually hindered it. “The program of equality of status and in law for all confessions put most Catholic believers on the defensive; how far, they wondered, was the liberal program merely a disguise for Protestant retribution?”² The historical privileges and vast wealth of the Catholic Church were a prime target to redress historical

1. Ágnes Deák wrote concerning the common designation for this period: “It was not the pre-1848 absolutism that was resurrected here after the great historic shock of 1848-1849 but rather a ‘neo-absolutist’ version.” Deák, Ágnes, 42.

2. Péter, László. “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900).” Hungary and European Civilization. Ed. György Ránki. Indiana University Studies on Hungary 3. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989. 85.

grievances.³ However, anticlericalism was not the prevailing spirit of the Andrassy cabinet, which was dominated by Catholic liberals who wanted to reform their church rather than wage a *Kulturkampf* against it.⁴

In parliament the principle which won “general approval” from the members was that of a “free church in a free state”, with all sides expecting the government to act “in the spirit of 1848.”⁵ In fact the parliamentary record shows that when Deák declared to the members of parliament in a speech that a “free church in a free state - this is my slogan”, the members responded with laudatory cries of “Hear! Hear!”⁶ This desire to work “in the spirit of 1848”⁷ seemed to be assured by the fact that the new head of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education (also known as the *kultusz* ministry, I shall also use the Magyar abbreviation VKM, which stands for *Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi Minisztérium*), Baron Eötvös, held the same portfolio in 1848. He was a stalwart champion of liberty of conscience.

3. The Hungarian Roman Catholic Church held prior to WW I over 1.5 million *hold* of land (one *hold* = 0.57 hectares), making it by far the largest single landholder. The income from the various Church holdings were, according to the *ius patronatus*, administered by the government, specifically by the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, as a trustee in cooperation with the hierarchy. The income was used to pay the clergy and to finance the Catholic schools. It was little wonder then that the anticlericals “demanded after 1867 that the Roman Catholic Church be stripped of its privileges, that its property be secularized or, at least, the Roman Catholic funds be absorbed into state revenues and be shared out equally among the other churches.” Péter, László. “Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary: A Historical Perspective.” *Hungarian Studies* 10.1 (1995): 8.

4. The outlook of the governing party has been described in the following terms: “Die größte und bedeutendste Partei, die Deák-Partei, war gemäßigt liberal. Sie hielt zwar eine Reform der sogenannten gemischten religiösen Fragen, wie Schulwesen, Kirchenvermögen und Matrikelführung für dringend notwendig, war jedoch auf einen konfessionellen Frieden bedacht.” Adriányi, 118.

5. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 80.

6. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 121.

7. What is meant by the phrase “in the spirit of 1848” with regard to ecclesiastical legislation? Perhaps a sense of what is meant can be imparted by the comments of Lajos Kossuth before the Diet at the passage of Law XX of 1848 dealing with ecclesiastical affairs, which provided for full reciprocity between the recognized religions. “Daß das Gesetz irgendeiner Kirche die Stellung der ‘herrschenden’ Religion geben und daß diese Kirche der herrschenden Religion den Charakter einer mit Pfründen, Vorrechten und Macht bekleideten Staatseinrichtung besitzen soll, ist unvereinbar mit der menschlichen Freiheit, insbesondere mit der Freiheit des Gewissens. Eine solche Einrichtung widerspricht den Grundbegriffen der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und der staatlichen Souveränität so sehr, sie ist die Quelle von so viel Leid, so viel Unglück, so viel Streit und so viel Ärgernis gewesen, daß wir uns entschlossen haben, diese schreckliche Lehre aus dem ungarischen Staatsrecht zu streichen und den weisen, gerechten und wohltätigen Grundsatz zum Gesetz zu erheben, daß keine Konfession der anderen übergeordnet sein kann.” Góttas, 496.

However, the important question was what was meant by this slogan? The slogan first made its appearance in Hungary in the 1840's and was inherently ambiguous in its meaning: "some understood by it the church's freedom from the state, others the state's freedom from the church."⁸ It has been suggested that this principle won such wide acceptance "perhaps because it was hardly ever used in any specific sense."⁹ The German consul-general in Budapest, Baron Waecker-Gotter, reported to Bismarck late in the course of the church political debates in 1873:

The "American system" which Deák proclaims can be seen as nothing more than a slogan for his program, which manifests precisely in relation to the most important conflict points enough in the way of omissions and opacity. It is significant that in the rank of newspapers which to a man greeted the act of parliament with joy, and are now busy trying to interpret Deák's speech like a gospel, even the ultramontane newspapers are not absent. These parties can all accept the slogan of a free church in a free state in their own ways.¹⁰

In the transition from feudalism to a civil society was the emphasis to be placed upon the prerogatives and liberties of the state or the Churches?¹¹

For some the image conjured by the rhetoric of church-state reform was that of the American experiment of a separation of church and state.¹² Yet this would have entailed a radical departure for the Churches, the state, and the Crown, as well as for Hungarian society. Leaving aside the issue of the complex relationship between the Roman Catholic Church, the Hungarian state, and the Habsburg Crown, the Protestant Churches did not desire such a radical solution to guarantee their liberties and assure confessional equality.

8. Péter, "Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary: A Historical Perspective," 26.

9. Péter, "Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)," 80.

10. Adriányi, 130.

11. In the Hungarian context, this was essentially an issue revolving around the ties binding the Roman Catholic Church and Hungarian state together and the idea of Catholic autonomy.

12. Gábor Salacz argued that both Ferenc Deák and József Eötvös, as well-meaning Catholic liberals, had the American experiment in mind. "The example of the United States in North America was in front of their eyes, where separation was not motivated by opposition to the Church, but indeed the state greatly honored religion." But he continued, they forgot that "in Hungary the situation was completely different than in America, where the separation was present from the beginning and special conditions warranted it. They forgot that in Hungary separation would represent a break with historical continuity..." Salacz, Gábor. Egyház és állam Magyarországon a dualizmus korában, 1867–1918 [Church and State in Hungary During the Period of Dualism, 1867–1918]. *Dissertationes Hungaricae Ex Historia Ecclesiae*, no. 2. München: Aurora Könyvek, 1974. 11.

In explaining the different degrees of autonomy achieved by the various Churches, László Péter commented:

No Church was ever separated from the state. The Churches themselves did not want separation. They wished to be legally recognized, to be endowed with church statutes, to be entitled to legal and administrative protection by the state, including the right to seek help from the civil authorities to enforce their own regulations and to maintain internal discipline. Above all, Churches expected subsidies from the government to pay their clergy and support their schools.¹³

The Protestant churches believed themselves to be too weak financially to survive without the support of the state. For the most part, the anticlerical sentiments of Protestant churchmen desired to harness the power of the state to level the playing field by weakening the Catholic Church (through eliminating their privileges and the secularization of their endowments), as opposed to a more radical separation of church and state. The Catholic historian Gábor Salacz criticized this aspect of liberalism, arguing that Hungarian liberals could not abide an autonomous power like the Catholic Church which stood in opposition to the principles of liberalism. He argued:

They wanted to keep the reins in their hands, but with a different purpose than Josephinism. Josephinism and liberalism alike required the autarchy of the state, but while Josephinism decided that in the interest of the state religion was very important, liberalism on the other hand struggled to partition as much as possible the spheres of the church and the state.¹⁴

In any case, a principled stand for separation of church and state would have been an exercise in futility, for the crown and the Catholic hierarchy zealously guarded their respective privileges and would never have agreed to the disestablishment of the Church.

Thus while a few voices among the more strident anticlericals called for a separation of church and state, most were content to focus on the more appealing prospect of enlarging state power at the expense of the Catholic Church.¹⁵ Yet the starting point for all liberals was the language of “equality” and “reciprocity” of the Churches in the law as first proclaimed by Law XX of 1848: “Complete equality and reciprocity without any discrimination are hereby declared among all the lawfully received religious

13. Péter, “Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary: A Historical Perspective,” 7.

14. Salacz, 11.

15. In addition to eliminating Catholic Church privileges and calling for the secularization of the church fund, or at least parcelling it out among all the Churches, another popular issue among anticlericals was the demand for the introduction of civil marriage. This in fact became the driving issue of the so-called Hungarian *Kulturkampf* during the 1890’s.

denominations of the fatherland.” This was not the language of a separation of church and state. Rather, Hungarian liberals sought to guarantee the confessional equality of these “lawfully received” churches through statute law as a necessary step towards liberty of conscience for the individual.¹⁶

The question was how to go about achieving this goal? Two concerns seem to have dominated the thinking of Eötvös about moving towards the confessional equality of the churches. First, any statutory measures had to be worked out with the consent of the churches in order not to exacerbate sectarian strife. Secondly, the goal of confessional equality and reciprocity was predicated upon the churches operating as autonomous, self-governing entities. This was already the case with the Protestant and Orthodox communities. However, in explaining why the cabinet was not yet ready to introduce comprehensive legislation in the House regulating church affairs, Eötvös explained in June of 1868 that among other issues, the Catholic Church, “which used to be in a privileged position, did not yet have the security of autonomy.”¹⁷ In other words, Eötvös laid out an agenda in which reform of the Catholic Church had to precede any attempt at comprehensive legislation.

This was reflected in the preamble of Law LIII of 1868, entitled “On Reciprocity Between the Lawfully Received Christian Religions”, which stated: “Until the equal rights of religions are regulated in general, as regards the reciprocity between Christian religions by virtue of Law XX of 1848, the following are enacted.” In this law regulating conversions from one Christian confession to another, Eötvös also attempted to deal with one of the most vexing issues that incited both Protestant and Catholic passions, the religious affiliation of children born to mixed marriages. This issue will be addressed shortly.

16. There was of course a tension between the ideal and what was practical. As Péter noted of the leading statesman among Hungarian liberals at the time of the Compromise: “Deák was an adherent of the principle of ‘free church in a free state’, which he sometimes understood to mean the *egyenjogság* [reciprocity] of self-governing churches, at other times, as the complete separation of church and state, as in North America. But on a more practical level, Deák wished to operate through winning consent. He rejected the idea of taking privileges away from the church by legislation, and repeatedly warned against the dangers of confessional conflict which he found distasteful as well as anti-liberal.” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 86.

17. This reason did not win much sympathy from the anticlerical deputies. In an ironic barb aimed squarely at the hierarchy, one such deputy interjected with the comment, “Who prevented it?” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 81. The obvious suggestion was that the hierarchy was more interested in preserving its privileges than in reforming the Church.

In contrast to the bold endeavor of Law XX of 1848, this temporary measure was weak and uninspiring. This was the sentiment of the House which passed on without debate the plea of its Central Committee to instruct the ministry to advance legislation in the following parliament that would “establish the equal rights of the religious denominations in general” and would “remove all the [legal] obstacles to the realization of the principle.”¹⁸ This report of the Central Committee expressed its disappointment concerning the ministerial bill, stating that it would have preferred a bill “based on the general principle of religious freedom” rather than one “restricted to the reciprocity of the Christian religions.”¹⁹

This was certainly Eötvös’ desire and he continued to propose legislation to this effect, but the enterprise foundered upon the abortive attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church and establish its autonomy. The effort was an inherently difficult one to begin with, since the Crown jealously guarded its privileges with regard to the Church²⁰, and since the hierarchy, already tied so closely to the Crown and now to the government (specifically to the responsible minister), was wary of ceding any privileges lest it become too weak. But this dependence upon the government by the Catholic Church was also matched by the governing party’s dependence upon the prelates, whose support they needed in parliament against the liberal opposition.²¹ Eötvös was as a result already at a disadvantage when he proposed autonomy to the Catholic prelates.

Eötvös presented his case for Catholic autonomy in an open letter to Prince Primate Simor in July 1867. In it he argued that lay apathy was a greater threat to the Church than anticlerical agitation. The problem was one of taxation without representation. The solution resided in Law XX of 1848, the confessional equality of the churches. “For the Church, Eötvös argued, needed freedom rather than privileges. The

18. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 81.

19. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 122.

20. The Crown historically exercised enormous influence over the Church through its claim of *ius patronatus*, by which it assumed the “right” to appoint bishops and to otherwise exercise general supervision of the Church, although some of these claims, “being in conflict with Canon Law, were never recognized by the Holy See.” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 87. Under the Compromise the claim of *ius patronatus* was exercised in conjunction with the responsible minister.

21. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 83. It must be remembered that since the Roman Catholic Church comprised the first Estate in the kingdom, a large number of Catholic bishops sat in the Upper House.

history of France, England and Ireland showed that privileges hindered the Church's influence on society rather than helped it. In declaring religious equality in 1848, the legislators had enabled the Catholic Church to acquire the independence and autonomy that the Protestant churches already enjoyed."²² While Eötvös acknowledged that "according to the principles of our religion, the influence of the laity cannot extend to purely religious subjects", neither church property nor public education fell within this domain.²³ Indeed, Catholic lay participation had existed in the past in Transylvania and the Royal Free Towns, and it was a worthy sacrifice to devolve some of the hierarchy's powers upon an elected lay body in order for the Roman Catholic Church to assume full responsibility for the Catholic funds and other matters now handled by the responsible minister.

The prelates were concerned that the restoration of ministerial responsibility in the exercise of *ius patronatus* might result in even greater interference into the affairs of the Church than under absolutism, and so they responded positively to Eötvös. Preparatory conferences were held with mixed lay and ecclesiastical participation. An impasse was met when lay Catholics, including Deák, "insisted that the elected lay element rather than the hierarchy should be in the dominant position in the organization, a principle which the prelates were reluctant to accept."²⁴ Perhaps a compromise could have been negotiated if the Papal Nuncio and the Roman Curia had played a constructive role, but they were not fond of the idea of a self-governing Hungarian church. With the events of Vatican I about to unfold, anything that would potentially adversely effect the authority of the Holy See was viewed with suspicion. In their view Catholic autonomy could have been the first step towards a "national church".²⁵

Any hope of reform was dashed by the proclamation of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council in July of 1870. Although the Hungarian prelates were largely

22. Péter, "Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)," 89.

23. Péter, "Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)," 89.

24. Péter, "Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)," 89.

25. Péter, "Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)," 90. In fact the idea of Catholic autonomy had first been raised by the Prelates Conference in 1848 after the prelates had failed in their effort to block passage of Law XX of 1848. However, this effort was dropped when radical Catholic liberals latched on to the idea of autonomy as the first step towards a national Catholic Church. This was an idea radical Catholic liberals still cherished in 1867, even if moderates such as Deák and Eötvös clearly did not "regard the autonomists of 1848 as their predecessors." Péter, "Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)," 124.

opposed to the proclamation, once it became official dogma they were duty-bound to support it, and they accordingly closed ranks with the Nuncio and Curia in obedience to the Pope. Naturally the anticlerical forces in Hungary were whipped into a frenzy by it and a political storm broke out over Budapest. Relations between Eötvös and Prince Primate Simor grew strained and the government in general took a dim view of the proclamation, the cabinet even declared that the papal proclamation was an “attack on the state.”²⁶

At the same time Eötvös sought to forestall action by the House to introduce anticlerical legislation for which the cabinet could never have received the monarch’s preliminary sanction. What he did was to inform the bishops through a rescript that the *placetum regium* was in force, thus denying them the government’s permission to publish the papal bull.²⁷ This mollified the anticlerical deputies, but when the congress for Catholic autonomy was held in October of 1870, attitudes on all sides were still so polarized that the government as well as the prelates were content to let the issue quietly die. Subsequent attempts to move forward proved futile.

The crisis over papal infallibility ensured that Law LIII of 1868 would not prove to be a temporary measure awaiting comprehensive legislation. In fact, significant statutory reorganization of church-state affairs would wait until the so-called Hungarian *Kulturkampf* of the 1890’s. “Instead, the customary rights of the Church and the civil authorities appear to be the decisive factors. The growing importance of the ministerial *rendelet* - the customary law of the ministry - was a significant part of this pattern.”²⁸ In this political and social environment, the fact that Law LIII of 1868 did not establish a foundation based upon a general principle of religious freedom, but rather upon the reciprocity of the historic Christian religions, proved adverse to new religious

26. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 90.

27. Before it was rescinded by an 1850 patent and the 1855 Concordat, papal bulls by customary “right” were required to receive the monarch’s *placet* before publication. With the king’s permission, this “administrative dinosaur” was revived to placate the anticlerical forces. Of this Péter commented, “Far too many liberals in the late nineteenth century took for granted that the monarch’s theocratic *placet* was an essential part of the authority of a modern state, and held as axiomatic that the state represented ‘progress’, whereas the church was the epitome of ‘black reaction’. Only a few liberals were concerned about the consequences of resolving the conflicts between parliament and the church by enlarging the ministry’s discretionary powers” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 90–91.

28. Péter, “Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary: A Historical Perspective,” 10.

movements, the so-called “sects”, which were not, as Eötvös noted of the Nazarenes in an 1868 ministerial *rendelet*, among the “lawfully received religious denominations.”²⁹

On August 13, 1868, Eötvös issued VKM *rendelet* [ministerial order] No. 12548 to the city of Pest, which had passed on to the *kultusz* ministry an application by József Sollarsch, a Nazarene cobbler, asking whether the Nazarene’s would be allowed to maintain their own registers (for births, deaths, etc.), or if the civil authorities would administer the registers on their behalf.³⁰ Setting forth the procedure to be adopted by the city, Eötvös noted that the Nazarenes were not a lawfully received denomination, which posed a problem for the *kultusz* ministry, since “According to our laws only the lawfully received religious denominations possess rights; it is only with these [denominations] that the government can communicate officially...”³¹ In other words, only religious denominations that had won legal recognition from the state were conceded to possess legal rights. This “concessionary” view of rights restricted religious freedom and subjected the sects to the ongoing interference of state and ecclesiastical authorities with little hope of legal redress.³² Since the Nazarenes, and later the Baptists and other

29. When Eötvös submitted Law LIII of 1868 to the House, he did not indicate what the “lawfully received religious denominations” in the bill were, nor did he need to do so. “It was common knowledge that at that time the Catholics of all rites, Orthodox Christians, the two large Protestant Churches [the Reformed and Lutheran Churches], and the Unitarians qualified.” Péter, “Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary: A Historical Perspective,” 12.

30. The consequences of the decision rendered by Eötvös in terms of the development of customary law by the *kultusz* ministry is starkly presented by Péter. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 112–14.

31. “A nazarenusokról [About the Nazarenes].” *Protestans Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* 11.35 (Aug. 30 1868): 1131. Because of the interest with which the historic Protestant Churches followed the state’s interaction with the sects, a copy of the *rendelet* with a brief introduction appeared in the August 30, 1868, issue of PEIL. I am translating the ordinance from the Hungarian as it appeared in PEIL.

32. László Péter refers to this as the “autocratic principle”. Péter, “Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary: A Historical Perspective,” 4ff. Unlike in the legal traditions of the West, where the presumption of the law was on the side of the rights of the citizen, in Central and Eastern Europe it was on the side of the state. Hence the *bon mot* of nineteenth century German law students, “In England ist alles erlaubt, was nicht verboten ist. In Deutschland ist alles verboten, was nicht erlaubt ist.” Péter, “Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary: A Historical Perspective,” 24. The implications of this principle in the sphere of religious liberty in Austria-Hungary were forbidding: “In matters of religion, the monarch ... traditionally claimed *ius reformandi*: the right to permit or withhold permission to practice a particular religion. The remedy against autocratic restriction and interference was the growth or recognized religious privileges. Rights developed as concessions by the monarchic state in the form of decrees and statute laws which protected the subject. Customary law then consolidated the process by creating the class of ‘received religion’. But the implication of the ‘concessionary’ view of rights ... was that in areas where rights were not expressly recognized, the authorities could, without any statutory authorization, lawfully restrict the

evangelical groups, did not fall within the category of “lawfully received religious denominations”³³, legally speaking they existed in fundamental insecurity, subject to *kultusz* ministry *uzus*, that is, customary law.

In the case at hand Eötvös informed Pest that the Nazarenes could not yet maintain their own registers. Yet in deference to the principle of liberty of conscience, Eötvös declared, “On the other hand, it is not the responsibility of the government to compel someone to accept any religion against their religious convictions.”³⁴ Thus with respect to birth and death registers, the government would not force Nazarenes to submit their newborn or recently deceased to the rites of a religion they had formerly practiced, and so he instructed that the Nazarenes report births and deaths to the civil authorities, who in turn would see to their registration with the office of the received religion “to which the Nazarene formerly belonged.” In essence the Nazarenes were to be treated as members of their former religion by law, though not by conviction. This resulted in further legal insecurities for the offspring of Nazarene marriages³⁵, although Eötvös hoped to rectify this through further legislation.³⁶

activities of any subject, association, or church.” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 111. The only check then against discriminatory or repressive treatment of religious denominations not “lawfully received” by civil authorities were the liberal principles professed by Hungarian politicians in government. These principles were, as shall be seen, unevenly applied and subject to political and other considerations.

33. Eötvös’ successor Trefort gave in 1887 the standard definition for what constituted a received religion: “...the term ‘received religion’ in public law means that the religion is placed under the protection of the law; it receives legal protection and guarantee of its rights; furthermore it means that those professing that religion are endowed with certain religious and political rights.” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 109. In the context of the moment, this definition put out by Trefort in a ministerial *rendelet* on December 28, 1887, was designed to put the Roman Catholic Church firmly in its place. It was in response to attempt by some in the hierarchy to declare that the Church was not a *recepta religio* [received religion], but still the *avita religio* [ancestral religion] of Hungary, that is, the state church of the kingdom. Trefort’s *rendelet* put an end to this in the liberal interest of maintaining a semblance of confessional equality. Obviously some religions were more equal than others, and the sects were less equal yet.

34. “A nazareniusokról [About the Nazarenes],” 1131.

35. Since civil marriage did not yet exist and the state did not recognize the validity of marriage vows made outside the sanction of the lawfully received religious denominations, Nazarene marriages were not legally recognized. As a result, the children stemming from such marriages were considered, in the words of the ordinance, “illegitimate”, with all the implications this held for the “right of inheritance.”

36. Nazarene marriages could not be recognized by the state, Eötvös surprisingly interjected, only so long as “the law does not make other provisions.” By this Eötvös appears to imply that civil marriage was a possible resolution to this problem.

The contrast with the American experiment of a separation of church and state is clear. In America all religious denominations enjoyed equal protection under the law. American citizens were free to practice their religions within certain commonly applied legal restraints (e.g., Mormon polygamy was not protected under the law), without fear of suffering legal disadvantage. This was not the case in Hungary. With the failure to enact comprehensive legislation reforming church-state affairs, the goal of “confessional equality” was not fully realized, and was not even applicable to those religions not “lawfully received” by the state. This left open the question of to what extent was freedom of conscience truly provided for under the law? Far from achieving their stated ideals, Hungarian liberals, building upon inherited customary law through ministerial ordinances and the like, “unwittingly ... created a discriminatory class system of religion which was an affront to the very principles they professed.”³⁷ This discriminatory hierarchy would be further developed during the years of governance by the Liberal Party under Kálmán Tisza, in which comprehensive legislation would be avoided in favor of piecemeal legislation and ministerial ordinances.

1.1.2. The Stalemate of the Tisza Era

With the rise of the Left Center in the 1870’s and its merger with the remnants of the Deák Party under Kálmán Tisza in 1875 to form the dominant Liberal Party, there was a definite shift in the composition of the House in favor of the anticlericals. This was all the more so because the various factions of the nationalist opposition continued to gain ground in the House during this period as well.

Yet the call for church political reform only came from the ranks of the opposition. And among the anticlerical deputies of the nationalist opposition, the most outspoken and consistent champion of religious liberty was Dániel Irányi, who introduced legislation at each session of parliament calling for civil marriage and freedom of worship.³⁸ A typical example of his rhetoric comes from a speech before the House on

37. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 82.

38. Born to a Protestant gentry family in 1822, Irányi was among the student leaders of the March Youth who proved invaluable in pushing for change during the legal phase of the revolution in March of 1848. He joined the revolutionary government and served in the Justice Ministry in 1848-49. He was also a volunteer in the Hungarian army. With the crushing of the revolution he emigrated for fear of reprisal and became an active member of the emigré community. He returned to Hungary following the Compromise and, on the strength of his patriotic reputation, was quickly elected a deputy to the House as a member of the Party of 1848, a nationalist opposition party, in 1868. In 1884 he became the chairman of the Independence Party. He died in 1892.

December 2, 1876, responding to the claim of Tisza that legislation was not needed to guarantee freedom of worship because it was already established under existing laws:

Gentlemen! Whoever asserts that freedom of religion exists in Hungary, that Hungary has laws that guarantee this freedom, that person - excuse my honest words and with all due respect in which I hold the Prime Minister, for his intelligence as much as for his knowledge - that person either does not know what freedom of religion is, or he does not know the laws of Hungary and does not know what is happening in Hungary.³⁹

It was Irányi who made himself available to the Nazarenes and the Baptists in order to present their grievances to the House. He developed a cordial working relationship with Heinrich Meyer during the course of their meetings, and Meyer was appreciative of his efforts on behalf of the Baptists.⁴⁰ Other anticlerical deputies were perhaps not as sympathetic to the “sects” as Irányi, but nevertheless advocated liberal principles in relation to church-state affairs.

Why then was no attempt made by the Liberal Party government under Tisza to reform church-state affairs?⁴¹ It was certainly not the case that interconfessional conflict was on the wane or that the need for statutory reform had disappeared. In fact, Eötvös’ failed attempt at passing legislation “in the spirit of 1848” had left a temporary measure on the books that had only exacerbated sectarian strife.

This was the previously discussed Law LIII of 1868, “On Reciprocity Between the Lawfully Received Christian Religions”, which opened a “Pandora’s Box of sectarian strife.”⁴² The law, which governed conversions between the received churches, created chaos in its provision regulating the religious affiliation of children born to mixed

39. Zeller, Árpád. A magyar egyházpolitika 1847–1894: Második kötet 1872 - 1894 [Hungarian Church Politics 1847–1894: Part Two 1872 - 1894]. Budapest: Boruth E. Könyvnyomdája, 1894. 475.

40. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 40.

41. For example, Péter observed, “Notwithstanding the shift of parliamentary balance towards anticlericalism, Tisza never openly challenged the Catholic Church on any question throughout his years in government between 1875 and 1890.” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 92. In part, as he explained, this was because there were other crises which occupied the attention of the government. Yet the reality was that Tisza did not want to venture into this area of conflict unless absolutely necessary. “For fifteen years the Liberal government refrained from doing anything that would disturb, let alone undermine, the ‘truce’ between Protestants and Catholics.” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 92.

42. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 94.

marriages.⁴³ The aim of the relevant provision was simple enough. It was to make illegal the *térítvények*, or “assurances”, demanded by the Catholic priest that all children resulting from a mixed marriage would be brought up in the Catholic faith. To be fair, the paragraph in question was changed in the Central Committee and did not reflect Eötvös’ liberal intention.⁴⁴ The law as it passed sought to deal with the problem not by empowering parental choice, as liberty of conscience would suggest, but by assuring the principle of confessional equality guaranteed by the state. This was done by borrowing a practice from Transylvanian law, such that the relevant provision, paragraph 12, stated: “As regards the children of mixed marriages, son’s follow their father’s and daughters follow their mother’s religion.”⁴⁵ Only in this way did the majority of Protestants believe that it was possible to actually prevent assurances. The problem was that the law had a “major omission” in that it “lacked legal sanction.”⁴⁶ Priests were quietly encouraged by the hierarchy to ignore the law and continue as before.

Thus what actually resulted was an intractable problem in which the state was increasingly pressured by the Protestants to enforce what it did not have the fortitude to impose upon a recalcitrant hierarchy and priesthood. The *kultusz* ministry was in perverse bureaucratic logic the only winner, because it was repeatedly called upon to enlarge its

43. With the reforms of Joseph II at the end of the eighteenth century, which ended the jurisdictional monopoly of the Catholic ecclesiastical courts over all lawsuits involving Christian marriages, a parallel court system arose. For Protestants, who viewed marriage primarily as a civil contract, civil courts usually had jurisdictional competence. Since Catholics viewed marriage as a sacrament, their ecclesiastical courts held jurisdiction in Catholic marriages. Moreover, until Law LIII of 1868 enacted a measure of reciprocity, they held exclusive jurisdiction in the case of mixed marriages as well. Of course the introduction of dual jurisdiction into mixed marriages created problems of its own. The overlapping structures of authority was made for confusion and conflict. See: Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 94.

44. Eötvös wrote the provisions such that the parents were free to decide at the time of marriage which religion the children of either sex would follow, although if an agreement could not be reached by both parties, it was then mandated that the male children would follow the father’s religion and the female children the mother’s religion. In this way the assurances demanded by the Catholic priest would be forced to give way to the free decision of the parents. This was naturally opposed by the Catholic Church in light of their belief that marriage was a sacrament, and not merely a civil contract; in their view the demand for assurances “was already a compromise on the part of the Church.” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 95. This of course was greatly resented by the Protestants. And while Eötvös saw his draft as “an attempt to move towards the liberal ideal of liberty of conscience,” Protestants saw it as only leaving the back-door open to the same old practices. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 96.

45. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 96.

46. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 96.

discretionary powers to seek to solve the resulting intransigent problem of *elkeresztelés*, literally the “baptizing away” of Protestant children by Catholic priests, previously mentioned as the practice of “reversal”. Yet even the *kultusz* ministry was ignored by the hierarchy. As pressure mounted an attempt was made to resolve the problem by amending the lack of legal sanctions attached to paragraph 12 of Law LIII of 1868. Law XL of 1879, “On Offenses”, paragraph 53, attached penalties for *elkeresztelés*. However, the High Court, which could be counted on to protect the interests of the Catholic Church, used legal and lexical semantics to eviscerate the intent of the law.⁴⁷ Subsequent efforts by the *kultusz* ministry to get the courts to enforce paragraph 53 of Law XL of 1879 as intended proved futile.⁴⁸

Why was the Tisza regime unwilling to aggressively address confessional conflicts or seek comprehensive reform as a way out of the impasse? Péter commented: “The truth was that the Liberal Party under Tisza, kept together largely by the constitutional issue, in spite of its unassailable parliamentary majority, could not afford to sustain a clear policy to resolve interconfessional conflicts, let alone to realize the idea of *egyenjogúság* [confessional equality].”⁴⁹ From the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church, she was fighting a rear-guard action against an increasingly assertive state.⁵⁰ One Catholic historian argued that the anticlericals hoped to “separate the state from the church, [yet] they would not allow the church to separate from the state but wished to

47. Of this Révész wrote: “For eleven years the Reformed Church continued to struggle against this bullying on the part of Rome; then in 1879 it managed to persuade the government to pass a law forbidding this activity of the Roman priests on pain of two month’s imprisonment. The result was that it was now the turn of the Roman priests to be hailed before the courts. People now excitedly asked whether the government would really have the courage to take steps against priests of the Roman Catholic Church. In actuality some of the lesser courts did pass sentence upon the law-breaking priests, but what happened was that the latter appealed to the High Court in Budapest, and the High Court simply annulled the sentences and freed the priests. Its judgment ran: ‘The baptism of a child in actuality is not baptism into any one denomination, but into the Church Universal.’ But despite this judgment babies thus forcibly baptized were still entered in the parish priest’s register as of the Roman Catholic faith!” Révész, Imre, 135–36.

48. Révész, Imre, 136–37.

49. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 98.

50. The trend was visible in the way the government used its power to ensure the appointment of pliable bishops who would support it, and also in the expansion of ministerial competence over church affairs. During this period the Roman Catholic Church became more dependent upon the government, not less. As Péter noted, “Yet the balance of church-state power did not remain unaltered: the Catholic Church was losing ground.” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 98.

make it more subordinate than it had ever been before.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, direct conflict was avoided. Csáky noted: “Despite growing difficulties that were a direct result of the church political legislation passed in 1868, Prime Minister Tisza maintained his immutable principle of ‘*quieta non movere*’.”⁵² And this policy had illiberal ramifications.

This is most clearly seen in reference to the “sects”. If Minister Eötvös was prevented, despite his principled liberal orientation, from regulating the affairs of new religious denominations in a liberal fashion due to the failure to push through comprehensive reform, the “sects” encountered a less sympathetic *kultusz* ministry under Trefort. It was Trefort who “drew the anti-liberal conclusions implicit in Eötvös’ 1868 ordinance.”⁵³ In 1875 Trefort took this *rendelet* [ministerial order] originally addressed only to Pest and only concerning the Nazarenes, and expanded it to encompass the whole country and any new religion. Moreover, he supplemented the ordinance in a most illiberal direction. According to Trefort, it was necessary to extend “police supervision” to religions “which are not regularly organized.” In addition, the Nazarenes “and other similar sects not lawfully received, whatever they call themselves” were required to fulfill all legal obligations to their former religion; in short they were obliged to continue paying the church tax due to the religion they had left.⁵⁴ This appears to have been a gross violation of liberty of conscience. Yet basing his decision upon Law LIII of 1868, which Trefort interpreted as only “permitting” conversions between the lawfully received Christian religions, Trefort concluded that the Nazarenes and other sectarians had not lawfully left their former religion, and must continue to support their former churches financially.⁵⁵

51. The quote comes from Gábor Salacz, *Egyház és állam Magyarországon a dualizmus korában 1867-1918* [*Church and State in Hungary During the Period of Dualism, 1867-1918*]. The citation translated into English is from Péter. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 91–92.

52. Csáky, Moritz. Der Kulturkampf in Ungarn: Die kirchenpolitische Gesetzgebung der Jahre 1894/95. Studien zur Geschichte der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie. Graz: Hermann Böhlau Nachf., 1967. 104. Péter echoes this principle of Tisza, but cites it in the German as *fortwursteln*, or “muddling through.” Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 92.

53. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 112.

54. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 113.

55. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 113.

This illiberal direction was moderated in June of 1881, when Trefort took cognizance of Eötvös' desire not to compel citizens to register births and deaths (or participate in the religious rites surrounding these events) against their conscience, and carried this desire to its logical conclusion. A particularly egregious example of priestly abuse gave rise to the *rendelet*. Alexa Risztics, a Serb from the village of Mokrin in Torontál County, complained to local authorities that "his dead child was forcibly taken by Kristóf Trifunác, the local Serbian Greek Orthodox priest, and buried according to the Greek Orthodox religious rites, and that having discharged the rite he seized and carried off from the house a bushel of wheat in exchange for the appropriate fee."⁵⁶ Trefort noted that on the basis of the previous ordinances the Nazarenes were not required to participate in the religious rites of their former religions, such as burials or christenings, nor were they required to pay the fees for these rites. As a consolation to the abused family, the priest was compelled to reimburse them for the illegally confiscated fee.

This last case bears witness to the repressive and hostile environment in which the members of "sects" found themselves, in part because the government did not concede to those religious denominations not lawfully received by the state as having any rights. They were at best tolerated, but not protected, by the state. Indeed, they were subject to police supervision, they were discouraged from meeting in public, and were easy targets for harassment from clergy and local civil authorities. Statutory reform to address these grievances, among others, would not come until the so-called Hungarian *Kulturkampf* of the 1890's.

1.2. Nationalism, Magyarization, and the Churches

The 1867 Compromise brought an end to the Habsburg policy of de-magyarization of the churches which followed the repression of the revolution. Under Hungarian liberals, the churches would come under the opposite pressure, particularly with regard to linguistic Magyarization and the parochial schools of the nationalities. This pressure was exerted in various degrees and with varying degrees of success.

56. The ordinance is number 15.226 issued on June 24th, 1881, entitled "Szabályrendelet a nazarénusoktól követelt stóla tárgyában" [Ordinance on the matter of the surplice-fee required from the Nazarenes]. I am translating from a copy of the ordinance contained in the Hungarian Baptist Archives in Budapest. The ordinance can also be found in: Dárday, Sándor. *Közigazgatási törvénytár [Collection of administrative laws]*. Budapest: Athenaeum r. társulat, 1897. 390–91.

With the return of Hungarian constitutionalism, the royal prerogatives of supreme patronage and supreme supervision were now exercised with the requirement of the signature of the responsible minister, the *kultusz* minister. Thus the *kultusz* minister used his influence over the king to ensure that these privileges “would be exercised in harmony with the interests of the nation.”⁵⁷ In the case of the Latin rite Roman Catholic Church, which did not enjoy autonomy, these royal prerogatives were effectively manipulated by the Hungarian government to make sure that only “patriotic Hungarians were nominated for vacant episcopal sees and other influential church posts.”⁵⁸ This control was not as effective with the Uniate churches, in practice the Rumanian Uniate Church vied with its Orthodox counterpart to be a “national” church to its people, whereas the Ruthenian Uniate Church was very loyal to the Hungarian state.⁵⁹ This control was limited to veto power in the autonomously governed Orthodox, Protestant, and Jewish religious bodies.⁶⁰ In the case of the Serbian and Rumanian Orthodox Churches, it was unlikely that a “patriotic Hungarian” could be found for their episcopal posts, rather veto power was exercised to make sure that activists inimical to the unitary Hungarian state would not be elevated. This veto power never needed to be exercised in the case of the Protestant churches. Especially the Reformed and Unitarian Churches, being almost exclusively Magyar in composition, were wholly captured by the spirit of Magyar nationalism.

Pressure was particularly brought to bear upon the denominational and communal schools to become instruments of linguistic Magyarization. The *kultusz* ministry had recourse to its regulatory powers and the power of the purse, through the state subvention for teachers, to enact increasingly strict requirements for the use of Hungarian in the schools. This was particularly effective among the Latin rite Catholic schools, since the *kultusz* ministry managed the Catholic fund. However, the Romanian Uniate, the Romanian and Serbian Orthodox, and the Saxon Lutheran Churches were not as susceptible to the fiscal and other pressures the state could bring to bear upon their schools. This was because they enjoyed autonomy and brought in sufficient income from their numerous estates and rich endowments to fund their schools, which made them less

57. Laszlo, 45.

58. Laszlo, 45.

59. Laszlo, 45–46, 48.

60. Laszlo, 45.

dependent upon state subventions.⁶¹ For those ethnic groups without the protection of a “national” church, the Magyarization policies of the government made significant advances in their schools. Most effected were the Slovaks, three-quarters of whom were Roman Catholic, while the other quarter was Lutheran. Both churches were dominated by Hungarian leadership, and there was no question of autonomous Slovak church structures for the Slovak districts. “The Catholic and Lutheran church leaders faithfully followed the official doctrine that there was no such thing as a Slovak nation.”⁶² While many of the leading figures of the Slovak intelligentsia who championed the Slovak cultural and national revival were clergy, because the Slovak clergy were educated in Hungarian seminaries in the “Magyar” spirit, many of them “remained loyal to Hungary even in the face of increasingly bold Slovak nationalistic agitation in the years preceding World War I.”⁶³ Thus the number of schools teaching primarily in Slovak during this time actually decreased substantially. A similar fate befell the Swabians, the primarily Catholic Germans scattered throughout Hungary.⁶⁴

Perhaps the most unusual response to the increasing role the state played in public education came from among the ardent Magyar patriots of the Protestant confessions. The introduction of compulsory schooling and the consequent rapid expansion of state-sponsored public education was viewed very positively by many, but especially by the Magyar Protestants. While there was some fear among Reformed circles that increasing ministerial regulation might disadvantage their impoverished schools⁶⁵, overall the

61. Laszlo, 46.

62. Laszlo, 46.

63. Laszlo, 47.

64. Unlike the Lutheran Saxons in Transylvania, who lived in contiguous territories and were historically recognized as one of the official “nations” of Transylvania, and who furthermore possessed autonomous church structures, the Swabians were a dispersed minority with no religious structures above the parish level. They were consequently fully exposed to the pressures for linguistic Magyarization. Laszlo notes: “In fact, the Swabians surpassed all other non-Magyar nationalities, except perhaps the Jews, in the rapidity and completeness of their assimilation into Magyarodom.” Laszlo, 47.

65. With regard to the school legislation of 1868, Révész complained it unduly burdened the impoverished Reformed Church to the advantage of the Roman Catholic parochial schools: “The Reformed Church was thus quite incapable of meeting the government requirements, and so was afraid of opening schools which would not be able to fulfill the regulations and which would then be promptly taken over by the State. Moreover, its fears were justified. The Reformed Church only just managed to its schools going with difficulty in the cities and towns, but in the country districts it now lost many, many of its smaller schools. And it lost its schools just in those villages where the Roman Church could support a pretentious building!” Révész, Imre, 134–35.

Protestant churchmen so identified themselves with the patriotic cause of building the Hungarian state that they welcomed even increasing ministerial control of denominational schools and viewed it as progress. For example, in his first annual report as the Reformed Bishop of Transylvania, Domokos Szász stated in 1885:

We Calvinists, who view ourselves in the first place as Hungarian patriots, greet with inner joy the capture by the state of the greatest possible place in the field of primary education, so that narrow, confessional thought must recede there where the interests of the Hungarian state and the Hungarian nation are at stake.⁶⁶

In fact, some voices went so far as to call for the schools to give up their confessional status in the interest of the state.⁶⁷ Such calls were not motivated solely by Protestant anticlerical animus, but rather by a liberal, rationalistic theological outlook that identified liberal Protestantism as one in spirit and interest with the modern Hungarian state. Secularized public education was not seen as a threat, but to the contrary as the most effective means of promoting a resurgent Protestant spirit across the whole spectrum of the populace.⁶⁸ The Roman Catholic Church looked to the past and considered itself the *avita religio*, or state religion, of Hungary. To these Protestant churchmen, Rome was the embodiment of backward-looking reaction, while they thought of themselves as the future and the true spirit of the modern Hungarian nation and state now freeing itself from the shackles of the past. Any step that the liberal state took to assert itself against the Roman Catholic Church, or the intertwined confessional and ethnic particularisms that stood

66. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 118.

67. Compare this with the charge of “Judas money” that the Lutheran Minister Wimmer greeted the proposed legislation in 1848 to have the state directly fund the churches and their schools. He successfully fought against the proposed plan in the interest of maintaining church autonomy.

68. As Bucsay explained: “Die liberalen Theologen des ungarischen Protestantismus, die diese Ansicht vertraten, wollten die kirchlichen Schulen nicht deshalb aufgeben, weil sie die Hoffnung verloren hätten, das Volk in Zukunft mit dem Geiste des Protestantismus durchdringen zu können. Ganz im Gegenteil! Sie wollten nur einen Teil opfern, um dafür das Ganze zu bekommen. Sie waren überzeugt, daß der protestantische Geist von Haus aus liberal und national sei. Es wurde nicht nur gedacht, sondern auch sehr direkt ausgesprochen, daß der Ungar von Geburt her liberal und national, d.h. ein Protestant sei. Wenn also der Staat den Schulunterricht in liberalen Geiste erteilen lasse, erreiche dadurch der protestantische Geiste viel ungehinderter und rascher das ganze Volk als durch die konfessionellen Schulen! Man hoffte ganz ernsthaft, im liberalen staatlichen Unterrichtswesen das Wundermittel gefunden zu haben, um nicht allein die ultramontanen römisch-katholischen Elemente, sondern auch noch die vom landläufigen Materialismus bereits angesteckten Massen für die erhoffte Einheit eines freisinnigen und nationalen Ungarns zu gewinnen.” Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 101.

opposed to the solitary Hungarian state, was seen by liberal Protestants as a step towards the realization of this future.

However, this spirit of nationalism was shared by most Magyars, whatever their confessional allegiance. The progressive formulation of the day was: “We are first Hungarian and then Reformed or Catholic.”⁶⁹ Protestants claimed pride of place in patriotic service to the Hungarian nation for themselves, a fact recognized by the general populace. For example, in 1872 the German consul-general in Budapest, Baron Waecker-Gotter, was closely watching the church political developments in Hungary and reporting back to Bismarck. Surveying the situation, he wrote:

Among the rest of the population of Hungary on the one hand that deep religiosity, which among the German people is frequently the soil from which ecclesiastical fanaticism arises, is entirely missing; religion is not an emotional thing and no one is scrupulous about dogma. On the other hand, even from the time of the Reformation the tolerance of the Hungarian people, sometimes in contrast to the government, has been widespread and has plainly become an essential virtue because of the dense cohabitation of so many confessions. In particular a proper Hungarian distinguishes himself by this trait. A third of this nationality, as everyone knows, belongs to the evangelical confession, which in the mouths of the Hungarian people is generally referred to as the “Hungarian religion”. Why should even a Catholic Hungarian himself hate the “Hungarian religion”?⁷⁰

The Reformed Church earned its designation as the “Hungarian religion” because of its history of service and devotion to the national cause. Yet the noted “tolerance” of the Magyar people with regards to confessional matters also explains why Magyar nationalism was hardly confined to Protestants. Magyar Catholics and even assimilated Jews were proponents of Magyardom.

2. The Churches in the Age of Liberalism

2.1. Liberal Catholicism

The wave of liberal Catholicism that swept over the Church during the age of reform and revolution in Hungary subsided with the other liberal endeavors that came to nought in 1849. The Church entered into a period of conservatism following the

⁶⁹. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 102.

⁷⁰. Adriányi, 127.

suppression of the revolution, and Catholic liberalism remained dormant. It reappeared, or was reawakened, with the return to constitutionalism in Hungary in 1867.⁷¹ This return to constitutionalism had profound implications for the Catholic Church, for it revived the debate of how to restructure church-state relations in Hungary. As noted previously, the starting point for this debate was Law XX of 1848 and the goal of “complete equality and reciprocity” among the lawfully received denominations. Despite the demise of the negotiations surrounding the proposal for Catholic autonomy and the consequent failure to enact comprehensive statutory reforms governing church-state affairs, the debates and controversies which attended the endeavor aroused the passions of many in the Catholic Church and marked the rebirth of Catholic liberalism.

A useful simplification of the spectrum of personalities and thought that characterized liberal Catholicism from the Compromise to the *Kulturkampf* is to identify two main streams in the Church. The less consequential stream was that of the radical liberal Catholics, both clerical and lay intellectuals, who wanted to reform the Catholic Church in keeping with the spirit of the age. Though without power in the hierarchy or the government, they made their voices heard through a series of press organs they published.⁷² As with political liberalism, the radical liberal Catholics valued freedom. They wanted to free the Catholic Church from the golden chains of outward privilege and power, the political entanglements that worked against the reform of the Church. Mihály Zoványi, a Catholic priest who came to prominence as a journalist, labeled conservative churchmen as “Interessenkatholiken” to impugn their motives for resisting reform.⁷³ The radical liberals wanted democratization in the Catholic Church, for the laity to be entrusted with responsibilities in the Church. In short, they were champions of Catholic

71. Adriányi wrote: “Die Niederwerfung der Revolution, die Aufhebung der Verfassung, die Wiederherstellung der Rechtsverhältnisse vor 1848 sowie die Durchsetzung des Neoabsolutismus auch im kirchlichen Bereich, brachten zwar der Kirche neue Probleme, verbannten aber vorläufig auch die Gefahr des Liberalismus. Bis zur Wiederherstellung der Verfassung von 1848 durch den Ausgleich mit Österreich im Jahre 1867 gab es in der Tat keine nennenswerte liberale Bewegung im ungarischen Katholizismus. Dann aber tauchte die alte Frage wieder auf, denn die erwähnten Gesetzesartikel III und XX von 1848 berührten das Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche in seinem Kern.” Adriányi, 117–18.

72. The publishing of liberal Catholic periodicals was marked by great fluidity as papers either ceased or were renamed to signal a change in orientation. The most fertile period for the liberal Catholic press was during the first years following the Compromise when church political issues were being hotly debated. Perhaps the premier organ of the radical Catholic liberals was *Szabad Egyház* [*Free Church*, not to be confused with a later evangelical Protestant magazine of the same name], which advocated a separation of church and state.

73. Adriányi, 120.

autonomy and foes of ultramontanistism. They also desired greater freedom for the lower clergy against the hierarchy, and less reliance upon the Holy See and Roman curia.⁷⁴ Naturally this call for freedom and democratization in the Catholic Church was too radical for the hierarchy, much as it had been in 1848.

The most influential stream of liberalism within the Catholic Church was that of the hierarchy. Their liberalism was not so much focused on inner renewal or reform of the Church as it was on protecting its privilege, wealth, and power through becoming a partner of the liberal and national Hungarian state.⁷⁵ Like the hierarchies of the national churches, the liberal Catholic hierarchy in Hungary became a defender of the Magyar national interest. But this made the liberals in the hierarchy supporters rather than critics of the liberal regime.⁷⁶ Thus Prince Primate Simor could confess in an 1888 interview in Die Presse, a Viennese paper:

I would not consider it permissible to systematically oppose the government, especially not in my position, and if I was dealing with the worst government, I would still prefer that to no government at all. I have never made a secret of this attitude...⁷⁷

The symbiotic relationship of the hierarchy with the government was noted by Baron Waecker-Gotter, who wrote to Bismarck:

The Bishops, particularly those from the old school, live as great lords, they have somewhat worldly inclinations and could in some respects best be compared to their English High Church counterparts. Up until the present moment one could hardly find ultramontane tendencies among them, it was well known that the Hungarian clergy at the Vatican Council almost without exception belonged to the

74. Greater freedom for the clergy meant, among other things, the end of enforced clerical celibacy. Zoványi wrote: "Was ist ehrlicher, die würdige Ehe oder der gegenwärtige Status quo?" Adriányi, 120.

75. Katus argued that the possibility of the secularization of the Church lands and property led to a quiet deal between the Hungarian government and the Catholic hierarchy: "At this point, however, the Andrassy government and the Bishops' Conference reached an implicit compromise - subsequently adhered to by the Liberal government after 1875. Under the deal, the Bishops' Conference offered political support to the government, which pledged in return to protect Church lands and property (Gyula Andrassy gave a personal assurance to this effect to the nuncio Falcinelli). The government also promised to uphold the constitutional status of the Church and the operation of its schools - subject to government overseeing." Katus, 329.

76. R.J.W. Evans made the argument that "Liberal Hungary (with all its flaws) was in considerable degree a creation of Catholic believers: that explains the otherwise curious absence of confessional parties among the Magyars throughout almost the whole of the nineteenth century." Evans, 152.

77. Adriányi, 122.

opposition... Because the bishops in Hungary are nominated by the government and only confirmed by the Pope, one understandably finds reliable supporters of the governing party in all the important posts, which is an important source of their support.⁷⁸

Not until the outbreak of the Hungarian *Kulturkampf* in the 1890's did ultramontanism filter up into the hierarchy.

Yet among those who distrusted Hungarian political liberalism and its national outlook, which had an inherent interest in subordinating all things to the national interest, this partnership posed a risk to the Catholic Church.⁷⁹ On the other hand, the liberal hierarchy feared the rise of a strong ultramontane current in the Church or political life as something that would invite anticlerical reaction, possibly even the secularization of the Church endowments.⁸⁰ Ultramontane sentiments were mostly confined to the lower clergy and to some of the Catholic magnates, although it was making strong advances among the younger generation of those in the hierarchy.⁸¹

In the final analysis, liberal Catholicism was not condemned by its later detractors so much for mistaken church political calculations as for the effect liberal church politics had upon the inner life of the Church.⁸² The later Bishop of Székesfehérvár, Ottokár Prohászka, who as a leading advocate of Christian Socialism approached the *modus*

78. Adriányi, 126.

79. Adriányi expressed this sentiment: "Die Gefahr einer Verständigung mit den Liberalen seitens der Kirche lag in Ungarn darin, daß der nach Westen orientierte »politische« Liberalismus hier erst nach 1867 mit einer Phasenverschiebung zur Geltung kam jetzt als »nationaler« Liberalismus durchaus radikale, d.h. auch kirchenfeindliche Züge hatte." Adriányi, 121.

80. For example, Baron Waecker-Gotter observed that it was the episcopacy that rebuffed efforts to organize an ultramontane political party: "Erzbischof Haynald, welcher als der geistige Führer desselben betrachtet werden kann, erklärte in der bischöflichen Konferenz, die Bildung einer ultramontanen Partei bedeute soviel als die zukünftige Säkularisation der Kirchengüter, und damit war die Abstimmung des Episkopates entschieden." Adriányi, 126.

81. Adriányi, 122–23.

82. Adriányi expressed this conviction rather strongly: "Das religiöse Bild des katholischen Volkes sah noch düsterer aus. Der Liberalismus entartete in der Öffentlichkeit zum Indifferentismus. Äußerlichkeiten und Traditionen, prunkvolle Feste, verhüllten nur das Fehlen einer inneren Religiosität... Frömmigkeit unter den Gläubigen galt als Ultramontanismus und war verpönt. So wollte niemand als »bigott« oder »klerikal« abgestempelt werden, niemand besuchte die Kirche außerhalb des Gottesdienstes, niemand betete in der Öffentlichkeit, niemand bekannte sich offen zum Glauben, denn niemand wollte sich in der liberalen Gesellschaft unmöglich machen. Der religiöse Kult wurde immer einfacher, oberflächlicher; religiöse Übungen, Sitten, Andachten verschwanden. Die Kirche sank in der Gesellschaft auf das Niveau eines eben noch tolerierten Hauslehrers." Adriányi, 124.

vivendi of the Catholic liberals and the Hungarian government from a more radical point of view, criticized the dishonesty of both the state and the hierarchy revealed in their church political machinations from 1848 onward, which damaged the vital “living space” of the Church. He wrote in the aftermath of the *Kulturkampf* in 1898:

The church politics of the last fifty years was from the side of the state anticlerical from the beginning, vehement at first, dishonest as it developed, and high-handed in the end. It was from the side of the Church downright clumsy, a despondent dirge. Instead of firm opposition, there was compromise with golden chains, playing with royal authority, pliability, avoidance and continuous loss of living space.⁸³

In the view of later critics, the liberal Catholicism of the hierarchy and its cynical church politics was guilty of ceding the spiritual and intellectual lives of the laity to the anti-Christian forces of modernity and secularization in exchange for the preservation of its wealth and privileges. According to the later Jesuit journalist Béla Bangha: “The Church lived from the prestige of the past. Hungarian culture suffered under the dominion of anti-Christian freethinking. There were only a few oases in the desert of religious life.”⁸⁴ This left the Church unprepared for the storms to come.⁸⁵

2.2. Liberal Protestantism, Confessional Orthodoxy, and the Rise of Evangelical Renewal

2.2.1. Two Unions in Opposition: The Protestant Union and the Evangelical Alliance

83. Adriányi, 123–24.

84. Adriányi, 125.

85. It should be noted that one prominent liberal Catholic was aware of the problem of religious apathy and placed the blame elsewhere. József Eötvös lamented: “Among our clerics, apathy and indifference have reached levels rarely seen in other countries, and a consequence of this is the highest degree of indifference among [ordinary] Catholics.” This was particularly true of middle-class Hungarians, as noted by Ernő Szeghy, the procurator-general of the Cistercian Order, who wrote: “Their religion was applied only in baptism and at funeral ceremonies. In the meantime, they had nothing to do with Church or priest... Religious fervor was unknown.” According to Eötvös, one of the main reasons for this apathy was the lack of Catholic autonomy, something which he earnestly worked towards with little success. He wrote that “whereas the Protestant Churches enjoy the greatest degree of autonomy in their school and Church affairs, the Catholic Church has been made a ward of the state.” Related to this was the fact that there was no lay involvement in the running of the Churches and the schools, and so the people “were accustomed to viewing matters concerning the Church and the schools as none of their business.” In some respects the call of Eötvös for Catholic autonomy shared the concerns of later critics about “golden chains” binding the Church to the liberal state, but his call for a much greater degree of lay involvement in running the internal affairs of the Churches was a radical critique of conservatism in the Church and called for a level of Church democratization that challenged all sides. Katus, 330–32.

2.2.1.1. The Protestant Union in Formation

Liberal Protestantism following the Compromise sought to capture Hungarian culture and society not solely through its patriotic service to the Hungarian state⁸⁶, but also through aligning itself with the spirit of the age. In reality the two were seen inseparably.⁸⁷ This desire to bring the church into conformity with modernity, to reject Protestantism's biblical and confessional heritage in the interest of "reconciling religion and science," was in the liberal Protestant view a struggle for relevancy: "They hoped that movement in the modern direction would promote an increased interest in the church."⁸⁸ In this they had the support of Protestant statesmen. As Gábor Salacz observed: "From the time of the Compromise all the way to [the time of] István Tisza Protestant statesmen identified Protestantism in countless statements with the idea of liberty and liberalism."⁸⁹

This same conceptual worldview stood behind the impetus to found a Protestant society patterned after the *Protestantenverein* of Germany. The agitation for a Protestant union began with Albert Kovács, a professor of theology at the Reformed Theological Academy in Budapest, in an 1870 pamphlet.⁹⁰ This call was taken up by other Protestant

86. The extent to which the Protestant churchmen identified the Hungarian national cause with their own can be gleaned from the following quote: "Gradually the many church leaders all but identified the interests of the church with the existing political and social system. This close relationship between the church and the social order to a large extent retarded the fulfillment of the church's own calling." Bíró, Bucsay, Tóth, and Varga, 378. This phenomenon was recognized by József Eötvös, who remarked concerning the presence of Protestants in Hungarian political life: "Protestants - even though they are outnumbered two to one by Catholics - have more influence than Catholics in all regards." Katus, 340.

87. The goal of building the Magyar state was merely one, albeit central, aspect of building a modern, liberal society. Liberal Protestants saw themselves as fellow architects of this society through their educational and cultural work, and as the natural heirs of its construction. Thus liberal Protestantism's concept of mission was centered around the nation and a cultural mandate rather than around a theological construct and an evangelistic mandate. For example, A.M. Kool, commenting on the controversy surrounding Márton Czelder's Moldavian-Wallachian Mission, noted "the profound differences in concepts between the liberal/rationalistic, strongly confessionally and rationalistically bound Reformed concept of mission as preserving Magyar culture, and the Pietistic/evangelical concept of mission, interdenominational in character, as spreading the Kingdom of God for the sake of the *gloria Dei* and calling people to conversion." Kool, 132.

88. Bíró, Bucsay, Tóth, and Varga, 377.

89. Salacz compared this with the situation of Hungary's Magyar Catholics through a fascinating quote from the Catholic liberal statesman József Eötvös, who commented: "Go and ask any Reformed person what is his religion, and he will proudly answer that he is a Calvinist. But ask any Catholic, and he will apologize, because he is Catholic." Salacz, 12–13.

90. Entitled *Alakítsunk egyházi reformegyletet!* [*Let us found a Church Reform Union*], it pointed out the twin dangers of Vatican I and materialism. The former displayed "faith without science", while the

academics, all adherents of rationalistic theology from the Reformed, Lutheran, and Unitarian confessions. In the lead were the Reformed theologians from Budapest.

The motivation of these academics in agitating for the need for a liberal union was explained by Bucsay:

They believed that if in modern preaching the figure of Jesus would be stripped of all supernatural elements and only the idea of inner spiritual freedom and moral self-control and self-sacrifice was left, even the modern intellectual could not avoid such a Jesus. Such a theology could then provide the basis for the unification of Christians from every confession.⁹¹

One of these men, Mór Ballagi, proved to be the dominant figure of the founding conference in 1871; his address gave a strident critique of confessional orthodoxy. A disciple of the historical critical school of F.C. Baur, Ballagi held that “the religion of Jesus consisted of simple human truths” and concluded from this that “we prefer a church, which does not consist of dogmas, but which protects and does not restrict the freedom of the conscience by building on the unity of high ethical standards.”⁹² The name suggested by Kovács, *Church Reform Union*, was rejected at the founding conference in favor of the more neutral *Hungarian Protestant Union*.⁹³ The goal of the Union was proclaimed to be “a renewal of religious and moral life in the spirit of Jesus and in accordance with the entire cultural advancement.”⁹⁴

A picture of what this first conference was like can perhaps be gained from a description by Edward Millard of the second annual meeting as found in the British and Foreign Bible Society 1873 Annual Report. It also gives an insight into why the Union was received with such vehement opposition from the side of confessional orthodoxy. Millard argued:

It is not only the priest of Rome that proves an obstacle to Bible circulation in Hungary. The cold and withering rationalism that is assailing all vital Truth within the Protestant Church can scarcely be less friendly to the operation of your

latter displayed “science without faith.” See: Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 110.

91. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 109.

92. Kool, 49.

93. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 111.

94. Kool, 48–49.

Society. Your Agent alludes to the annual meeting of the Hungarian Protestant Association held during the year in the Reformed Church at Pest, at which sentiments were boldly advanced subversive not only of evangelical Truth, but also of the Divine authority and inspiration of the Scriptures. Skepticism and science were eulogized as the best friends of humanity, and the contents of the Bible pronounced worthless myths. One speaker declared, amidst boisterous applause, that the Apostolic Creed was not suited to these days, and should be discarded. Some of the Protestant Professors of Theology shared in the proceedings, but no voice was lifted up to denounce the infidel utterances of the speakers. The clamor was for the reform of Protestantism, and the sentiments which prevailed shadowed forth in no doubtful colors the sort of reformation desiderated. To dethrone the Bible and deify reason and science would seem to be the objects for which many so-called Protestants in Hungary are striving, with a zeal worthy of a better cause. In view, therefore, of such fierce and outspoken attacks on the Scriptures from those who ought to be in the front rank of defenders and champions, it is a solace to find that the Bible has been in larger demand than usual, and to feel assured that the humble and inquiring will find in its sacred pages the Truth which the worshipers of science and intellect altogether miss.⁹⁵

The rejection of Scripture in favor of intellectual accommodation to the prevailing values of the age was not only viewed by Millard as inimical to the work of the Bible Society, but moreover as a betrayal of the mission of the church. His dim view of the Union was shared by those Hungarian Protestant churchmen loyal to the confessional heritage of their denominations.

While the Bible Society and other evangelical societies were engaged in literary work to disseminate “vital Truth” to the masses, the Protestant Union could boast several newspapers in which their views were expressed⁹⁶, as well as an active publishing society which was responsible for a great increase in Hungarian Christian literature in the various theological disciplines.⁹⁷ As important as their literary activity was, it never reached a wide reading audience.⁹⁸

2.2.1.2. Confessional Orthodoxy and the Evangelical Alliance

The advocates of liberal Protestantism held sway in Budapest, but east of the Tisza in the Magyar Alföld confessional orthodoxy remained strong. The leading voice of

95. 1873 Annual Report, 100–01.

96. Apart from PEIL, other papers expressing liberal views were *Sárospataki Füzetek*, *Egyházi Reform*, *Egyházi Szemle*, *Protestáns Szemle*, *Theologiai Szaklap*, and the *Egyházi és Iskolai Szemle*.

97. The preeminent example was the noted series entitled the *Protestant Theological Library*.

98. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 112.

the orthodox viewpoint was the Debrecen pastor and church historian, Imre Révész Sr., who “insisted strongly on the great evangelical Protestant principle of ‘*semper reformari*’.”⁹⁹ In a stinging rebuke of the founders of the Protestant Union he published in the *Figyelő*, Révész advised them to separate themselves from the church, in order “not to experiment on the corpse of their mother.”¹⁰⁰ He also took this fight to the church authorities, demanding that they not tolerate that “future ministers be trained by their own professors in a way that runs counter to the confession of the church.”¹⁰¹ Thus an ongoing struggle began in the upper echelons of the Reformed Church between the partisans of the Protestant Union and the defenders of confessional orthodoxy. In this fight Révész was joined by Ferenc Balogh.

Dissatisfied with theological direction of the Protestant Union and its priorities, Révész came to the conclusion that a constructive alternative was needed to the Protestant Union.¹⁰² A measure of symmetry obtained in this endeavor in that as Hungarian liberal Protestantism was in many ways the product of students bringing back theological modernism from their *Wanderjahren* in Germany or Holland, and the Protestant Union itself was patterned after the German *Protestantenverein*, so now Révész looked to his contact with the Scottish Mission to provide him an alternative model to pursue. That alternative model was British-inspired Evangelical Alliance. In 1873 he and Ferenc Balogh worked on the arrangements for establishing the Hungarian branch of the Evangelical Alliance, but the plan eventually fell through due to general indifference and “trivial misunderstandings and slander in Debrecen.”¹⁰³ This attempt to breathe some life into the moribund adherents of church traditionalism through establishing a Hungarian branch of the Evangelical Alliance thus came to nought, and so confessional orthodoxy remained more or less alienated from the evangelical streams of renewal centered in Budapest. The Hungarian branch of the Evangelical Alliance would finally be established

99. Kool, 49.

100. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 111.

101. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 111.

102. Révész was dismayed that “the best of their strength was being wasted in passionate and futile controversies mostly concerning matters of church and school politics.” Kool, 49.

103. Kool, 50.

in the 1890's, when the evangelical renewal was flourishing within Hungarian Protestantism.

2.2.1.3. The Alienation of Both Parties from the Laity

The internal decay of Hungarian Protestantism became evident in that the battle between liberals and traditionalists never reached the laity. Bucsay explained that the “theological battle between the Liberals and the Orthodox remained the concern of a rather sparse educated class.”¹⁰⁴ Révész argued the same point, that this battle remained confined to the theologians because “neither had the liberal direction enough religious depth, nor the conservative direction enough connection to the mentality of modern man.”¹⁰⁵ Thus neither side captured the imagination of the laity in this struggle.

Despite the seeming vigor of the Protestant churches, when measured by the external indicators of literary and political activity, the churches were in fact empty.¹⁰⁶ It was later said, “The ministry had now fallen into a hopelessly poor condition; moreover, being depressed materially, it was also depressed spiritually.”¹⁰⁷ The laity was so alienated from the church that the collection plate would bring in only a pittance. Already exhausted from “centuries of struggle”, the church was “now sapped by a wave of rationalism, it simply could not rise to meet the need.”¹⁰⁸ This was, of course, written from the perspective of one within the evangelical stream of church life. Révész went on to state that the “church had entered into a vicious circle... [because] few ministers were preaching the Gospel, people would not go to church to hear dry rationalism from the pulpit... Religious practices were being dropped in the homes of the people, and the Bible

104. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 112.

105. Cited and translated in: Kool, 49.

106. Révész described the situation as follows: “However, it was only from an external point of view that the Reformed Church of Hungary looked strong and vigorous at this period of the century. Within, all was not well with the Church; for one thing, the churches were virtually empty. We are told that it was a frequent occurrence after the mid-century for a minister to look out of his manse door after the bell had been tolled to see if anyone was coming to church, then when he saw no one on the road, give a nod to the church officer to lock up the church, and go in again to his manse. People seemed to be out of sympathy with the ministry, even anti-clerical in outlook.” Révész, Imre, 138–39.

107. Révész, Imre, 139.

108. Révész, Imre, 140.

was becoming almost a closed book to the masses.”¹⁰⁹ Of course the empty formalism of much confessional orthodoxy did not fare much better among the people.

Still, in the first flush of the return to constitutionalism when the future spread out before Hungarian Protestants like so many possibilities and theological liberalism had not yet decayed in its vitality, it was the liberal stream of Protestant life that was dominant and expected to capture the allegiance of the people. It was this challenge that awoke a response from a slumbering confessional orthodoxy.¹¹⁰ It is thus legitimate to inquire whether Protestant liberalism was able to transform religious life in the manner in which it expected. The simple answer was no.¹¹¹ It certainly did not enjoy any success among the peasantry. Much of the peasantry remained loyal to the Reformed church after a fashion, though they sought informal ways to meet their spiritual needs.¹¹² Of those who abandoned the church, many did so to join the “sects”. This phenomenon shall be discussed more fully later.

Yet one must admit that the peasantry, indeed both the urban and rural proletariat, was largely ignored by those in leadership in the Protestant churches, irrespective of their theological orientation. Not until the evangelical renewal began to take hold in the church did the poor find concerned ministers reaching out to them. But what of the target audience of the liberals, the “modern man” who no longer identified with the church? Oddly it was particularly “the middle-class, the intellectuals in their own eyes, who became almost wholly irreligious at this period.”¹¹³ It was here that the liberal project failed. “It turned out that liberal religion did not know how to arouse lasting interest in

109. Révész, Imre, 140.

110. Bucsay argued: “Zwar war die Orthodoxie in Ungarn vorhanden, doch war sie gleichsam in einen tiefen Schlaf gesunken. Gerade die Agitation des Protestantenvereins hatte sie als Protestaktion aufgeweckt und selbstbewußt, wachsam und gebieterisch gemacht.” Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 112.

111. Gábor Salacz criticized liberal Protestant statesmen and churchmen for fighting the wrong enemy. He complained: “The Hungarian Protestant politicians and churchmen saw it as their civic duty to promulgate liberalism and ideas of freedom; due to their political convictions they stood against ‘ultramontane’ Catholicism when instead they should have been fighting with them against the spreading stream of irreligion and materialism.” Salacz, 13. The interesting question is given the fact that the Protestant liberals were also well aware of the spreading streams of atheistic and materialistic social thought, why did they still feel compelled to battle as much against ‘ultramontanism’ as against socialism or communism? There were historical reasons for why they feared the former as much, or more, than the latter.

112. Kool, 50–51.

113. Révész, Imre, 139.

itself. People to a large extent became more cultured in vain, in vain did they acquire knowledge, they did not recognize God's will from these things. Only the liberal church leaders were surprised at this. Their opponents insisted from the beginning that knowledge and education, as well as conceptions of religious ethics in and of themselves are not of much use. True power depends on the following: whether the recognized truth or conception can be made real in life?"¹¹⁴ The question arises whether Hungarian liberal Protestantism, in its effort to become relevant to the new "modern man" and to capture Hungarian culture and society, instead became a captive of the culture it sought to mold and was rendered in the end superfluous to its target audience?¹¹⁵ Moreover, it also was not successful in appealing to those who had retained their faith. "It became clear that the liberal religion was not necessary to the believers."¹¹⁶ This failure of liberalism mystified liberal churchmen, and was keenly felt by those in the Protestant Union.¹¹⁷ Over time the lack of interest and financial support from the Protestant public took its toll on the Protestant Union and its publishing concern. "In this way first the publishing company, and after that the Union itself ceased to exist."¹¹⁸

2.2.2. The Rise of the Evangelical Renewal

Even as liberal Protestantism was on the decline, on the opposite side of the theological spectrum the rise of the evangelical renewal was making its way onto the scene. Bucsay observed of this fall and rise, "The Orthodox party could not enjoy their victory for long. Soon the champions of traditional churchliness were faced with a more intense assault from the advocates of the evangelical awakening and home mission than

114. Bíró, Bucsay, Tóth, and Varga, 377.

115. For example, Révész observed that the "secular Protestants" who were active in the affairs of the nation had formerly retained their connection to the church "at least out of liberalism and nationalistic feeling." However, "since this traditional rapport became outdated, they could not find new, more meaningful and deeper spiritual connections [to the church] in them." Quoted in translation in: Kool, 50. In short, liberal Protestantism could not articulate any distinctive vision that demanded the allegiance of the laity.

116. Bíró, Bucsay, Tóth, and Varga, 378.

117. Bíró, Bucsay, Tóth, and Varga, 378.

118. Bíró, Bucsay, Tóth, and Varga, 378.

from the cultural Protestants.”¹¹⁹ It is true that in many ways the evangelical renewal represented a foreign, misunderstood, and mistrusted element in church life to the adherents of church traditionalism. Yet while the agents of renewal could be charged with introducing foreign innovations into church life (e.g. Sunday schools), they were not doctrinal innovators on a par with the theological modernism of the liberals. Thus it has been observed that “one can in many cases speak of a symbiosis between Orthodoxy and Pietism.”¹²⁰ This was the case with the protagonists of Hungary’s *Erweckungstheologie*.

Similar to the penetration of theological liberalism from the West, the roots of the evangelical renewal in Hungarian Protestantism have their provenance in the West. In his introduction to Georg Bauhofer’s History of the Protestant Church in Hungary, J.H. Merle d’Aubigné, a leader of the Réveil movement in Geneva, chastised the Hungarian church for its capitulation to rationalism¹²¹, and, using the exhortatory language of the Apostle Paul contained in Ephesians 5:14, he called for it to return to its Reformation heritage, to the Gospel message of justification by faith alone: “We can exhort her boldly from the west of Europe - from the foot of the Alps - from that town of Calvin which has always regarded her with affection - in words from Holy Writ - ‘Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’”¹²² Some within the church indeed desired to transform its inner life, and looked to the West for examples. “The means towards inspiring this new life in the parishes was obtained by copying the ‘*Innere Mission*’ idea then being developed in Germany, but the few visionaries, about the year 1860, who realized what a mighty instrument a properly organized Home Mission might become, found little support for their plans.”¹²³ This was around the time

119. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 113.

120. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 111.

121. He wrote: “It is probable that the Protestant Church of Hungary erred by departing from this divine authority, and therefore did not escape this blight of rationalism which swept over the whole of Europe during the second half of the eighteenth century... There were some ministers - blind guides - who thus yielded to the spirit of the age, and thought themselves wise in their own folly. This was the inward canker of the Hungarian Church - an evil more dangerous in its consequences than the most cruel persecutions.” d’Aubigné, Merle. Introd. History of the Protestant Church in Hungary. By Georg Bauhofer, trans. J. Craig. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1854. xxi.

122. d’Aubigné, xxviii.

123. Révész, Imre, 145.

the Scottish Mission renewed its activity in Pest, and it became a model for evangelistic work in the country and a conduit for evangelical views from the West.¹²⁴ One consequence of this reappearance of the Scottish Mission was the formation of the *Filialgemeinde*, which “then likewise became an influential mediator of Western practical church life, above all of the home mission movement.”¹²⁵ Influential charitable ministries were begun under the auspices of the *Filialgemeinde* and the Scottish Mission.¹²⁶ In time these two institutions became the well spring of evangelical renewal and home mission in Hungarian Protestantism, “The new methods of church work, such as the evangelistic sermons, Sunday Schools, Bible Circles, literature missions, and so on were zealously pursued by the workers of these two organizations.”¹²⁷

However, these German and Scottish influences remained by and large divorced from Magyar Protestantism until their influence was mediated by the person of Aladar Szabó.¹²⁸ Szabó was well-suited to this task. He had spent a year at a Lutheran school in Pozsony to learn German before completing secondary studies at the Reformed College in Pápa. An earnest young man committed to his faith, he was influenced by the exponents of living orthodoxy.¹²⁹ In 1880 he enrolled in the Reformed Theological Academy and the Faculty of Arts of the University of Budapest. Discouraged by the ineffectiveness of his witness during his first year of studies, in 1881 Szabó became the “inspector” in the new dormitory of the Academy and initiated Bible studies with his fellow students.

124. Révész noted, “The Sunday School which the Scottish Missions to the Jews of Hungary ran in Budapest was now used as a model throughout the country, though many ministers refused to touch such a strange and far-reaching innovation.” Révész, Imre, 147.

125. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 114.

126. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 114–15.

127. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 114–15.

128. Kool cites Richard Bodoky as saying that the German Reformed Church “remained an alien body” within the broader Magyar Reformed community; Kool attributes this to the fact that “nationalistic, anti-German feelings prevailed over the evangelical, German Pietistic and Scottish Puritan spirit, which was spread by the German Reformed affiliated church.” See: Kool, 115.

129. Kool mentions in particular a book on the life and thought of John Calvin by Imre Révész as having a profound influence on Szabó. She notes that Calvin’s teaching on the grace of God and the imitation of Christ shaped his outlook, and cites his memoirs to illustrate the point, “if somebody really wanted to become a Christian, he should allow God’s Spirit to lead him, not revelry.” Kool, 136.

This resulted in a fateful encounter during a Bible study in the dormitory, when colporteur Hirsch of the British and Foreign Bible Society was surprised to see theological students gathered together with open Bibles in front of them. Szabo described the encounter in his memoirs:

‘What are you doing?’

‘We are studying and explaining the Bible for edification!’, I answered. ‘For edification?’ These few words increased even more Uncle Hirsch’s¹³⁰ amazement. ‘I have never seen such a thing from theological students! If the Reverend Moody knew about it he would be very glad!’, he added.

‘Reverend Moody? Who is he?’, I asked.

‘Reverend Moody is a Scottish missionary pastor preaching at the church of the German Reformed affiliated church and he is also the headmaster of the school of the Scottish Mission’, came the answer.¹³¹

A few days later Hirsch reappeared, this time with greetings from Reverend Moody and an invitation to come to his home. The visit took place on November 3, 1881, and it opened up to Szabó horizons previously unknown. Moody opened up his “home and his heart” to the students, and this openness drew many of these young people into the same evangelical spirit evidenced by their mentor.¹³² Also influential in Szabó’s life was his future father-in-law, Tivadar Biberauer, also active in the Filialgemeinde. Aladár Szabó began to attend the Sunday German language service of the Filialgemeinde held at the Scottish Mission building on Hold utca [Hold Street], where he was exposed to the fellowship’s involvement in home and foreign missions.¹³³

As a result, first Szabó, then more and more of his fellow theology students became involved with the Sunday school for street children in the area begun by Irma Biberauer, one of Tivadar Biberauer’s daughters. Great enthusiasm had taken hold of the students when in 1883 they were visited by Carl Fernaud, secretary of the YMCA, who came at the invitation of Aladár Szilassy, a prominent member of the Filialgemeinde.¹³⁴

130. “Uncle” here, which translates the Hungarian word *bácsi*, does not denote blood relationship. Rather it is a term of familiarity and endearment that is used for male elders, particularly within the churches.

131. Kool, 137.

132. Kool, 137.

133. Kool, 138. Bucsay noted of the Hold utca building, “Seit 1878 zog sie in ein großes eigenes Gebäude, das ein *Zentrum der Erweckungsarbeit* wurde.” Bucsay, *Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 114.

134. Kool, 139.

Fernaud's lectures made a profound impression upon Szabó and the other students. It crystallized in Szabó the importance of extending the Sunday school work among the children to the older youth as well. Under the chairmanship of Aladár Szilassy, the Hungarian branch of the YMCA, the *Keresztyén Ifjusági Egyesület* (KIE, literally the "Christian Youth Association") was established; Aladár Szabó was the secretary of the KIE.¹³⁵

In the beginning of 1884 Szabó sought to extend the Sunday school work by transferring to the Sárospatak Academy, but after five weeks he was required by the presbytery to halt his efforts, and so he returned to Budapest. In the following years he became an assistant pastor in Budapest-Kőbánya and an assistant teacher at the Theological Academy, all while pursuing his own doctoral studies. Nevertheless, he remained available to the theology students, and in this way nurtured a rising generation of leaders in the evangelical renewal.¹³⁶ In the following decade the evangelical renewal in the Protestant churches and interest in home and foreign mission would come into its own.

Two events at the end of the 1880's proved to be the first fruits of the spiritual revival that was to blossom fully in the following years. The first was the initiation of the Alliance prayer week. In late 1886 Aladár Szabó came before the elders of the Kálvin Tér Reformed Church with a novel request. He wanted to use the church hall to hold prayer meetings the first week of January. This was to coincide with an international week of prayer sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance, so that believers around the world could together pray over the same themes and concerns. Approval was given and in the first week of January, 1887, public prayer meetings were held in the *Baldácsi terem* of the church. According to Gyula Forgács, who participated in the event, "this was the crown of spiritual revival in the eighties. This was the main guarantee of future development."¹³⁷

On December 1, 1887, eleven months later, the spark of revival burst into flames with the visit of the renowned Scottish evangelist, Andrew N. Sommerville. Dr. Somerville had just completed an around-the-world evangelistic tour, and was invited to come to Hungary by the Scottish Mission.¹³⁸ For nearly half a year, from December 1887

135. Kool, 139.

136. Kool, 140.

137. Kool, 141.

138. Révész, Imre, 147.

well into 1888, Somerville ministered in Hungary. With more energy than his 76 years betrayed, he began with an outreach to the Jews and other inquirers in Budapest, and then took an extensive tour among the Reformed Magyar population of the *Alföld* and Transylvania.

Imre Révész Jr. spoke of the impact of Somerville's ministry in Hungary:

He was one of the greatest Reformed evangelists of the 19th century ... and God's special gift. For at this point of the Hungarian Reformed revival - which still could easily have come to a standstill - he paved the way for Aladár Szabó and others in a cold, severe winter, after overcoming difficulties trying even for young people, with an unbelievable performance which can be explained only by the extraordinary help of the Holy Spirit by evangelizing a really significant and characteristic part of Hungarian Reformed mass congregations.¹³⁹

A measure of the difficulties Somerville encountered can be gleaned from the February 4, 1888, entry in his journal:

I have now discharged this ministry in thirty-seven different towns. I would have no doubt exceeded this number, but unforeseen accidents, such as being snowed up in Debrecen for five days, lack of interpreters, ill-health, Christmas holidays, etc., have interfered somewhat with my movements. What has amazed me more than anything is the multitudes of people who, at the shortest notice, flocked together to the Reformed churches. At Békés 4000 assembled at 10 a.m.; at Gyoma, 3000; and yesterday at this place, Mezőberény, 2000. A great many ministers have shown their sympathy, as well as teachers and students. May God bless the seed so feebly sown.¹⁴⁰

Yet despite the sundry obstacles that impeded his work, the evident spiritual hunger of the Magyar Reformed peasantry compelled Somerville to persist in his evangelistic efforts. And this despite the advice of some whom he encountered. From Gyoma on February 1, 1888, Somerville wrote:

In Scotland I have never had audiences as big as here...I am glad that I did not listen to the advice of the good professors in Debrecen and did not go home. Surely the most significant part of my Hungarian mission begins now...who would have believed that I would still be an eyewitness of scenes like these in my earthly life! Oh if God only poured out His Spirit! I really must think of the three thousand at Pentecost. All the glory be to God for everything.¹⁴¹

In this tour, particularly with respect to the compassion Somerville showed to the

139. Kool, 142.

140. Smith, George. A Modern Apostle, Alexander N. Somerville, D.D., 1813-1889. London: John Murray, 1890. 355.

141. Kool, 142.

peasantry and rural proletariat of the Hungarian countryside, he “prepared the way and set an example” for the indigenous leadership of the evangelical renewal “to continue this work of reviving the local churches to their responsibility in mission work, within and outside Hungary.”¹⁴² This concern for social justice, which was largely unique to the evangelical renewal among the streams of Christian life in Hungary, was an aspect of home mission that was modeled for them by Somerville and also the Scottish Mission.

2.3. The Problem of the Sects: To the Protestant First?

2.3.1. The Sects as “Sickness”

When József Sollarsch, a shoe-maker from Pest, went to the municipal council in 1868 to request that the Nazarenes be allowed to maintain their own birth and death registers, it signaled a changed situation for new religious movements in Hungary. This request was forwarded to the *kultusz* Minister, Baron Eötvös, who did not grant the request, because, as noted in the ministerial ordinance, “The Nazarenes, or Followers of Christ, are not among the legally received religious denominations.”¹⁴³ While constrained by legal custom to deny the request, Eötvös sought a compromise in deference to the liberal principles he had long espoused. As he put it in the ordinance, “on the other hand, it is not the task of the government to compel someone to accept any religion against their religious convictions.”¹⁴⁴ What resulted was the cumbersome set of procedures previously elaborated, in which the Nazarenes were to be treated as members of their former religion by law, though not by conviction. Whatever the limitations of this decision, it at least announced that it was not the role of the state to suppress the sects and enforce church discipline against the conscience of the individual.

Whereas before the Compromise only the Nazarenes had made considerable, though hard-fought progress in propagating their message, in the more liberal atmosphere of post-Compromise Hungary not only the Nazarenes, but also the Baptists were able to experience rapid growth.¹⁴⁵ In fact, the Baptists were often confused with the Nazarenes,

142. Kool, 143.

143. “A nazareniusokról [About the Nazarenes],” 1132.

144. “A nazareniusokról [About the Nazarenes],” 1132.

145. All the early literature concerning the Nazarenes was of a polemical nature, with the exception of the reprinting in PEIL of the confession which the Nazarenes put out to make known their religious principles. This was published with a brief introduction by a Reformed pastor who had contact

sometimes they were deliberately conflated with the Nazarenes. Thus the Reformed pastor Lajos Törő wrote in a short article on the history of the Nazarenes his tendentious view on the origins of the Nazarenes and their relation to the Baptists:

On the basis of the above sketch it is not difficult to give a decided answer to the oft-raised question: are the Baptists and the Nazarenes one? It is a fact that Kropacsik and Denkel brought to Hungary the Baptist teachings, from which afterwards the Nazarenes began.¹⁴⁶ It is a fact that the German Baptist teachings and the Hungarian Nazarene principles of faith are entirely the same, consequently the differences between them are nominal rather than dogmatic. Therefore I cannot accept the view that the Baptists and Nazarenes are two different sects, I view them as entirely the same...¹⁴⁷

Those Protestants who were strongly opposed to the two new religious movements were more inclined to adopt this view, while those of more evangelical convictions were often

with Nazarenes in his parish. See: Bokor, Benő. "A nazarenismus kiadta confessióját [The Nazarenes' Published Confession]." *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* 20.13 (Apr. 1 1877): 397–402. The standard contemporary history of the Nazarenes in Hungary is by László Kardos and Jenő Szigeti. It divides the study into the Nazarenes "yesterday" and "today", with World War II as the dividing line. See: Kardos, László, and Jenő Szigeti. *Boldog emberek közössége: A magyarországi nazarénusok [A Fellowship of Happy People: The Hungarian Nazarenes]*. Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1988. The Nazarenes have their origin in the work of Samuel Heinrich Fröhlich in Switzerland. A history of the work of Fröhlich with attention to the spread of his teaching beyond Switzerland, including a chapter on the connection between Fröhlich and the founders of the Nazarene fellowship in Hungary, was published by Garfield Alder. See: Alder, Garfield. *Die Tauf- und Kirchenfrage in Leben und Lehre des Samuel Heinrich Fröhlich, VDM, von Brugg 1803–1857*. Basler und Berner Studien zur historischen und systematischen Theologie [Band 29]. Bern: Peter Lang, 1976. 175–80.

146. This is simply untrue. There is no organic link between Fröhlich and the Baptist movement in Germany under Oncken. Fröhlich had broken with the established Reformed Church and established his *Gemeinschaft Evangelisch-Taufgesinnter* long before the first German Baptists penetrated into Switzerland. In fact, the Swiss Baptist movement was built in part upon the unsettled orphans of Fröhlich's movement, which only began after Fröhlich's expulsion from his homeland. Oncken came to Switzerland for the first time in 1847. He wrote the following diary entry in October 14, 1847, after visiting Carl von Rodt, the leader of several independent German congregations in the Bern area that were influenced by Fröhlich's teachings: "Mr. von Rodt is thoroughly acquainted with the history of the Baptists of Switzerland, if such they may be called. The picture he gave was most discouraging. Most of them have attached a saving efficacy to baptism and very few, if any, have held consistent views of divine truth. In asking Mr. von Rodt if a single Baptist church, as to doctrine and practice such as the Calvinistic Baptists of German Brethren and America, had been formed, he replied in the negative. The great divisions among the so-called Swiss Baptists, along with their heretical views on many points of doctrine, have thrown a suspicion on Baptists generally which, even in the event of the formation of churches on Scriptural principles, will not be easily erased." Wagner, 78. Törő's effort to identify the Nazarenes with the Baptists in origin and doctrine is based more upon his polemical intent than upon a fair reading of the facts.

147. Törő, Lajos. "Ádalékok a magyarországi nazarénizmus történetéhez [Contributions Towards the History of the Hungarian Nazarenes]." *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* 23.30 (July 25 1880): 958.

willing to see the two as separate groups, and often looked more favorably upon the Baptists.

The more illiberal tack followed by Minister Trefort during the Tisza era made it evident that the sects occupied the bottom rung of the religious hierarchy, merely tolerated, but not protected by law. This invited continued harassment at the local level by civil authorities, often at the instigation of the parish priest or minister. But the sects nevertheless continued to grow during this period, especially during the last two decades of the century, and became a major concern to the received religions. The growth of the sects proved particularly vexing to the Protestant confessions. And this was because it appeared to come primarily at their expense.¹⁴⁸

The dominant metaphorical motif for discussing the sects among Hungarian Protestants was established in an influential article in PEIL published in 1874 by Sámuel Szeremley, Reformed minister in Hódmezővásárhely. Entitled “The Causes of the Spread of the Believers’ Sect and Contractions for the Hungarian Protestant Church”, Szeremley applied a parasitic model for understanding the growth of the Nazarenes:

In general it is possible to say that the believer’s religion is the superlative of old Protestantism; it is a caricature of our principles and teachings. They suck our blood like a parasite. They consume the same fluids and organs which within our organism nourishes our vital force. In their geographical spread they accompany us step by step, like certain vermin accompany a grazing flock.¹⁴⁹

Szeremley blamed the parasitic growth of the Nazarenes on the internal weakness of the church, he spoke of “our sickness” which stemmed from the dry formalism of Reformed spirituality - the church maintained the form of piety without the evangelical vitality that characterized its early reliance on the gospel. “Is it any wonder if under such circumstances the physical and spiritual strength of the church perceptibly languishes? If

148. Szigeti points out this popular misconception: “Even though the Free Church congregations were stronger in the Protestant areas, nevertheless the proportion of former Roman Catholics by religion in the Free Church congregations is significant.” Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 71. He notes that one-fourth of the Nazarenes and one-half of the Seventh Day Adventists were former Roman Catholics. The Nazarenes also enjoyed significant growth “among the Greek Orthodox Serbian population.” Kardos, and Szigeti, 252. Towards the latter half of Mihály Kornya’s ministry in Transylvania, a significant number of Rumanians from the Orthodox and Uniate Churches would also respond to his preaching.

149. Szeremley, Sámuel. “A hívő secta terjedésének okai és óvszerei a magyar protestáns egyházban [The Causes of the Spread of the Believers’ Sect and Contractions for the Hungarian Protestant Church].” Pt. 1. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 17.28 (July 12 1874): 876–77.

we deeply show the signs of decay? If a cunning adversary does damage in our midst?”¹⁵⁰ This parasitic metaphor was also employed, although in a darker, more polemical manner, by Kálmán Könyves-Tóth, who referred to the Nazarenes as a “spiritual phylloxera”.¹⁵¹ Könyves-Tóth’s focus was not on the sickness of the church which invited parasitic attack, but rather the parasitic attack which weakened the church. An external therapy was required. He called for the church superintendents to demand that the local authorities crack down upon proselytism by the sects. A similar sentiment was later expressed by Ferenc Márk in an 1886 PEIL article entitled, “Are the Nazarenes spreading and what sort of medicine can we employ against this epidemic?”¹⁵² Jenő Szigeti later observed that it became common for commentators to refer to the sects as the “Reformed sickness” or other such analogies, irregardless of the fact that not all the converts to the new religious movements came from the ranks of the Protestant churches.¹⁵³

Yet the observations of Szeremley, if less than charitable in their characterization, rightly point to an organic link between the historical Protestant confessions and the evangelical “sects”. Szeremley presented the sects as a caricature of Protestantism¹⁵⁴, although when moving from the realm of ideas to practical morality, Szeremley confessed his church could learn much from the Nazarenes.¹⁵⁵ And it is more in this realm of

150. Szeremley, “A hívő secta terjedésének okai és óvszerei a magyar protestáns egyházban [The Causes of the Spread of the Believers’ Sect and Contraceptions for the Hungarian Protestant Church],” 877–78.

151. Könyves Tóth, Kálmán. “Míg még nem késő? [Is It Still Not Too Late?].” Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 23.11 (Mar. 14 1880): 335.

152. Márk, Ferenc. “Terjed-e a nazarénizmus s minő gyógyszer alkalmazzuk e ragály ellenében? [Are the Nazarenes Spreading and What Sort of Medicine Can We Employ Against This Epidemic?].” Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 29.9 (Feb. 28 1886): 260–62.

153. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 71.

154. For example, the Protestant ideal of *Sola Scriptura* is reduced to biblicism in the proclamation of the Nazarenes: “If we clothe the Bible with God’s authority: they clothe even the letter as well.” Szeremley, “A hívő secta terjedésének okai és óvszerei a magyar protestáns egyházban [The Causes of the Spread of the Believers’ Sect and Contraceptions for the Hungarian Protestant Church],” 876.

155. He chides the Nazarenes because they “idolize the empty letter”; yet their concern for the Scriptures was for its practical application to daily life. “But while for this reason they make themselves incapable of moving forward by a single hair the development of mankind’s spiritual life and religious ideas, at the same time we must confess that by virtue of their practical endeavors and the strict moral relationships which bind members together, they are able to take the sanctifying power of religion into such stratum of society which to this point we have not even approached and which suffer in total darkness from

practical morality, or evangelical piety, that this organic link is found. Szigeti argued that the “forms of piety” which characterized the sects “lived in Hungarian Protestantism before their historical appearance independent of the official church framework. These forms of piety are in organic continuity with those dating back to Puritanism. Such forms of piety are the corporate reading of the Bible, the corporate reading of old puritan books, corporate singing, praying, and house worship services in which the laity expounded the word.”¹⁵⁶ This organic link was often lost upon the contemporary observers. If any historical links were to be found with prior Protestant history in Hungary, it was with Anabaptist migrants who had brought their form of religion onto Hungarian soil in generations past.¹⁵⁷ Thus when PEIL corrected an earlier error in their reporting, in which Heinrich Meyer was identified as a Nazarene, it stated that he was a follower “not of the Nazarene, but rather the Anabaptist religion.”¹⁵⁸ Certainly the doctrinal similarities between the Anabaptist tradition and Nazarene teachings are noteworthy.¹⁵⁹ Yet in the final analysis, it was not a doctrinal or historical connection with Anabaptism that organically linked the evangelical sects with Magyar Protestantism, it was the traditions of Magyar puritanism that predisposed elements of the Protestant population of Hungary to embrace the preaching of the sects more readily than those of other Christian confessions.

2.3.2. A Typology of Protestant Responses to the Sects

The success enjoyed by the preaching of the sects among the Protestant populace of Hungary invited a number of responses from both clergy and laity. A useful typology for understanding the variety of reactions was put forth by Jenő Szigeti in his study of the

moral degeneration.” Szeremley, “A hívő secta terjedésének okai és óvszerei a magyar protestáns egyházban [The Causes of the Spread of the Believers’ Sect and Contraceptions for the Hungarian Protestant Church],” 879.

156. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 76.

157. Szeremley, “A hívő secta terjedésének okai és óvszerei a magyar protestáns egyházban [The Causes of the Spread of the Believers’ Sect and Contraceptions for the Hungarian Protestant Church],” 873.

158. Különfélék [Notices]. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 21.34 (Aug. 25 1878): 1092.

159. Alder closes his chapter on the Hungarian Nazarenes with a quote from the Dutch Mennonite scholar Cramer: “In ihr ist der zur Ruhe gekommene und sittlich reinste Anabaptismus des 16. Jahrhunderts so unverändert wieder auferstanden wie nirgends sonst, sowohl in seinen leitenden Gedanken als auch in den kleinsten Einzelzügen.” Alder, 180.

relationship of the appearance of the evangelical Free Church congregations and the historical Protestant confessions.¹⁶⁰ He enumerated three categories of response: the “polemical”, the “ecumenical”, and the “peasant-ecclesiola” response.

2.3.2.1. The Polemical Response

The polemical reaction was that of the “official church”, typically churchmen who were guided by their common commitment to “liberal theology”. They viewed the rise of the sects as a sign of the “stupidity of the people, the result of their backwardness”, and as a resurgence of “primitive religion”.¹⁶¹ They hoped that public education would prove a sufficient prophylactic¹⁶². Yet they did not shrink from more aggressive measures; “if necessary they would try to contend against them with administrative means and mockery. They attempted to crush the growing influence of the Free Church fellowships by way of church disciplinary measures, if possible by legal means with the assistance of state authorities.”¹⁶³ Of course there was a certain irony to liberal churchmen calling for the use of illiberal measures to suppress the sects.

In fact many early voices called for moderation in the church’s response to the sects. Thus the conservative churchman, Bishop Pál Török, in the annual report for the church district over which he presided, commented as follows:

The profession of the principle of freedom of religion opened a wide gate to schism and silly behavior. In the southern regions of our church district the Nazarenes are increasing; this is because after the religious affairs ministry issued an ordinance concerning the registration of births and deaths, this arrangement was explained away by them as indicating not only that the government recognized their existence, but also legitimated it prior to pending legislation. I believe though that this plant from a strange soil, which was brought from abroad

160. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches].”

161. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 72.

162. For example, the Krassó Region Ministerial Circle spoke of “half-educated” sectarians who “cling with blind passion to the letter of the text” and in this manner propagate their “false faith”; but several remedies were available to the church, and “in the first place the most certain instrument is proper christian formation and teaching.” Krassó Region Ministerial Circle. “Gondolatok a nazarénizmusnak és baptizmusnak hazánkba lett behozatal és ellenszerei felett [Thoughts About the Importation Into Our Homeland of the Nazarenes and Baptists and About Their Antidotes].” Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 26.11 (Mar. 18 1883): 326–27.

163. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 72.

to our home soil by wandering craftsmen, will not become hereditarily implanted here; [that is] if we do not turn against the Nazarenes with mockery and persecution, which will only increase and harden the schismatics: on the other hand, enduring patience will convert them, through humane and loving treatment and gentle discourse.¹⁶⁴

Likewise, Sámuel Szeremley criticized certain church disciplinary measures against the Nazarenes as “foolish” and noted that previous attempts by the state to put a stop to the Nazarenes were only partially successful at best; the lessons from these efforts were clear:

It is possible to see from what has occurred up to the present moment that those weapons with which we formerly wielded to battle against the recently begun sects have entirely wore out due to rust and have become utterly useless to us. We must completely turn from every such plan or thought by which in matters of conscience we hoped to succeed through outward regulations. The weapons of our victory are not fleshly, and we should altogether refrain from wrestling with the new sects believers, rather we are commanded to peaceful coexistence. The most worthy idea that can be expressed among us is this: good neighborliness.¹⁶⁵

Yet such calls for a measured, Christ-like response to the challenge of the sects were increasingly drowned out by calls for a more forceful response as the sects demonstrated that they were indeed becoming permanent transplants in Hungarian soil, and successful ones at that.

Typical of the voices for intervention was Könyves-Tóth, the man who referred to the Nazarenes as a “spiritual phylloxera”, and called upon the church superintendents to demand government intervention. He was very forthright in expressing what that intervention should look like:

My desire is that they [the sects] would be impeded from further barking in this way, that their missionaries could not establish new congregations, that is, if they run around in all directions and disturb the peace in a community, the civil authorities should be free, nay they should be required, since these missionaries are fanatic religious maniacs and further since they upset the peace of the church, to transport them back to their place of residence or birth.¹⁶⁶

Nazarene and Baptist evangelists were often prevented from preaching in a particular

164. Török, Pál. “A dunamelléki reformatus püspök évi jelentése [The Annual Report of the Dunamellék Reformed Bishop].” *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* 13.28 (July 17 1870): 852.

165. Szeremley, Sámuel. “A hívő secta terjedésének okai és óvszerei a magyar protestáns egyházban [The Causes of the Spread of the Believers’ Sect and Contraceptions for the Hungarian Protestant Church].” Pt. 2. *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* 17.29 (July 19 1874): 907–08.

166. Könyves Tóth, 336.

community by local civil authorities. What Könyves-Tóth desired was to in effect quarantine the sects to prevent their spread.

Of course, some Protestants thought it unseemly to call for the state to suppress the sects. Pál Kun responded to Könyves-Tóth's article with the following reflection:

For my part, as a Protestant, as a member of that church which shattered the shackles of the spirit 300 years ago, which protested against the blind tyranny of Rome, which of necessity at its beginning stood in contrast to the Roman hierarchy with its common sense and stands so today and will continue to stand so for a long time: in the name of freedom of conscience I protest against state intervention in such a manner as Kálmán Könyves-Tóth recommends, and I would not like to see my own Protestant denomination, which is a propagator and keeper of broadmindedness, become the bailiff of the state...¹⁶⁷

For many Protestants of conscience, it was too much for the persecuted to turn persecutor, to attempt to wield the same blunt instrument of state power against the freedom of conscience of the sectarians as was wielded by the Catholics against them. For others, such a strategy was impractical and excessive. Lajos Törő, a Reformed minister who shared Könyves-Tóth's dim view of the sects (he called them "modern pharisees"), nevertheless declared: "I do not hold them to be as dangerous as does my colleague Kálmán Könyves-Toth, neither do I wish to crown their heads with the martyr's halo."¹⁶⁸ The sects did not use force to pry people away from other churches, likewise the Reformed church would do best to use the same manner of weapon as the sects to win back the allegiance of those separated from the mother-church.

Debate within the Protestant community remained vigorous about the challenge of the sects, yet practically speaking that viewpoint which called for state intervention won. In 1884 the *tiszántúli* church district moved that the general convent present a request to the Interior Ministry to restrict the free movement of the sects' evangelists, a proposal which the general convent looked upon with favor. Finally, on June 14, 1885, Bertalan Kun and Dr. Miklós Vay took the matter to the Interior Ministry, complaining that these itinerant evangelists

disturb the church and social order, they dissolve the peace and unity between believers, they incite dissension, and some among them regard their behavior as a source of income... [The] activities of the Nazarenes and those so-called itinerant prophets are guided not by an honest and serious religious conviction, but to a great extent by a lack of intelligence and morbid day-dreaming, their preached and

167. Kun, Pál. "A protestáns egyház és a nazarénusok [The Protestant Church and the Nazarenes]." *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* 23.15 (Apr. 11 1880): 464.

168. Törő, 958.

confessed principles undermine not only church order, but also the existing social order.¹⁶⁹

The Interior Ministry took the complaint and passed it along to the *kultusz* ministry, believing it was a matter falling under their jurisdiction. The *kultusz* ministry saw no other means of redress except police intervention, and so the matter was sent back to the Interior Ministry. In that same year the Interior Ministry issued an general order to the local authorities concerning the itinerant evangelists, advising them that “in so far as their pursuits cannot be harmonized with the law, as well as with the valid rules of assembly, and in so doing they disturb public order,” the local authorities were to maintain public order through appropriate action.¹⁷⁰

This step was applauded by many. In an 1886 PEIL article by Ferenc Márk discussing the appropriate “medicine” for the “epidemic” of the Nazarenes, Márk argued that while home mission was needed, it was not sufficient:

Only against those who from delusion blundered and fell can we wield this weapon [home mission] with success; yet there are deceiving and lying frauds among them also, and against these we can only succeed through the employment of the Interior Ministry’s stringent ordinance. These must be seized by the collar and like those who wreak mischief at night, they must be forcibly transported to their respective localities. This is a drastic remedy, but without a doubt useful.¹⁷¹

However, the measures adopted did not prove sufficient and in 1888 the convent again complained to the Interior Ministry, which again turned the matter over to the *kultusz* ministry. The *kultusz* ministry responded that there was nothing further that they could do and thus the previous action would have to suffice. The Interior Ministry in turn merely strengthened the previous ordinance and informed the Reformed and Lutheran churches of the decision.¹⁷² No further progress on these matters were made until the laws of 1894 and 1895.

169. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 73.

170. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 73.

171. Márk, 262.

172. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 73–74.

2.3.2.2. The Ecumenical Response

The second response of Szigeti's typology was the "ecumenical" reaction. In this stream of Hungarian Protestantism, most closely associated with the evangelical renewal movement, Szigeti is quick to point out the prominent role played by "Anglo-Saxon traditions of piety" in influencing the remnants of Magyar puritanism. In particular, he highlighted the role of the Scottish Mission in evangelical renewal in Hungary. And in this regard the open attitude of the Scottish Mission to other forms of evangelicalism was significant: "The Scottish Mission from its beginning had connections with the free churches."¹⁷³

Yet what stands out in this narrative of events is that all of the examples that Szigeti depicts to support this picture of evangelical ecumenism flowing from the Scottish Mission into Hungarian Protestant life revolve around the Baptists. The narrative begins with Johann Rottmayer and his close association with the Scottish Mission and later Sunday school movement in Hungary. This is then followed by a description of the relationships Heinrich Meyer cultivated with Protestant churchmen such as Gábor Pap, and also Meyer's involvement with the Evangelical Alliance. There is a simple reason for this.

When one talks of evangelical ecumenism during this period, one must remember that only two evangelical "free churches", to borrow Szigeti's term, were well established in the Hungarian landscape before the turn of the century, the Nazarenes and the Baptists, and the Nazarenes maintained a very sectarian outlook. In fact relations between the Baptists and Nazarenes quickly broke down due to this fact; the idea of Nazarene believers maintaining fraternal relationships with evangelicals within the historic Protestant confessions was unthinkable.¹⁷⁴ The latter could and did defend the right of the Nazarenes to proclaim their message, but a Nazarene was not likely to return a kind word; the consistent message of the Nazarenes was that to follow God, one must leave the corrupt false churches and join their fellowship.

It is true that the Scottish Mission was a leading force in the evangelical renewal and set an example for evangelical ecumenism. However, perhaps as much as the Scottish Mission, a different group of "Anglo-Saxon" institutions, which Szigeti oddly neglected

173. Szigeti, "A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches]," 74.

174. This is why it was considered so extraordinary that Somerville's evangelistic preaching tour in the Alföld actually attracted some Nazarene hearers in certain towns.

to discuss, contributed to building relationships between Protestant and “free church” evangelicals, namely the Christian literature societies at work in Hungary, particularly the British and Foreign Bible Society. The origin of Rottmayer’s cooperation with the Scottish Mission was rooted of course in J.G. Oncken’s position as the continental agent of the Edinburgh Bible Society. It was Oncken who offered the services of his Austro-Hungarian converts as colporteurs to the Scottish Mission. And except for the objections of Wimmer, Rottmayer and his compatriots would have distributed Bible Society literature as well.

It is ironic then that Wimmer’s successor as the Bible Society agent in Austria-Hungary was the English Baptist Edward Millard. Millard was the founder of the Baptist congregation in Vienna and a friend to the Baptist mission in Hungary. He accepted Heinrich Meyer for service in Zagreb, moved him to Budapest when he came into conflict with his co-worker, and supported him when Meyer was constrained to resign from the Bible Society in order to pursue full-time Baptist ministry. Millard also entrusted the Kolozsvár depot to Rottmayer. Johann Rottmayer Jr. was employed by Millard to work in the Vienna depot, which allowed Rottmayer Jr. to minister in the Vienna congregation and to pursue evangelistic work in the region.¹⁷⁵ As a result of these and other examples, Edward Millard was greatly esteemed by Hungarian Baptists as being instrumental to their development.¹⁷⁶ The fact that the English Baptist Millard was also able to develop cordial relationships with Hungarian Protestant churchmen helped to build bridges between the two communities.¹⁷⁷

In fact, the number of Baptist colporteurs working for the Bible Society in Austria-Hungary was entirely out of proportion to their percentage of the general population. This is explained by the Baptists’ commitment to the inspiration, authority, and efficacy of Scripture. They shared this commitment with Reformed and Lutheran brethren from within the puritan or pietist traditions of their denominations. Hence while many churchmen distrusted colporteurs as stealth missionaries for the sects, a charge not

175. For example, an article in PEIL mentions “a Viennese young person by the name of Johann Rottmayer” who was present at a Baptist meeting in Pozsony (Bratislava), in which the police had to intervene because a rowdy crowd had surrounded the house in which they were meeting; Rottmayer Jr. was taken into custody because he “could not furnish identification for himself.” “Baptizmus Pozsonyban [Baptists in Pozsony].” *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* 29.23 (June 6 1886): 737.

176. Szebeni, Olivér. “Millard Ede (1822–1906) [Edward Millard (1822–1906)].” *Békehírnök* X (LX).12 (June 15 1966): 5.

177. Balogh, 20–21.

entirely unfounded¹⁷⁸, those within the evangelical renewal had an appreciation for the Christian literature work of the various societies and for the free church evangelicals who worked so fervently to reach the masses with it.¹⁷⁹

Another aspect of this common interest in Christian literature was explicated by Szigeti, who observed that an interesting role in the “ecumenical relationships in the process of formation with the free church congregations” was played by the popularity and influence of the writings of Charles Spurgeon in Hungary.¹⁸⁰ Oddly enough, the first person to publish a translation of Spurgeon’s writings into Hungarian was Kálmán Könyves-Tóth, who in addition to the harsh article in PEIL already noted, also published a polemical tract entitled “Futkározó hamis atyafi, vagy a leálcázott baptista” [“False brethren who have sneaked in, or the Baptists unmasked”], the phrase comes from Galatians 2:4], which went through four editions between 1880-82.¹⁸¹ Könyves-Tóth spent some of his period of study abroad in London, where he was captivated by Spurgeon’s preaching.¹⁸² He eventually obtained permission to publish a translation of a collection of sermons, which appeared between 1881 and 1884 as a three volume edition entitled *A hit temploma* [*The Temple of Faith*]. While the edition was well received, it was later criticized by József Szalay as unfaithful to Spurgeon’s evangelical teaching.¹⁸³

178. This was in one sense the reality of the situation, even if not the Bible Society’s intention. Szebeni noted in an article about Edward Millard: “Even though the Bible Society forbade every kind of denominational propaganda to its colporteurs, it still came about that the Baptist principles of faith were spread along with the Bible. Our congregations were growing throughout the country, and our most noteworthy mission-workers in the beginning always came from the ranks of the Bible colporteurs.” Szebeni, “Millard Ede (1822–1906) [Edward Millard (1822–1906)],” 5. Szebeni then cited Gyula Répay, an early pioneer, to the effect that after God, the Baptists could thank Edward Millard for their great success because through the employ of Baptist colporteurs, he “made possible the spread of the Baptist principles of faith throughout the country.” Szebeni, “Millard Ede (1822–1906) [Edward Millard (1822–1906)],” 5.

179. Kool, 53.

180. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 74–75.

181. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 75.

182. Szigeti, Jenő. “Spurgeon magyar hallgatói [Spurgeon’s Hungarian Audience].” És emlékezzél meg as útról.. [“And you shall remember all the way..”]. Budapest: Szabadegyházak Tanácsa, 1981. 72.

183. Szalay complained that Könyves-Toth “so cleaned up Spurgeon’s sermons that by his own admission even Spurgeon would not recognize them.” Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the

Szalay himself had heard Spurgeon preach on several occasions. Along with Ferenc Kecskeméti, he had received a stipend from the Scottish Mission to study in Edinburgh, and during visits to London the two future leading figures in Hungary's evangelical renewal developed a deep appreciation for Spurgeon's preaching.¹⁸⁴ Szalay also published one of Spurgeon's works, *Templomi beszéd* [*Temple Talks*], which came out in 1895 in cooperation with the Hamburg Baptist publishing house, J.G. Oncken Nachfolger.¹⁸⁵ This represents an interesting example of the cooperative relationships which existed between Hungarian Protestants in the evangelical renewal and the Baptists.

Spurgeon's writings were widely distributed by people like Szalay, and found a ready audience in the peasant ecclesiolas.¹⁸⁶ Spurgeon's writings helped to create a bridge between the two evangelical camps, and to deflect the criticism of those opposed to the Baptists. Some critics characterized the devotion with which the Baptists praised Spurgeon's writings as erecting a Spurgeon cult.¹⁸⁷ Others tried to drive a wedge between Spurgeon the Christian theologian and the sectarian Baptists of Hungary. For example, Lajos Zsigmond Szeberényi, a contemporaneous historian and critic of the nascent Nazarene movement, wrote on one occasion that Spurgeon was not concerned in his work with "Baptist matters, nor with English matters, but with Christian matters," and so in his view, "Spurgeon, in consequence of his lofty erudition, truly stands above the narrow vision of the sects."¹⁸⁸ To this Dr. Aladár Szabó responded that the frequent use of Spurgeon's works in the Protestant churches was "a great consolation to our Baptists, who certainly view it with great satisfaction, for if we often reprove them, we still are not ashamed of the spiritual nourishment which our believers receive from their pastor."¹⁸⁹

All of these factors served to build bridges between those in the evangelical renewal and the Baptists. This sometimes put the former in difficulty with their fellow

Protestant Churches],” 75.

184. Szigeti, “Spurgeon magyar hallgatói [Spurgeon’s Hungarian Audience],” 76–77.

185. Szigeti, “Spurgeon magyar hallgatói [Spurgeon’s Hungarian Audience],” 77.

186. Szigeti, “Spurgeon magyar hallgatói [Spurgeon’s Hungarian Audience],” 77.

187. Garzó, “A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes],” 334–35.

188. Szigeti, “Spurgeon magyar hallgatói [Spurgeon’s Hungarian Audience],” 78.

189. Szigeti, “Spurgeon magyar hallgatói [Spurgeon’s Hungarian Audience],” 78.

churchmen from the liberal wing of the confession, who charged them with nurturing the sects. It also served as a wedge issue to denigrate the home mission efforts of the evangelical renewal. The partisans of the evangelical renewal responded in various ways to defend themselves, sometimes they were constrained to put some distance between themselves and the free church evangelicals. Hence the following comment which appeared in an 1898 issue of PEIL: “There is something to appreciate from that kind of Baptist who converts unbelievers and saves the depraved, but no forbearance is due to that kind of Baptist who disturbs believing Christians, who lurks in the dark.”¹⁹⁰

Still the typical viewpoint expressed in the various organs of the evangelical renewal, magazines such as Hajnal [Dawn], Keresztyén [Christian], Evangélista [Evangelist], Kis Tükör [The Little Mirror], and Szabad Egyház [Free Church] tended to support the sects against their detractors. For example, József Poór, Reformed minister in Újszivác, responded to liberal complaints in an 1895 Evangélista article in the following manner:

As to that assertion, that we are well-suited for increasing the numbers of the Nazarenes, Baptists, etc., I say what a pity it would be if the followers of the Calvinist Reformed confession would no longer feel themselves at home, or would no longer remain in the Reformed Church; perhaps it would be good if we would proclaim Unitarian doctrines, so that we could retain church members in the Reformed Church, wouldn't it? After all the Nazarenes, the Baptists, indeed even the Unitarians are increasing - so it seems - and without us at that.¹⁹¹

This sarcastic response to liberal accusations sought to make the point through biting irony that the greatest problem facing the Reformed Church was not the increasing membership of the sects, often at the expense of the Reformed Church, but the different gospel which the liberal churchmen were preaching. Whatever the faults of the sects, at least they were seeking to proclaim the gospel.

Similarly, Mihály Révész, Reformed minister in Biharnagybajom, responded to an article in the Szabad Egyház magazine which attacked the Nazarenes and Baptists from a conservative confessional direction. In his response Révész defended the Baptists and their proclamation against the coarse attack. He expressed a fundamental sentiment of the evangelical perspective when he argued: “With regard to salvation, the essential thing is

190. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 74.

191. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 74.

not in what manner someone was baptized, but rather whether one believes.”¹⁹² He also criticized the hypocrisy of Protestants clamoring for the state to help them battle the sects. “While on the one hand we loudly proclaim that we are the champions of freedom of conscience, on the other hand we cry at the door of the Ministry that in the interest of our freedom of conscience would they please send out the police to forcefully suppress the freedom of conscience of the Baptists and Nazarenes.”¹⁹³ He closed his article with the following sentiment: “We should not repulse with hatred, rather we should embrace into our bosom all of those who have become our brethren through faith in the Lord Jesus.”¹⁹⁴

In summary, this ecumenical response typically came from those involved in the evangelical renewal who saw in the sects, primarily the Baptists, fellow brethren in the faith. On the one hand they defended the sects against the attacks of church liberals, arguing that they were not the problem, but represented a call for the Protestant churches to recover the gospel itself in order to retain the loyalty of its members. On the other hand, this ecumenical response often drew a line when free church evangelists called upon believers within the historical Protestant churches to leave their degraded congregations for a pure fellowship of believers. The successes of the Baptists in this regard was seen to undercut the home mission work of the evangelical renewal.

2.3.2.3. The Sects and the Peasant Ecclesiolas

In a certain sense the third response was not a response *per se* to the sects, but rather a contested battlefield between the various forces. The peasant ecclesiolas were a venerable practice containing many affinities with the phenomenon of free church evangelicalism. They were also the true guardians of puritan traditions and piety among Magyar Protestants. Thus they were significant beyond their small numbers. These ecclesiolas were lay fellowships in which earnest believers gathered together at someone’s home to study the Bible, read devotional literature, sing hymns and pray.¹⁹⁵

192. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 75.

193. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 75.

194. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 75.

195. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 71.

The parallels with the piety and practices of the sects are evident.

For this reason, the peasant ecclesiolas became increasingly estranged from the “official church”, the repository of liberal theology and institutional elitism. As one village minister complained in the Protestáns Közlöny:

What use is there out of my church if the village bootmaker, furrier, or gardener (without respect to whether he is a Calvinist or not) can gather around himself a group of people, take the Bible in his hand and begin to expound upon it? Or if when they are finished with that, they very nicely fall on their knees to pray? Or can my believers be built up out of that, if my Mr. Péter Albu the baker comes down from the neighboring borough to lead singing of such songs for which one looks for in vain in the hymnal?¹⁹⁶

To the official church, the peasant ecclesiolas represented both a competing lay structure and theological vision.

Yet for the leading lights of the evangelical renewal, the peasant ecclesiolas represented a basis upon which to build, a natural constituency to aid in the evangelical reformation of the church, particularly in the heartland of Magyar Protestantism in the Alföld.¹⁹⁷ Among the leaders in the evangelical renewal who encouraged and defended the lay ecclesiolas were Ferenc Kecskeméti and József Szalay. Yet as Szigeti notes: “Theirs was a strange two-fronted fight. On the one hand they had to defend themselves from the increasingly sharp attacks of the official church, on the other hand it was increasingly hopeless to keep the disillusioned ecclesiolas in the church.”¹⁹⁸ In other words, the peasant ecclesiolas naturally gravitated towards the Baptists given their affinities.¹⁹⁹ For example, Károly Horváth, a peasant active in the Mezőtúr ecclesiola, reminisced: “With regards to the faith of the fellowships, I felt closest to the Baptists. That is because I saw in them the most faithful discharge of the sacrament contained in the Lord’s commandment according to Matthew 28, verses 18, 19, and 20.”²⁰⁰ This was

196. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 75.

197. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 75.

198. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 75.

199. These were common forms of piety, a shared evangelical theology, and a similar sociological composition and emphasis upon lay leadership.

200. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak

not a theological observation on the proper mode of baptism, but rather a confession of sympathy for the Baptists because, in Horváth's view, they most faithfully executed the Great Commission which the Lord had left to His disciples.

This was the attraction of the Baptists to these guardians of the puritan spirit among the Reformed peasantry, and the source of their dissatisfaction with their own church. The Baptists were fond to compare the spiritual vitality and evangelistic fervor of their fellowships to the spiritually moribund Reformed Church and the cultural captivity of its clergy and theologians to the modernist *Zeitgeist*. In the eyes of those within the peasant ecclesiolas, the Baptists often won this comparison. The partisans of the evangelical renewal entreated this constituency to stay within the church and work for its reformation. But in some significant cases this plea went unheeded.²⁰¹ The denizens of the peasant ecclesiolas remained a fertile source of Baptist converts and a parallel lay movement within the Reformed Church that had sympathy and regard for their Baptist brethren.

2.3.3. Protestant Disunity in the Face of the Challenge From Below

It is evident that there was a broad spectrum of responses to the challenge of the sects from those within the historic Protestant churches. Of course patterns of behavior were discernible from different factions, as Szigeti's typology of responses helpfully demonstrates. Yet what strikes the imagination upon reflection is that Hungarian Protestantism was very divided when the shoe was on the other foot.

Hungarian Protestants argued interminably over how best to fight against Roman Catholic abuses or to end Roman Catholic privileges in the quest for confessional equality. But in their role as David against the Goliath of the Roman Catholic Church, Protestants were united in their belief that their struggle was both necessary and right. When confronted, however, with an entirely different kind of threat, one from below rather than from above, Hungarian Protestants could not agree on the nature of the problem, much less on the appropriate solution.

[The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 75. Szigeti takes this citation from Horváth's *Életem története* [*My Life's History*], a manuscript in the archives of the Mezőtúr Reformed Church.

201. A prominent example that shall be examined in more depth later concerns the conversion of István Sós, an ecclesiola leader in Békés and frequent contributor to *Szabad Egyház*. When he finally decided to become a Baptist, this decision eventually resulted in numerous defections from the Reformed Church, mostly from those active in the ecclesiolas. Baptized by Kornya in 1891, Sós became an active and successful peasant evangelist for the Baptist movement in Békés and Csongrád counties.

With regard to the sects, some within the received Protestant churches were only too happy to do unto others as had been done unto them, while others recoiled at the hypocrisy and retreat from first principles that the call for state intervention represented. Indeed, was the rise of the sects an external threat, or merely an external manifestation of the inner problems and weaknesses of the Protestant churches? Was the proper analogy of sickness with regards to the sects one of a predatory pestilence, or of a symbiotic parasite exploiting the internal decay of Protestantism? There was very little common ground found within Hungarian Protestantism when confronted with this novel challenge, and the various responses tell us as much about the divided nature of Hungarian Protestantism as they do about the sects.

3. The Renewal of the Baptist Mission in Hungary under Heinrich Meyer

3.1. Heinrich Meyer's Early Life and Ministry

Heinrich Meyer was born to a Lutheran family residing in Grossbuschek, Hessen, on August 13th, 1842. His father was a cooper by trade. Meyer described his mother as a woman of “generous spirit”, despite which his parents marriage was not “happy” and his father was “hard” to his mother.²⁰² The young Meyer was only able to attend the village school from age six to fourteen. Despite the fact that he was a good student, Meyer's formal schooling was cut short for practical reasons, from the age of eleven he took over responsibility for the family garden and helped with various chores. He continued his education with various artisans for several years after the end of his formal schooling.

Music was an important part of the Meyer family. His father was a member of a choral society, and even contemplated a musical career for his son until Heinrich cut his finger so severely that he could no longer play the violin. Still, Heinrich picked up his love of singing from his father and described his own voice as “exceptionally strong”.²⁰³ In the end, Heinrich's father though the carpenter's trade was best for him. He studied drafting briefly and eventually apprenticed under a few masters until he received his workbook as a carpenter.²⁰⁴

202. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 1.

203. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 2.

204. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 2, 4.

Towards the end of the 1850's Meyer's father was befriended by a Baptist craftsman by the name of Sommerland. Under Sommerland's influence he began to regularly attend Baptist services in Alstdorf in 1859 or 1860, and in late 1860 he began to take his family with him to services in Fronhausen. Heinrich was silently annoyed because he found the other youth "goofy" at first. In time he came to respect the Baptist believers in Fronhausen as "true saints".²⁰⁵

As was the custom with young artisans of that time, Meyer wandered from master to master learning his craft. But it was a time of loneliness and guilt, because he would use his free time on Sundays to make various pieces for himself.²⁰⁶

It was during this period of spiritual turmoil that Heinrich Meyer returned home for the holidays. He arrived on Christmas eve of 1861 and found that in his absence his family had become more involved in Baptist life. This did not please him. On Christmas day he was invited to attend an evening service the Baptists were holding in Buseck, but Heinrich declined in order to go out with friends. The conversation with his friends that evening turned to the subject of the "believers" and how "hypocritical" they were; it was also noted that Meyer's sisters were attending Baptist services. Later that evening one of them commented about Meyer: "This one is also infected."²⁰⁷ Then a strange thought entered into Heinrich's head: "These people are all enemies of God." It was followed by a stranger thought still: "My life demonstrates the same thing!" And finally Meyer said to himself: "You must convert." This was strange indeed, but he knew what he had to do, and so he resolved: "I want to convert and God will help me." As he went home that night, Heinrich Meyer was convinced his life would never be the same.²⁰⁸

After that night, Heinrich Meyer entered into a period of spiritual struggle and seeking after God. He immersed himself in the Scriptures and wrestled with his past life. Finally one night after a month of inner turmoil, towards the end of January, 1862, Meyer thought to himself, "God will forgive your every sin, if you believe; but I don't know how

205. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 3.

206. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 5.

207. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 5.

208. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 6.

to believe.” Yet on that very evening God came to him and gave him the ability to believe.²⁰⁹ He emerged from that experience confident in the faith he had placed upon Jesus and assured of his salvation. Around the same time the rest of Meyer’s family came to the same peace he had found, and so they all presented themselves for baptism. On March 7th, 1862, Heinrich Meyer and his family were baptized in the Lahn River by Jakob Becker.²¹⁰ On his Baptist membership certificate one can find the signature of J.G. Oncken.²¹¹

In 1867 Meyer went to Hamburg for the conference and celebration surrounding the opening of the Böhmen Street Chapel, and he decided to stay and seek work in the city. In time Meyer and some friends organized a youth fellowship, with Meyer serving as its leader. The work developed well, such that at one sermon J.G. Oncken described it as the “backbone” of the church.²¹²

While in Hamburg a turning point came in Meyer’s life. In 1868 two German youth named Pritzkau and Reims arrived from southern Russia looking to study in the mission school. Reims was a Mennonite, Pritzkau a Baptist.²¹³ They spoke of the thirst of the people for the Word of God and the dearth of preachers. Meyer had an impression that

209. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 6.

210. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 6.

211. Mészáros, Kálmán. “Meyer Henrik születésének 125. évfordulójára [The 125th Anniversary of Heinrich Meyer’s Birth].” Theologiai Szemle 10 <new series>.9–10 (1967): 293.

212. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 12.

213. Pritzkau was part of a German pietistic renewal movement among the Lutherans of the area who through the influence of the Mennonite Brethren had adopted believer’s baptism. The Mennonite Brethren themselves were an evangelical renewal movement among the German Mennonite communities in southern Russia. It was a leader among the Mennonite Brethren by the name of Unger who gave Pritzkau’s house-church the name and address of Oncken in Hamburg. Pritzkau had written Oncken and explained the faith and experiences of his congregation, and had received a warm response from Oncken. Eventually, rather than wait for Oncken to come to them, the “Pietistenbrüder” decided to send Pritzkau to Oncken in Hamburg to establish a relationship between their indigenous movement and the Baptist movement lead by Oncken in Germany. Pritzkau arrived before the Baptists in Hamburg had established their “Prediger-Seminar”, and so the brethren recommended that they sponsor Pritzkau’s education at Chrischona. Oncken wrote to them, but Pritzkau was denied acceptance because he was a Baptist, and so Pritzkau spent a year doing practical ministry in Hamburg and the environs. Pritzkau wrote: “Im April des Jahres 1869 nahm ich von der Gemeinde Abschied, bei welcher Gelegenheit ich noch erst vor der Gemeinde von Br. Oncken zum Missionsdienst ordiniert wurde.” Pritzkau, Johann. Geschichte der Baptisten in Süd-Rußland. Odessa: Wenske und Lübeck, 1914. 34.

“certainly it was God’s will that I should go to these people.”²¹⁴ Eventually, after a period of financial and spiritual struggle, Meyer joined Pritzkau in 1869 on the long journey back to Pritzkau’s home in Alt-Danzig, a German settlement north of Odessa. Much of their journey was by boat down the Danube. In Vienna Meyer attempted to visit with Edward Millard, but he was back in London on business. Once in Alt-Danzig, Meyer took up his trade, and with what little spare time he had, he devoted to mission work.

During his time in Alt-Danzig, Meyer claimed to have witnessed the birth of the Russian Baptist movement. J.G. Oncken came to the German colonies of the Alt-Danzig area in 1869, where he sought to bring German Protestants, particularly from the Mennonite Brethren²¹⁵ fellowships, into the Baptist fold.²¹⁶ He enjoyed some success in this and in reaching out to the Russian *Stundist* sectarians. It was in Alt-Danzig that Meyer claimed to have witnessed Oncken baptizing a simple Russian peasant, who in turn later baptized someone Meyer called “Rabschatka”. This Rabschatka, Meyer argued, became the driving personality behind the Russian Baptists, although, as Meyer explained, they called themselves *Stundists* instead of Baptists, after the German word *Stunde*, or hour, denoting the time of Bible study and worship practiced by the German Pietists.²¹⁷ According to Meyer, it was at the time of the Russian Orthodox Christmas, late January of 1870, and a Mennonite Brethren elder baptized around fifty Germans who wanted to become Baptists because Pritzkau was not yet ordained. Meyer explained that the local brethren did not want to baptize this Russian believer from a neighboring village

214. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 10.

215. As noted, the Mennonite Brethren were an emerging splinter group from the established Mennonite congregations. They were the result of an evangelical awakening among their communities and in most respects were very close to the Baptists in faith and piety. Thus Heinrich Meyer remarked: “Such good relations developed between the believing Mennonites and the Baptists that the elders of the Mennonite congregation helped with the establishment of the Baptist fellowships and permitted the Baptists to be baptized by them. The only difference between the two was that the Mennonites had a tradition of foot-washing and they did not swear oaths.” Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 21.

216. Pritzkau wrote in some detail of Oncken’s visit, and described Oncken’s tour of the region after his stay in Alt-Danzig, and his visits to Mennonite Brethren congregations figured greatly in this narrative. He wrote: “Mit derselben jugendlichen Frische und Wärme, wie bei uns, hat er dann auch hier unter der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde dieselbe Arbeit zur Aufmunterung, Erbauung und Belehrung der gläubigen Schar getan.” Pritzkau, 37.

217. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 21–22.

because of the certain persecution that would come from the Russian authorities. Therefore, Meyer was surprised when he saw the Russian believer undress and enter into the water before Oncken. Oncken baptized him without the other brethren noticing. However, some Russian witnesses saw this and Oncken was spared the trouble that came only because he immediately left after the baptism.²¹⁸

Pritzkau has a similar recollection, yet divergent in some very important aspects. He also places this event in Alt-Danzig in 1870, but following Oncken's visit. Moreover, Pritzkau invited Unger and Wieler not out of necessity, but in the spirit of brotherly friendship; for he was ordained by Oncken in October of 1869, and the Alt-Danzig congregation had already been constituted as the first Baptist church in the region. Following Oncken's visit, a revival had taken hold in the area, and Pritzkau had invited his close Mennonite Brethren friends to come to celebrate the baptisms they would perform. Meyer came along with a Mennonite Brethren evangelist named Johannes Wieler, for at that time he was working with Wieler in Odessa. Pritzkau wrote:

Among the baptismal candidates there was also an ethnic Russian, a brother C. But we could not decide whether to baptize him. But as the baptisms were taking place in the river on the second day of Pentecost before a great crowd of witnesses, brother C. could not resist and mixed in with the baptismal candidates and before brother Unger, who was performing the baptisms, realized it, he was baptized with them. In this way this large baptismal celebration also became the occasion for the wonderful beginning of the Baptist movement among the circle of Russian believers.²¹⁹

It was this Brother C. who later baptized "Br. Rjaboschapka", as Pritzkau called him. In fact an Ivan Ryaboshapka was a leader of Russian stundism from a village neighboring Alt-Danzig. He appears to have been active in Russian stundism prior to his baptism.²²⁰ Still, he may have been baptized in a manner consistent with Pritzkau's recollection, by a Stundist by the name of Tsymbal.²²¹ However, Ukrainian stundism represented only one of three streams of Baptist/evangelical renewal in the Russian empire; moreover,

218. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 21.

219. Pritzkau, 13–14.

220. Brandenburg, Hans. The Meek and the Mighty. New York: Oxford UP, 1977. 81–83.

221. Nesdoly, Samuel John. "Evangelical Sectarianism in Russia: A Study of the Stundists, Baptists, Pashkovites, and Evangelical Christians 1855–1917." Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University, 1971. 48; Gutsche, Waldemar. Westliche Quellen des russischen Stundismus. Kassel: J.G. Oncken Verlag, 1956. 50.

Ukrainian stundism was already a rising phenomenon before Oncken's visit, and Oncken's labors in the region provided only a brief, though perhaps important spark to an emerging Russian Baptist movement indebted primarily to Mennonite Brethren piety.²²² Still, Oncken's work was fundamental to the development of an ethnic German Baptist movement in the region, and Meyer supports Pritzkau's description of the Alt-Danzig congregation as the first Baptist fellowship in southern Russia, formally constituted by Oncken.²²³ Oddly, Meyer also agrees with Pritzkau in placing Oncken's visit to southern Russia in the fall of 1869, at the time the church in Alt-Danzig was constituted. It is difficult to reconcile Meyer's seemingly conflicting recollections, and preference should be given to Pritzkau's narrative of the events.

Around this time Meyer had grown dissatisfied with his situation in Alt-Danzig. In December of 1869 he was constrained to go to Odessa because his passport had expired, and there he came into contact with German "pietists" and preached among them.²²⁴ Meyer spoke of the Wünsche family and the previously mentioned "Mennonite" Johannes Wieler.²²⁵ Wieler encouraged Meyer to come to Odessa and continue the mission work they had initiated, and Meyer began to work towards that end.

These plans culminated at the beginning of the following year. January of 1870 was a significant turning point according to Meyer in his life and ministry, though it only merited a brief mention in his autobiography. He simply wrote: "In January I was ordained by brother Ondra and in the same month the church [in Odessa] was founded."²²⁶ Brother Ondra has been identified by Mészáros as Karl Ondra, Baptist pastor in Lodz.²²⁷ Meyer also briefly noted that Oncken came down from Volhynia for the

222. Sawatsky, Walter. Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II. Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1981. 32–35.

223. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 22.

224. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 22.

225. Johannes Wieler, although a Mennonite Brethren, had come under the influence of Oncken. He later sought to bring the *Stundists* and Caucasian Baptists together, and was briefly the president of the first Baptist Union in the Russian empire in 1884. See: Sawatsky, 34, 44.

226. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 23.

227. Mészáros, A magyarországi baptista egyház vázlatos története [A Brief History of the

founding of the Odessa fellowship.²²⁸ In February of 1870 Meyer made the move from Alt-Danzig to Odessa. He and Johannes Wieler worked together preaching in the houses of believers and attracting converts who then presented themselves for baptism. According to Meyer, Wieler left the work sometime after April, 1870, following an incident in which the two men were taken from the home in which they were holding a service for questioning by the authorities.

Unfortunately, the simple picture painted here by Meyer is contradicted by the recollections of Johann Pritzkau, who paints a darker portrait of a work torn by division. Pritzkau confirms that Wieler invited Meyer to join the work in Odessa, and that Meyer did so in early 1870. Pritzkau visited the work in May of 1870. Two aspects of this visit stand out in Pritzkau's recollection. First, Pritzkau's travels at this time remained vivid in his memory because it was his first missionary journey through the region some months after Oncken's ground breaking visit. Just before he reached Odessa, he had the joy of performing some baptisms in Annental, thereby laying the ground for the second Baptist congregation in the region. Second, the trip was memorable for what he encountered in Odessa. As Pritzkau put it, "In Odessa, however, my work was not so pleasant as it was in Annental."²²⁹ Pritzkau's description of the situation is important because it shows both the strengths and weaknesses that Meyer brought with him to the mission in Hungary. The split that eventually developed between Meyer and the rising indigenous Magyar leadership within the Baptist movement in Hungary is a repetition writ large of what took place in Odessa. Pritzkau continued:

My undertaking to restore reciprocity between the two brothers, Meyer and Wieler, did not survive for long. Hardly a year had passed before things broke down and the small congregation was called together so that I could mediate. This was a very difficult task for me because the two brothers were my friends from my youth. All three of us were at that time unmarried and almost the same age. I very much regretted that these men who began [their ministry] in unity with those from Moldowanka²³⁰ could not carry on in the same manner. They both had the necessary equipment, education and gifts. In this respect they could have fulfilled their intention to stay in Odessa for a while to be a blessing. In my opinion ambition was to blame for the fact that this could not come to fruition. Indeed

Hungarian Baptist Church], 34.

228. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 23.

229. Pritzkau, 58.

230. This was the Jewish Quarter in Odessa, and apparently where the house in which the congregation met for worship was located.

people usually put the blame on other, often religious motives, as it happened here during the church meeting, in which the church was split into two parties, even though the entire congregation barely amounted to ten members. Some wanted brother Meyer to be ordained as elder under the pretext that brother Wieler was a Mennonite, while the other party to the contrary wanted brother Wieler on the grounds that he had begun the good work there. Nevertheless, selfishness was the real reason that unity in the Spirit was hindered and the little home group could not proceed bound together in love, as is typical in such cases.²³¹

This narrative evidences a discerning spirit by Pritzkau. Here were two gifted men who through ambition allowed an infant congregation to become divided for reasons that did not meet the biblical warrant for separation. Pritzkau compared this situation to the one the Apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians confronted. He also reflected on Jesus' high-priestly prayer in John 17 in which he prayed for the unity of his disciples. In his view, if the brethren in Odessa had taken these biblical concerns to heart, then "such small, often personal things would not have given rise to separation."²³² Pritzkau's solution to the difficult situation did not please anyone, and yet it was the wisest course he could take.

Because of the disunity of the small home group in Odessa, I had neither the joy nor the will to meet with one or the other party and hold a vote in order to ordain one of the two brothers as an elder. I could only share with them the well intentioned advice to simply carry on as before in their work, except for the disunity, and to let the brothers preach during their gatherings until it pleased the Lord to show them another way. I shared this advice during the worship service, which also was my last time with them before departing Odessa. I did not depart without some anxiety.²³³

Pritzkau obviously hoped that through patience and prayer a solution would be found by the congregation that would not lead to a painful split; he realized that such a split would seriously impede the still small work. The other reason Pritzkau had for delaying a decision was the knowledge that he had invited Karl Ondra from Volhynia to come to Alt-Danzig for Whitsuntide to celebrate the occasion with the believers and also to perform Pritzkau's wedding ceremony. He hoped that Ondra would be able to bring his greater experience to bear upon the situation and mediate a solution. Wieler escorted Pritzkau to the train station following the service, and Pritzkau remembered their conversation because of what it foreshadowed. Naturally, the topic of discussion was the

231. Pritzkau, 58.

232. Pritzkau, 59.

233. Pritzkau, 59.

difficult service they had just completed and the divisions in the congregation. Pritzkau wrote: "Among other things brother Wieler told me that he was pondering starting his own church with the members of his party. In my view there was no good reason to do this, since no difference in teaching was involved, but simply personal differences were the issue."²³⁴ Such personality conflicts were a repeating pattern of Meyer's career. The split that Pritzkau feared and counselled against did come to pass, but not in the way he expected.

Karl Ondra arrived in Alt-Danzing and enjoyed a very fruitful time of ministry. Among the matters discussed by the gathered brethren was the need for a union of Baptist churches in the south of Russia, as their was for the Baptist churches in the west where Ondra ministered. After Whitsuntide, Pritzkau was encouraged by Ondra's willingness to travel with him to Odessa to give his counsel. Before they arrived in Odessa, Ondra was arrested in Annental while ministering to the believers, and brought to Odessa for questioning. He was held for two weeks in prison, and yet in such a manner that the believers in Odessa were given free access to visit with Ondra. Pritzkau described what transpired after Ondra's release with a measure of sorrow.

After he was released he held some gatherings, baptisms, and worship services. At this point the party within the Odessa congregation that stood with brother Meyer again came forward with their request. Brother Ondra, who knew too little about the relationships, relented to their urgent desire and carried out their will, although this did not prove itself to be God's will. Brother Wieler now led his party out, in accordance with what he had shared with me at the train station. Things did not go well with the other party, such that within a year brother Meyer had to resign from his position.²³⁵

After this debacle, Pritzkau passed pastoral responsibility for the Odessa congregation to Karl Ondra, since his decision to ordain Meyer resulted in the events which followed. The congregation continued to experiences troubles and divisions. Two quick points to clear up before examining the substance of Pritzkau's narrative. First, Karl Ondra was not from Lodz, as has been believed by some historians. He was in fact from Neudorf in Volhynia, and was the pioneer Baptist pastor in the region among the German colonists.²³⁶ Second, Pritzkau does not present Oncken as having accompanied Ondra from Volhynia, and it is

234. Pritzkau, 60.

235. Pritzkau, 62–63.

236. Miller, Donald. In the Midst of Wolves: A History of German Baptists in Volhynia, Russia, 1863 - 1943. Portland, OR: Multnomah Printing, 2000. 11–20.

unlikely that he would have not mentioned having the honor of Oncken's presence at his wedding, or at the discussions that lead to the establishment of the Baptist Union in southern Russia. Therefore, Meyer's memory was faulty on this point. Perhaps the circumstances surrounding his ordination account for the very brief description he gives to this important milestone in his ministry?

What then does one make of Meyer's ordination? First, Ondra likely consented to ordain Heinrich Meyer because he could only judge the situation as it appeared to him on the surface, the facade of Baptists desiring a Baptist as their elder and pastor. Pritzkau noted that Ondra made his decision as he did because he was not as familiar with the persons and relationships in the congregation as was Pritzkau. In the final analysis then, it was up to Heinrich Meyer to evaluate the situation and to follow the advice given by Pritzkau; that is, to decline ordination until such a time as it would not cause a rift in the fellowship. Admittedly, this would have been a difficult step. Yet the fact that Meyer believed it appropriate for his ordination to occur under such circumstances betrays the "ambition" that Pritzkau saw in the matter. Perhaps ambition is not sufficient to describe Meyer. The pattern that emerges in his ministry is that Heinrich Meyer never worked well with others when he was under the authority of another or co-equal with others. He was most comfortable being the unquestioned leader, and was self-centered enough to believe that such was always for the best. This characteristic of Heinrich Meyer became the focal point of the criticism leveled against him by the younger generation of Magyar leaders who began to question his dominance over the Baptist mission in Hungary during the 1890's.

Something in the events in Odessa brought home to Meyer the realization that something was lacking in his life. "At that time I realized that I needed to start a family, that I should have my own apartment and work-place close to the church's meeting-place. I prayed for half a year for a wife."²³⁷ This need marked the second significant event for Meyer that took place during his time in the Ukraine. In fact, his marriage must have taken place very close in time to his ordination.

After praying for some time Meyer was asked if he thought the younger sister of Mrs. Wünsche might be an appropriate match. Meyer described Mathilde Michelsohn as a "gentle-hearted" woman who attended the worship services with her sister and brother-

237. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 23.

in-law.²³⁸ Perhaps her suitability had not been readily apparent for two reasons. First, she was thirteen years older than Meyer. In Meyer's *Mitglieder Register*, her birth date is given as February 28, 1829, born in Ober-Balen bei Dorpat, in what is now Estonia.²³⁹ Second, she was not yet a Baptist. Meyer described her sister and brother-in-law as "pietists" when he met them, and Mathilde was also of this mind. Before coming to Odessa Miss Michelsohn had served as a chambermaid in the household of Princess Lieven in St. Petersburg.²⁴⁰ The Lieven's were a Lutheran noble family of Baltic origin who were esteemed at the imperial court, and Princess Lieven would become instrumental in the St. Petersburg revival that began in 1874 under the witness of the British nobleman, Lord Radstock, an evangelical associated with the Open Brethren in Great Britain.²⁴¹ When Mathilde Michelsohn left St. Petersburg to join her sister in Odessa, she found kindred spirits in the Baptist fellowship she attended with her relations.

The process of courtship was brief and to the point.

In May I asked if she would be willing to discuss the possibility of marriage. She agreed. We then decided that I would lunch at a certain house and she would come as well. We talked for several hours about various questions concerning starting a family and spiritual life, and our views were wonderfully harmonious. We agreed to meet the next morning in the park opposite the house in which we had lunch to carry our conversation further. We also agreed that if we drew closer to each other, then we would invite some friends to her sister's house that evening and announce our marital plans. We would ask their opinion and then possibly proceed with the engagement. On Monday I got up early. I sought out those pietist believers that I had preached before on several occasions in order to ask for their advice. I asked for a sign from the Lord: in as much as the leading people of this congregation looked with favor upon my wedding plans and greeted [the news] with joy, I would take this as a 'yes'; but if the opposite occurred I would renounce my plans. I explained all this to the brethren ... and they viewed my

238. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 23.

239. Dorpat is the German name for the Estonian city of Tartu.

240. Meyer stated that she was in charge of the household and thus "she was used to giving and receiving orders." Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 24. The maturity and social poise Mathilde Michelsohn needed for her service in the Lieven household no doubt was passed on to her husband. This was evidenced by the skill with which Meyer cultivated relationships with high government officials and parliamentarians in Budapest in his effort to seek recognition for the Baptist faith in Hungary.

241. Brandenburg, 105–06. The Evangelical Christians of Russia, also called the Pashkovites at first after Colonel Vasili Alexandrovich Pashkov, an early convert of Lord Radstock, had their origin in this revival movement. See also: Sawatsky, 34–35.

intentions with favor. After that we went for a walk [in the park] as planned and within a short time we were both certain that we were at one with the Lord's will. That evening we invited our friends and announced our engagement.²⁴²

This whirlwind courtship reflected less German predilections for order and efficiency than Meyer's rigorous Baptist views about marriage and family.

If the courtship proceeded from a contemporary perspective in a businessmanlike fashion, it was because Meyer viewed marriage as more than a mere social contract, it was a central aspect of a Christian's vocation. In an early Hungarian Baptist tract distributed by Meyer to commend the Baptist faith and practice, the section on marriage stated: "We believe that Christians can only enter into marriage with other believers."²⁴³ Therefore Heinrich Meyer sought to discern God's particular will in his situation first by determining if Miss Michelsohn was an appropriate and compatible potential spouse, and second by submitting himself to the godly counsel of fellow believers. An appropriate spouse would be a fellow evangelical believer who shared Meyer's Baptist distinctives and views on marriage and family. Compatibility was no doubt harder to define or ascertain, but both Heinrich Meyer and Mathilde Michelsohn likely found in each other a sympathetic soul, someone with whom the thought of nurturing a bond of love did not seem improbable. Once Meyer's decision was confirmed by the counsel of fellow believers, he entered into marriage not for love, although love would come, but in faith, faith in the providential leading of his Lord.

Getting married turned out to be much more difficult than getting engaged. Meyer turned to the German consulate in Odessa for advice. He was then directed to the Lutheran minister in the city, who stated that it would take at least six weeks to send a letter of inquiry to Germany. Not satisfied with this Meyer returned to the consulate, and was directed this time to the Reformed minister. At the same time Meyer was told of an Anglican minister by the name of Clark. Meyer later wrote,

This believer was willing to join us together, although he only spoke German with great difficulty ... Instead of the traditional church announcement [of the wedding], I brought some friends over and we held a brief wedding ceremony in the minister's residence. When I wanted to pay, he said "I will not take it, you have a greater need for the money than I do." Thus we were married on May 25th,

242. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 24.

243. Szebeni, Olivér. "Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer]." Theologiai Szemle 35 <new series>.5 (1992): 289.

1870.²⁴⁴

There was no honeymoon for the newlyweds, Meyer threw himself into his trade and his bride, who had given up her position in the Turkish consulate²⁴⁵, helped him as she could. Meyer recalled this period of struggle with obvious affection for her: “She was willing to share the poorest lot with me.”²⁴⁶

Mrs. Meyer also quickly submitted herself to the ordinance of baptism, a decision that was no doubt made before the wedding during the long conversations Meyer described. Miss Michelsohn could hardly have committed herself to Heinrich Meyer without committing herself to the Baptist faith and fellowship to which Meyer himself was wholly committed. According to Meyer’s *Mitglieder Register*, she was baptized in Odessa on June 6th, 1870, by Meyer’s Baptist companion Pritzkau from Alt-Danzig.

The marriage was a happy one, and had a positive impact upon Meyer: “The character of Meyer, marked by his tarrying in his youth and always complaining of his want of learning, was shaped by his first wife into a self-possessed, brave, and resolute one.”²⁴⁷ It was this zeal tempered by maturity that enabled Meyer to shoulder the burden of the Hungarian Baptist mission.

In the fall of 1871 a friend of Meyer’s who had hosted his early meetings in Odessa, returned to the city from Galați in Rumania and urged Meyer to come to his new home and preach the gospel there. By the following February Meyer had decided to sell what he could and go to Galați. On February 28th, 1872, after less than three years in southern Russia, Meyer and his wife departed from Odessa on a grueling trip down the Black Sea coast through Bessarabia, and then on to Galați.²⁴⁸

A similar patten repeated itself. Meyer began to work his trade and sought a way to undertake mission work. He was encouraged to hold meetings where he could present

244. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 24.

245. She was likely a chambermaid there, as she had been in the St. Petersburg residence of Princess Lieven.

246. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 25.

247. Szebeni, Olivér. “Meyer Henrik születésének 125. évfordulóján [The 125th Anniversary of the Birth of Heinrich Meyer].” Theologiai Szemle 10 <new series>.9–10 (1967): 294.

248. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 25.

the gospel to his audience. He was not encouraged by the results. “There were visitors at the meetings, but no revival.”²⁴⁹ Consequently Meyer sought out a brother to ask his advice, and he received counsel that would change the course of his life: “Brother Meyer, you would do better if you went into the service of the Bible Society.”²⁵⁰ Meyer knew of the British and Foreign Bible Society and liked the idea of making a living by distributing the Scriptures. He wrote to Edward Millard in Vienna and asked if he could enter into the service of the Bible Society.

Meyer received a favorable reply from Millard on May 20th, and thus began the series of events that would eventually bring Meyer to Budapest.²⁵¹ Budapest was in fact where he was first instructed to go. After only a few months in Rumania, Meyer and his wife departed in June of 1872 from Galați. On the way they passed through Bucharest, where Meyer preached in the Baptist church. There he met one of the original Baptist pioneers in Budapest, Carl Scharschmidt, who was a Bible Society colporteur in Rumania at that time. Upon arriving in Budapest, Meyer worked for four weeks before Millard made the trip down from Vienna and informed Meyer where his permanent placement would be.

Millard asked Meyer to work in Croatia, with Zagreb serving as his home base.²⁵² He was to receive 35 florin a month stipend plus 30% of sales, with a guaranteed minimum commission of 30 florins.²⁵³ He would be joining another colporteur in Zagreb by the name of Palmer, who had already been on the field for several years. The Meyers arrived in Zagreb on the 11th of July.²⁵⁴ Almost as soon as he arrived, he learned his co-worker was departing for Switzerland in order to get married, and that he would not

249. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 26.

250. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 26.

251. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 4.

252. The Zagreb station was under the Pest depot, and Meyer’s area of responsibility would have been primarily what is now central Croatia. Dalmatia and Slavonia were separate stations.

253. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 4.

254. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 4.

return for several weeks. Undeterred, Meyer went to Jelašić Square on a market-day to sell the Scriptures from a wagon before obtaining his work permit. He was stopped by a policeman, and lacking a work permit, he was obliged to pack everything back in the wagon and go home. After passing through the necessary bureaucratic hurdles to get his permit, Meyer was able to resume his work undisturbed.

In keeping with his sense of mission as an evangelist, Meyer began to invite people to his apartment to befriend them and share the Scriptures with them. An acquaintance in the building told Meyer this would never work, because the people could not understand it. People would only come expecting to socialize. As Meyer described it: “That was indeed the situation, nobody in Zagreb could imagine that it was possible to pray in an apartment. In their opinion that is why there were churches. Likewise it appeared to be an unheard-of and impossible thing that such a man should read the Bible to them who was not dressed in a priest’s garment.”²⁵⁵ Yet Meyer persisted and by the winter of 1872-1873 he was holding regular worship services in his apartment.

Unfortunately, Meyer’s mission work and his views on baptism did not sit well with his fellow colporteur, Mr. Palmer, although Meyer enjoyed a friendlier relationship with Mr. Palmer’s bride. The two agreed that it would be best for them to work in separate regions, and so they wrote to Edward Millard asking that one of them be assigned to the southern section of the country.²⁵⁶ Millard wrote back expressing his disappointment that the two could not resolve their personal differences for the sake of their service. Moreover, Millard gave Meyer strict orders that per the Bible Society’s rules, he was not permitted to distribute any other literature except the Scriptures furnished by the Bible Society. In the meantime a package arrived for Meyer in the Vienna depot from brother Koch in Hamburg, containing back-issues of the *Glaubenstimme*, a German Baptist magazine, various books, pamphlets, and tracts. This package was seen by Millard, and he wrote to Meyer to remind him of his obligation to observe the restrictions previously imposed. A “bellicose letter” was sent by Meyer in response, because most of the materials in the package were for his own personal use. Only the tracts were to be given away as he sold the Scriptures. “I knew what I had been ordered, but I did not interpret them the same way. If I were to understand them to mean

255. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 27.

256. This southern region was not defined, but perhaps they had in mind Fiume, modern-day Rijeka, on the Adriatic coast of Croatia. Fiume (Hungarians utilized the Italian name for the city) was a major naval port and was Hungary’s outlet to the sea.

that I could give nothing to no one, I would consider that a matter of coercion against conscience.”²⁵⁷

Despite these difficulties, Edward Millard was eager to keep Meyer in the employ of the Bible Society. And a simple solution was presented to Millard. There was attached to the Budapest depot a colporteur that Palmer wanted to work with instead of Meyer. This did not present a problem to the Budapest depository, Henry Millard, Edward Millard’s son, who was no doubt willing to help his father out of his predicament. In February of 1873 Meyer received a response from Edward Millard to his combative letter; it was a summons to come up to Budapest. Millard assuaged Meyer, writing: “I hope my calling you up to Budapest will be an enduring blessing.”²⁵⁸ Meyer’s assignment in Croatia proved to be rather brief.²⁵⁹ On March 5th, 1873, Meyer and his wife departed from Zagreb by train on their way to a new home. It was a fateful move.

3.2. Heinrich Meyer’s Arrival in Budapest and Early Baptist Work

Heinrich Meyer arrived in Budapest shortly before the three cities of Buda, Óbuda, and Pest were joined together as one, the newly fashioned capital of an expectant nation. He arrived in Buda on March 6th, 1873. Immediately he sought out acquaintances in the city, as well as Uhlmann, the colporteur with whom he was switching places, and also found a miserable, small apartment in Buda that they rented until the first of May. Afterwards they moved into another apartment in Buda on the former Albrecht Street. Meyer was familiarized with his new territory by the aforementioned colporteur, and threw himself into the work. And again he combined Baptist work with Bible Society work. Already by the first Sunday in May Meyer was holding meetings in his new apartment.²⁶⁰ At the end of May a German Baptist by the name of Johannes Weist arrived

257. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 28.

258. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 28.

259. Even so John David Hopper stated: “The most decisive pioneer Baptist in the early history of Baptist life in Yugoslavia was Heinrich Meyer.” Hopper, John David. A History of Baptists in Yugoslavia 1862–1962. Diss. Fort Worth, Texas: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1977. 11. This was not on the basis of Meyer’s brief stay in Zagreb, but upon the subsequent work Meyer undertook in various regions of the former Yugoslavia and his encouragement of other Baptist converts who spread the gospel in these areas.

260. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–

in Budapest and sought work in the city; he also helped Meyer with his meetings.

Once Meyer was settled into his new home, he and his wife decided it was time to return home so that Meyer's family and friends could meet his wife. They departed in early June. Despite the joy of being with family again, Meyer wrote: "Hardly a week into our stay there an irresistible homesickness overcame us for Budapest and my work there."²⁶¹ So they worked their way back to Budapest, visiting Baptist friends along the way. When they returned, Johannes Weist, who had been entrusted with their apartment, was no longer there. He nevertheless inadvertently brought Meyer into conflict with Henry Millard.

Upon his return to Germany from his travels, Weist wrote of the progress of the Baptist mission in Budapest under Meyer. His letter was summarized in the September 1873 issue of the Missionsblatt. The brief notice shared the following:

Brother Johannes Weist ... reported that in the [German] Reformed Church in Pest an awakening has again taken place, combined with an acknowledgement of the truth about baptism, just as it had a few years before when Brother G.W. Lehmann spent some time there and baptized a few people, such that some people have again announced their withdrawal to attend the meetings the very active Brother Meyer holds all Sunday long... Naturally the resentment against the "Anabaptists" on the part of the pastors and the church is great.²⁶²

Meyer read this report and described it as a "rousing account" of the progress of the Budapest mission. Unfortunately, Meyer's opinion was not shared by Henry Millard. In addition to his concerns about how Meyer's activities might reflect poorly upon the Bible Society's neutral denominational stance, Henry Millard, although baptized by G.W. Lehmann in Vienna shortly before the Budapest baptisms, was by this time a member of the Filialgemeinde and obviously sensitive to false reports about pastors König and Moody and the congregation.²⁶³

In fact Henry Millard felt compelled to write to the Missionsblatt to correct the false impression given by the Weist report. He wrote in a letter dated September 22nd, 1873:

1919], 28.

261. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 29.

262. Meyer, Heinrich. "Budapest." Der Wahrheitszeuge 3.22 (Nov. 15 1881): 154.

263. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 27.

It was with great regret that I took notice in the September issue of your magazine the correspondence passed on about the news in Pest. Without wanting to go into the incorrect information contained in the same in any way, I cannot help at the very least but express my regret over the phrase employed in the final passage, and I hold it to be my duty to emphatically repudiate the same as unwarranted.²⁶⁴

The Missionsblatt was only too happy to correct the impression given of the Filialgemeinde in view of the esteem in which they held Edward Millard, as was dutifully noted in the preface to Henry Millard's letter. Meyer himself noted that he met König shortly after arriving in Budapest, and described him as a "dear believer".²⁶⁵ Fierce opposition was to arise from within the Filiagemeinde to Meyer's work, but only following his first baptisms in 1874, and not from König or Moody. Therefore Henry Millard was more than justified to be upset with the spin Weist gave to the events he observed in Budapest.

Meyer in turn was concerned that Henry Millard would not look kindly upon his mission work in light of this incident. He noted in this context: "One Sunday evening he sought me out in my apartment in Buda and asked that I should be more cautious. I did not give him a binding promise and I continued with my mission work."²⁶⁶ Meyer was adamant about continuing to evangelize as the opportunity arose. Henry Millard was hopeful of avoiding controversy concerning Meyer's extracurricular activities because he was a very effective colporteur. Edward Millard gave a glowing description of Meyer's first year attached to the Budapest depot: "Heinrich Meyer is placed at Buda-Pest, the capital. So far as numbers are concerned he stands foremost on the list, and with the strong current of opposition he has to encounter he must have been active indeed to disseminate so many copies."²⁶⁷ In forty-one weeks of work Meyer managed to distribute 2,841 copies, over 700 copies more than the colporteur closest to him in numbers. The fact that Meyer was laboring in an urban district, rather than a rural one, accounts for a measure of his success. But much credit is due to his vigorous efforts. The following year Meyer's numbers dropped to 2,046 copies, placing him some second among the

264. Randall, Ian M. "'Pious Wishes': Baptists and Wider Renewal Movements in Nineteenth-Century Europe." The Baptist Quarterly XXXVIII.7 (July 2000): 186.

265. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 31.

266. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 29.

267. 1874 Annual Report, 63.

colporteurs²⁶⁸. This was in keeping with an overall decline in sales for the Budapest depot in the face of wide-spread social misery and opposition to the work of the Bible Society, such that Millard wrote: “Again and again has it been needful to impress upon the discouraged colporteurs that the extent of their sales was in itself no criterion of their work, and that at such a season it behooved every laborer for Christ to persevere with prayer and a brave hope.”²⁶⁹

Lack of zeal was never a problem with Heinrich Meyer. In fact it was the growing success of his mission work that convinced Meyer to move from the more Germanic and staid Buda to the more dynamic and rapidly Magyarizing Pest.²⁷⁰ He took an apartment at 11 Üllői Street. Thus he was located on a major thoroughfare not too far from the downtown. The apartment was a three room dwelling with a kitchen on the back of the building on the third floor. Meyer rented out one room. An advantage with his new apartment was that he could use the largest room for Bible studies and a Sunday School he had begun. The Sunday School in Pest was begun in the winter of 1873.²⁷¹ Another one in Óbuda was begun in October of 1874.²⁷² Finally, according to a letter Meyer sent to the Continental Sunday School Mission in London, another one was begun in 1879 in Újpest.²⁷³ By his estimate, Meyer had 200 children that were attending his meetings, with

268. An interesting statistic was given in the 1875 Annual Report, the literacy rate of the colporteurs' various districts. In it we find that Meyer's district only had a 36% literacy rate. Yet the district of the colporteur who achieved some 400 copies more in sales than Meyer enjoyed a literacy rate of 78%, by far the highest rate of the different districts.

269. 1875 Annual Report, 54.

270. Some among the radical left in Hungarian politics opposed the 1873 unification of Buda and Pest on the grounds that Buda represented the Germanic, Catholic and anti-nationalist Habsburg-true element of Hungarian society. Around the time of Meyer's arrival in Budapest, Buda represented only a quarter of the city's population, and was by a fair plurality still Germanic in character, whereas by this time the predominant majority of those in Pest spoke Magyar as their first language. Yet even with the rapid Magyarization of Budapest that had begun even prior to Meyer's arrival, all but the least educated portion of the population was bilingual, speaking German as well as Hungarian. See: Lukacs, 70–71, 100–01. It was this fact that allowed Meyer to move in various social circles despite his inability to speak Hungarian.

271. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 29.

272. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 6.

273. Meyer, Heinrich. Letter to the Continental Sunday School Mission. Oncken Archives. Hamburg.

about 60 that were regular attenders. He also noted that all were the children of Roman Catholic parents. Meyer asked for free Bibles from the Bible Society to support the work. He also went to the Filialgemeinde to ask for support on two occasions, and while some were willing to contribute to the work, he never did receive any help.

The Filialgemeinde likely demurred from assisting Meyer because of his strong Baptist identity. The idea of a Sunday School was hardly a novel one to the Scottish Mission, and thus to the Filialgemeinde. Moreover, Johann Rottmayer had begun one in Pest shortly before he moved to Kolozsvár, and had been operating one in his new home for several years by the time Meyer was pioneering his Sunday Schools in Budapest. Indeed, when the Sunday School movement finally became implanted in Hungary, the leading roles were played by those associated with the Scottish Mission and the Filialgemeinde, including Bernhard Victor²⁷⁴, Rudolf König, and Andrew Moody. An 1881 PEIL article discussing the rise of the Sunday School movement in Hungary strongly drew the connection between this novel form of ministry and Anglo-American piety as mediated by the Scottish Mission.²⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that while the PEIL article extensively discusses the Sunday School work of Victor, König, and Moody in Budapest, and even describes the efforts of Rottmayer in Kolozsvár, no mention is made of the work of Heinrich Meyer. The difference between the Sunday School work of Rottmayer in Kolozsvár and that of Meyer in Budapest was that Rottmayer strived to maintain a non-denominational character in his work. This was required of him as the Bible Society depositary in the city, and was characteristic of the Sunday School movement in Hungary of which he was a part.²⁷⁶ Yet while the Sunday School movement was decidedly evangelical in character and evangelistic in intent, Heinrich Meyer set himself apart by utilizing the Sunday School as an express instrument of spreading the Baptist faith. Victor, who long served as the secretary of the movement, commented in a 1911 presentation: “Wherever one of their congregations arose, the Baptists immediately established a Sunday School, and their denomination’s leader, Heinrich Meyer, knowing what kind of power there is in this institution, took care to assure that the believer’s zeal

274. Bernhard Victor succeeded Henry Millard as the Budapest depositary for the BFBS in 1876. It was Victor who tired of Novák’s Baptist work and transferred him to Kolozsvár.

275. Láng, 469–72.

276. While a Magyar Baptist congregation did emerge in Kolozsvár as a result of Rottmayer’s Sunday School ministry, it was at the initiative of those who wanted to conform themselves to Rottmayer’s faith and practice, and Rottmayer quickly passed off leadership of the incipient congregation to Magyar Baptist evangelists.

in this regard would not diminish.”²⁷⁷ Victor’s point was that Meyer had the discernment to realize that a successful Sunday School ministry would not just reach out to children with the gospel, but could also provide an entrance point to the parents, that one could leverage this ministry to children to reach the parents with the Baptist message.

This was in fact what happened with Meyer’s first converts in Budapest, and it was this success that set in motion a chain of events that resulted in Meyer resigning from the Bible Society in order to devote himself completely to the pastoral ministry. On Saturday, December 26th, 1874, Meyer held a Sunday School celebration in Óbuda, with 20 children in attendance. Also present were two couples who had come to accept the Baptist message. A Baptist Bible Society colporteur by the name of Meereis²⁷⁸ was in Budapest at that time, and he raised the issue of baptism. A suggestion was made that the Lukács Baths in Óbuda would be an appropriate venue for a baptismal service. On Sunday the following day, December 27th, Meyer, Meereis, and Spiess²⁷⁹ gathered together in Óbuda to meet with the Benzinger’s and Kaiblinger’s for “a brief discussion of the important points concerning church ordinances.”²⁸⁰ Afterwards Meyer baptized the two couples in the Lukács Baths. On the following evening they celebrated the Lord’s Supper in Óbuda. These baptisms mark the beginning of Meyer’s Baptist mission in Hungary. It is interesting to note, and this points to the strict church discipline that Heinrich Meyer maintained, that neither couple remained Baptists. According to Meyer’s *Mitglieder Register*, Anna Maria Benzinger was disfellowshipped on June 10th, 1876, and her husband, Erhard Benzinger, on October 29th, 1876. Georg and Maria Kaiblinger were both disfellowshipped on January 12th, 1881. None were ever readmitted to fellowship.

The baptisms brought Meyer into conflict with certain people in the Filialgemeinde. That is because the Benzinger’s were members of that church. They were

277. Szebeni, “Meyer Henrik születésének 125. évfordulóján [The 125th Anniversary of the Birth of Heinrich Meyer],” 294–95.

278. Augustus Meereis left his mark wherever he went as a colporteur for the Bible Society. Rushbrooke stated, “The pioneer Baptist in Bohemia - and, indeed, in the whole of the former Austria-Hungary - was A. Meereis, a colporteur of the British Bible Society...” Rushbrooke, 68. He eventually served as the pastor of the Baptist congregation in Késmárk (Kežmarok), in Slovakia.

279. The Spiess brothers, Konrad and Philipp, were Bible Society colporteurs baptized, according to Meyer’s *Mitglieder Register*, in 1872 in Katalui, Turkey. Which Spiess brother was present at the first baptism is unknown.

280. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 6.

also the hosts of Meyer's Sunday School in Óbuda, thus it is possible that Meyer met them through his application to the Filialgemeinde for support for his ministry.²⁸¹ Meyer described Mrs. Benziger as a "Pietist from Württemberg ... In Pest she belonged to the Reformed Church which came out of the Scottish Mission to the Jews, to which she also later returned."²⁸² The whole incident was framed by Meyer in terms of the previous uproar caused by G.W. Lehmann's baptisms in Pest in 1865. It must be remembered that Meyer was under the impression that Rottmayer was a co-founder of the congregation that became the Filialgemeinde along with the Dutch headmaster of the Scottish Mission school, Adrian van Aniel. He also believed that Rottmayer was still a co-pastor with Rudolf König, who succeeded Van Aniel, when he invited Lehmann to Pest without König's understanding as to the purpose of Lehmann's visit, and only thus did König raise no objection to the visit. In Meyer's view, as a result not only Rottmayer, but also Lehmann and König were the objects of much abuse when the baptisms came to light.²⁸³ Meyer wrote of his problems as follows: "When I baptized some people on December 27th, 1874, the congregation stemming from the Scottish Mission once again became indignant and I had to suffer much abuse as a result."²⁸⁴ Meyer singled out Theodor Biberauer as a particularly vociferous opponent to his work.²⁸⁵ Lehmann's name was again resurrected and subject to much abuse, which pained Meyer, and caused him to write to Lehmann to ask him about his experiences in Pest and what he would advise. It is ironic that Meyer ascribed much of the uproar to the previous incident and to Rottmayer's complicated relationship with the Filialgemeinde. In fact, Meyer misunderstood much of this previous history and did not seem willing to take responsibility for the fact that some

281. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 37-38.

282. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 36-37.

283. Meyer described König as a "dear believer", and thus it is evident that König did not make an issue out of the baptisms.

284. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842-1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842-1919], 32.

285. Meyer noted that it was Biberauer who had reacted similarly following Lehmann's baptisms, he "stepped forward very resolutely against the Baptists in the pastor's [König's] apartment." Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842-1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842-1919], 31. For a more accurate picture of the origins of the Filialgemeinde, and Biberauer's leading role in its establishment. Bucsay, "125 Jahre deutschsprachige reformierte Gemeinde in Budapest (1859-1984)," 18-19.

in the Filialgemeinde might view his baptism of the Benzinger's as sectarian "sheepstealing".²⁸⁶

The trouble came, as Meyer noted, when some in the Filialgemeinde complained to the leadership in the Bible Society about the baptisms.²⁸⁷ This left Edward and Henry Millard in a quandary. Edward Millard communicated to Meyer: "The baptisms which you performed have breed bad blood, and as a consequence you can either accept a transfer or resign from further service."²⁸⁸ Millard struggled to find another place suitable for Meyer, but eventually he told Meyer it was a dead issue, there simply was no place Millard could place him in Hungary that would guarantee him a living.²⁸⁹

The conclusion they reached was fateful: "Brother Millard became convinced sooner than I did that preaching and pastoral ministry would be my life's calling."²⁹⁰ As the founder of the Baptist fellowship in Vienna, Millard went to the elders of the church and suggested that they call Meyer as the pastor of the church; he also approached the Religious Tract Society about a position in Vienna for Meyer to supplement his income.²⁹¹ In March of 1875, Meyer travelled to Vienna to meet with Millard and was offered the pastorate of the Vienna church along with a small stipend.²⁹² Meyer told the brethren in Vienna that he needed to talk with the converts in Óbuda, but that he thought it would be sufficient if he promised to travel to Budapest once a month to minister to them.

286. By "sheepstealing" I mean to signify the practice by which an emerging fellowship establishes its base not by making new converts from unbelievers, but by enticing believers in another fellowship to abandon their present body for the new one.

287. Considering that Henry Millard, the Budapest depositary for the Bible Society, was a member of the Filialgemeinde, and that his father Edward Millard was the Bible Society's agent for Austria-Hungary in nearby Vienna, it was not hard to do.

288. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 32.

289. In all of this, Meyer never faulted Edward Millard. He went on to comment that "For as long as Brother Millard was in Vienna, he was truly a fatherly and faithful counselor and friend."

290. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 32.

291. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 32.

292. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 7.

However, things did not go as expected. The diary entry for March 28th, 1875, reads: “The brethren were as one to do whatever was in their power so that I might remain in Pest, and after all had committed to a contribution I told them in trust in the Lord that I would remain by them.”²⁹³ This was in fact a step of faith, since the small group of believers could not give nearly what was promised Meyer in Vienna. Despite this uncertainty, Budapest would be the home of Meyer’s Baptist ministry. Meyer described his departure from the Bible Society and his situation in stark terms: “I resigned my position on May 1st. I had no income. The Bible Society gave me 100 *Gulden* severance pay ... and now the question was, what will I live on?”²⁹⁴ To cut down on expenses the Meyer’s moved from their larger apartment on 11 Üllői Street to a small apartment on Pfeiffer Lane with pitifully small rooms. Even then the support Meyer was promised from the congregation proved illusory. He had expected that the congregation would take care of his apartment and congregational meeting place. “That, however, was just on paper... Not too long afterwards I realized that the congregation was incapable of paying my rent.”²⁹⁵ Meyer was obliged to rent one of the two rooms in the apartment to two gentlemen. In order to hold the meetings in his apartment, Meyer had to be rather creative. “I had to place the harmonium in such a manner that when I preached it replaced the podium. I brought the benches from the Üllői Street apartment. I made these from book boxes. Our alcove room was therefore the bedroom, the kitchen, the parlor, and the congregational meeting-room in one.”²⁹⁶ Despite all of this, Meyer stated that the meetings slowly grew, the fellowship of believers was warm, and that there were conversions and baptisms as a result.²⁹⁷

Meyer’s situation was put on a somewhat firmer basis by the June 1875 meeting in Budapest for the British and Foreign Bible Society colporteurs serving in Hungary, to

293. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 7.

294. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 32.

295. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 33.

296. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 33.

297. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 33.

which Millard invited Meyer. Not only was Meyer given a small donation by Mr. Bridewide, a Quaker of evangelical convictions who spoke at the conference, but since so many of the colporteurs were Baptists, the brethren held a Baptist conference parallel to the Bible Society conference, at which special attention was given to Meyer's situation.²⁹⁸ Apart from Edward Millard and Johann Rottmayer, Meyer mentions Philipp Spiess and, most importantly, the Novák's as being in attendance. Meyer had already received some support from family members in America and Germany, from Rottmayer in Kolozsvár as well as from Rottmayer Jr. in Vienna, and from other Baptists. The question was how much should be given for Meyer's monthly maintenance? Meyer wrote that "it was agreed upon brother Rottmayer's suggestion that 50 *Gulden* [per month be given]. This was approximately the same income one would be able to earn as a carpenter."²⁹⁹ Even then Meyer calculated that since he lived so economically, he could still reserve a part of that money for the mission work. Later in 1876 Meyer was asked by a brother Braun, who served under the auspices of the mission society of the German Baptists in America, if 200 dollars in annual stipend would allow him to devote himself completely to mission work? This extra support freed Meyer to concentrate fully on the mission work.³⁰⁰

At this conference Meyer met people who would enable him to expand the Baptist mission beyond the environs of Budapest. We will leave aside for the moment Meyer's discussions with Antal Novák about his work in Nagyszalonta, and focus on two German-oriented missions. But before we do so, a word is in order about the German diaspora in Hungary, and the very different histories and characters of the German communities spread throughout Hungary.³⁰¹ The German population in Hungary was divided into a Catholic majority and a Lutheran minority. The largest group of Catholic Germans, often called "Swabians", were newer settlers encouraged to repopulate areas liberated from the Ottomans, thus they were spread throughout the country, with large pockets around Buda, in the hill country north of Lake Balaton, and especially in the area around Pécs, with

298. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 33.

299. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 34.

300. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 34.

301. A helpful overview of the German communities in Hungary from the angle of religion and national feeling is given by R.J.W. Evans in the chapter "Religion and Nation in Hungary, 1790-1849". Evans, 154–56.

later waves settling in the Banat of Temesvár and the Bácska region between the Danube and Tisza rivers, what is now part the Vojvodina region of northern Serbia. While they maintained their national identity, they did not seek collective rights. Of much different character were the “Saxons” in Transylvania³⁰² brought in to defend the Hungarian border during the 12th and 13th centuries and the “Zipser Saxons” in northern Hungary invited to repopulate areas following the Mongol invasion. These Germans became Lutherans during the period of the Reformation. Unlike the Swabians who established rural farming villages, the Saxons were predominantly urban settlers forming royal free towns. The Transylvanian Saxons achieved corporate rights in the Middle Ages as a part of the “Union of the Three Nations” of Transylvania along with the Magyars and the Szeklers³⁰³. While the Saxons of Transylvania were often at odds with the Magyars and greatly resisted Magyarization, the Zipser Saxons and Swabians did not have such an adversarial relationship with the Magyars and many voluntarily Magyarized during the period of Dualism as a means of social advancement.³⁰⁴

The first was the mission in Neusatz (Újvidék in Hungarian, modern Novi Sad in the Vojvodina). The significant encounter for this mission was with Adolf Hempt. Hempt was a colporteur based out of Novi Sad. He was also a former Nazarene. It seems the Nazarenes did not look kindly upon the frequent interaction Hempt had with Christians of other persuasions through his work as a colporteur, and he was disfellowshipped as a result. Hempt appears to have struck up an immediate friendship with Meyer at the conference, and consequently he found a new church home through Meyer’s witness. According to the *Mitglieder Register*, Hempt was baptized in Novi Sad on November 16th, 1875.³⁰⁵ The significant aspect of this baptism was that Adolf Hempt was not the only one to submit to the ordinance. Hempt had invited Meyer to come to Novi Sad, and after a few days of ministry Meyer witnessed “revival and conversions.” Meyer described his efforts in Novi Sad in the following terms: “For five weeks I worked nearly day and

302. The German name for Transylvania is *Siebenbürgen*, which refers to the seven fortified towns built by the Saxons following the Mongol invasion.

303. The Székely are a Magyar people group of unknown origin who came in with the Hungarian tribes during the conquest and guarded the eastern border of the Kingdom.

304. Katus, 464.

305. Meyer mentions briefly that even though Hempt was a Nazarene and his wife was baptized by the Nazarenes, Hempt himself had not been baptized. Thus Meyer baptized Hempt, but not his wife.

night, and after my third visit altogether I baptized nineteen people.”³⁰⁶ It is noteworthy that in Novi Sad the fellowship was built in part upon the foundation of former Nazarenes, no doubt through the efforts of Hempt. In an 1875 private letter Meyer wrote of the events in Novi Sad:

The Lord bestowed great mercy on us in November in Neusatz on the Danube. Some of the Baptists there who formerly were Nazarenes had sought to hold meetings, but without true earnestness. But these meetings were different. The old members were gripped by sorrow and pain over their former indecision. Those who formerly were entirely careless, and those who had hoped to be saved through their own works, now were awakened. In a short time twenty people were baptized.³⁰⁷

For a short time at the beginning of Meyer’s ministry the largest Baptist fellowship in Hungary was in Novi Sad.

Another round of baptisms took place in Novi Sad in January of 1876. Once Meyer arrived he spent a few hours teaching a catechism to the initiates, using this time to get to know them and to discern their readiness for baptism. In the end Meyer had six women and five men to baptize. On his last evening in Novi Sad everyone met at the appointed house in the middle of the night for the baptismal service. At the end of the garden there was a deep pool which had been dug out and filled with water. Because of the frigid temperature they had to throw bricks at the surface of the pool to break the thick ice which had formed on top. Since there were no baptismal robes people changed quickly into the clothes they would wear for baptism. Meyer himself wore instead of a robe a simple black cloak for the baptisms. Meyer stood in the frigid water and baptized first the women, then the men. He described the scene as follows: “I stood in the water and the oldest, shortest, and most wizened of the women came first. The water was so deep that the baptismal candidates did not need to lay down. Sharp pain seized my legs. After the sisters came the turn of the brothers, they were still in the warm room. In the meantime my legs stopped hurting, and I baptized the five men as well. When I stepped out of the water I realized that my legs were completely without feeling. They were numbed by the cold, that is why I could not feel the pain later.”³⁰⁸ Meyer quickly changed

306. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 35.

307. Donat, 435.

308. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 36.

clothes so that he could speak with those baptized, pray with them, and then celebrate the Lord's Supper with the new members along with the rest of the church. It is amazing that eleven people were so anxious to receive baptism that they would do so in the dead of winter in a frozen pool. It is even more so that Heinrich Meyer would literally endanger his health by standing in the frigid water to perform the baptismal rites for the sake of his calling. But such was the dedication Meyer brought to his work.

Yet despite this promising beginning and the considerable efforts Meyer expended in Novi Sad, the Baptist mission there did not flourish. Following the second round of baptisms Meyer departed from Novi Sad around the middle of January for Heltau³⁰⁹, a Saxon town to the south of Hermannstadt³¹⁰, resting at the foothills of the southern Carpathians. Here he was to meet the family of Johann Gromen, a young man who served under Rottmayer as a colporteur attached to the Kolozsvár depot. Great interest was aroused by Meyer's preaching, the result of which was a memorable incident of persecution. Forced to leave Heltau, Meyer travelled back to Novi Sad, arriving very late at night. As he was unexpected, he spent some time out in the winter cold knocking at Hempt's door before Mrs. Hempt (Adolf Hempt was out on tour) realized she had company and let Meyer in for a much needed rest. And it is at this point that Meyer makes an odd comment: "I visited the brethren. The joy was great and we held gatherings nearly day and night. There were many problems with one or two of the brethren recently baptized."³¹¹ In fact, a study on the life of the three early mission centers (Budapest, Nagyszalonta, and Novi Sad) by Szebeni reveals that Novi Sad wilted almost as fast as it bloomed. In 1876 Meyer baptized 8 people in Novi Sad, but he expelled 15, so that in the final tally for the year the church decreased from 19 to 11 members; by 1881 the number of members had dropped to four.³¹² Among those expelled in 1876 was the wife of Adolf Hempt.³¹³ While 1881 was the first year since 1876 to witness more than two baptisms, it

309. In Hungarian Nagydisznód, Cislădie in Rumanian.

310. Nagyszeben in Hungarian, Sibiu in Rumanian.

311. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 38.

312. Hempt, Adolf. "Aus Ungarn." Missionsblatt 36.7 (July 1878): 3.

313. Expelled on October 9, 1876 along with several others, Maria Hempt was readmitted to fellowship in May of 1883. She was expelled for good in December of 1886. Adolf Hempt was never expelled and remained a trusted colleague of Meyer's. By the time of Maria Hempt's brief return to the Baptist fellowship, Adolf Hempt had moved to Sarajevo to undertake colportage work in Bosnia. He is

was offset by further losses. Moreover, as Szebeni observed, by this time the baptisms were coming not from Novi Sad, but from the German villages in the Bácska.³¹⁴ For example, Meyer briefly described the 1881 baptisms in Novi Sad as follows: “On the 26th of June near Neusatz I baptized seven souls from Feketehegy, where brother Pfaff works, and three from Neusatz.”³¹⁵ Meyer’s introduction to these villages initially came by way of the converts in Novi Sad, who often had relatives in the countryside. By way of example, when Meyer visited Novi Sad in April of 1876, a Lutheran pastor recognized him and incited the authorities to force Meyer to depart from the city. Rather than return to Pest, Meyer took a brother from Novi Sad with him on the boat up the Danube and disembarked at Dalj so as to make a tour of the German villages he had previously visited.³¹⁶ Meyer proclaimed the Baptist message in such villages as Petrovac, Vrbas, and Crvenka among others.³¹⁷ Yet despite a measure of success in the German villages of the Bácska, the overall fact remained that Meyer’s German mission in Novi Sad never developed into a mature center of Baptist life when compared with Budapest or Nagyszalonta.³¹⁸

listed as active in Bosnia rather than Hungary for the first time in the 1880 Annual Review, which would indicate that he moved to Sarajevo in 1879. He became the leader of Baptist life in Sarajevo, with the small fellowship meeting in his apartment. Hopper, 15.

314. Interestingly Meyer described the events that brought the Germans to the area in his autobiography, and how many had maintained contact with relatives back in Germany. This perhaps explains why Meyer was willing to expend so much effort in proclaiming the Baptist message to these villages.

315. Meyer, “Budapest,” 220.

316. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 42–43.

317. It was noted previously that Heinrich Meyer was esteemed a pioneer of the Baptist movement in the former Yugoslavia. It is primarily because of his labors in the Vojvodina more than his brief time in Zagreb that accounts for this fact.

318. Meyer as a practice did not give detailed explanations in the *Mitglieder Register* for expulsions, so the reasons for the mass expulsions from the Novi Sad fellowship in 1876 are unknown. A reasonable guess is that because the congregation was partially comprised of former Nazarenes, dissension and strife was inevitable, as was the exercise of church discipline by Meyer. The Nazarenes were notorious for their bickering and divisions, a factor that impeded their growth and retention of converts. Even Samuel Heinrich Fröhlich complained of the early brethren in Pest: “Da bringt jeder seinen eigenen Sinn mit sich, einer reibt und reizt den andern, und da sind bald Missverständnisse, Lieblosigkeit und ein Anfang von Babel ... Wir haben also unseren schlimmsten Feind nicht ausser uns, sondern in uns.” Alder, 179. A journal entry for Meyer from November of 1877 relates how the Kempfner family in Crvenka complained greatly of their isolation, nobody would visit them because the Nazarenes sought to discourage the people from doing so. After describing his preaching in the village Meyer offered up the following prayer concerning the

Meyer's German mission in Upper Hungary began in a similar fashion. In this case the British and Foreign Bible Society colporteur Konrad Spiess was the pioneer who invited Meyer to follow up on efforts in the region. In addition, Meyer was asked by certain workers he had converted in Budapest to carry his message to their families in the region. Describing his decision to make the difficult journey into the region, Meyer wrote:

My journey into the Szepesség had a serious reason. In Budapest a good number of people who came from this region were converted and baptized. Among these were the Tatter brothers. In the mean time brother Millard was directing the colporteurs throughout Hungary. One of them went to the Szepesség. Konrad Spiess, who was from Katalui, lived in Mihályfalva ... All his brothers were missionaries. Brother Spiess did not just sell Bibles, but was also active in mission work and always found one or two ladies in the villages with whom he could share his testimony. Mihályfalva lies close to Poprád, but since the relatives of the brothers from Budapest lived farther out, I first went to brother Spiess.³¹⁹

This first trip took place in 1876. From the beginning of Meyer's work in the Szepesség, he encountered strong opposition from the local authorities, often in coordination with the Lutheran clergy. Thus Meyer continued his account: "I had hardly arrived before the chairman of the village council was on his feet and asked me to come to him... The people of the village council said: 'We don't care for this kind of thing.' They threatened me with punishment if they found more than two people in Konrad Spiess' house and if they saw Bibles on the table. In this situation I could do nothing, I turned away from this show of force and travelled on to Poprád."³²⁰ Meyer encountered similar resistance in several different villages. Finally, a more friendly magistrate in one village suggested that he go to the *alispán*³²¹, or sheriff, in Igló. While at the train station, Meyer had a strange

Nazarenes in Crvenka: "Ach Herr, sind sie deine Kinder, so vereinige sie doch mit uns, und lass sie nicht in solcher Feindschaft gegen deine Kinder stehen. Amen." Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 13. The contentiousness of the Nazarenes was evidently not directed solely inwards, but also towards other Christians with whom they disagreed. This same contentiousness that troubled the work in Crvenka is the likeliest explanation for why the work in Novi Sad struggled so during its first years. Yet even by 1890, when the Novi Sad church called Julius Peter to serve as pastor, it only had 17 members, with double that number in different smaller fellowships in the region. Hopper, 22.

319. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 43.

320. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 43–44.

321. The term *alispán* is difficult to translate, but I will follow in the practice of some and utilize the term 'sheriff' on the analogy of the old English sheriff in the government of the shire. An ancient office

encounter: “I was passing out tracts, during which a young man approached me instructively and began to talk to me. He related to me that a certain Meyer was coming soon from Pest, for which they were now making the preparations to procure him into their hands. From this I could discern that the whole Szepesség was talking about me.”³²² In Igló Meyer was cordially received by the sheriff, Von Schmer. While there he received some friendly advice, but not much else.

“You know”, he said, “in these small places the minister, the magistrate³²³, and the notary³²⁴ are very friendly with one another and will do for each other whatever kind of service asked of him. It will be very difficult work for you here. At the most you can do family visits, you must be content with this. Herr Meyer, in larger towns the situation is different.”³²⁵

Meyer went on to comment that in time he learned how lonely life was for these gentlemen, “The entire intelligentsia [in these small villages] was comprised of the minister, magistrate, and notary.” Despite his efforts to cultivate more friendly relationships with these local officials, Meyer and his converts in the Szepesség continued to experience persecution from the local authorities, and sometimes from an aroused populace, usually at the instigation of an unhappy minister who did not appreciate the

rooted in Hungarian feudalism, the *alispán* was technically the deputy administrator of a county, originally subordinate to the *főispán*, but over time the *alispán* became the chief administrative official in the county, elected to his office, with both law enforcement and administrative functions, while the office of the *főispán* had become a largely ceremonial position. Given the great importance of the counties in the Hungarian state of that time, the *alispán* was a powerful regional official. See: Reich, Emil. “The Magyar County: A Study in the Comparative History of Municipal Institutions.” Transactions of the Royal Historical Society New (Second) Series, Vol. 7 (1893): 45–47.

322. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 44.

323. “Magistrate” provides a rough translation for *szolgabíró*, another office rooted in Hungarian feudalism. The *szolgabíró* was the chief magistrate of a particular jurisdiction, combining both law enforcement, administrative and judicial functions. He was a political appointee of the government and always came from the gentry. According to Reich, the *szolgabíró* during this period was “to the district, or *járás*, what the *alispán*, or sheriff, [was] to the shire. He was ... in constant and immediate touch with the people, and his office, at once that of an administrative, judicial, and police magistracy, ... always required infinite tact, prompt sagacity, and rich experience.” Reich, 47.

324. “Notary” translates the office of the *jegyző*, who could also be described as the village clerk, performing administrative and executive functions. Chosen from among the leading families of the district, the *jegyző* had to be an educated person to perform his duties.

325. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 44.

competition.³²⁶ Nevertheless, Meyer persisted in visiting these small villages wherever he had contacts and a willing audience for his preaching and teaching.

Yet even in the larger towns Meyer and his converts were subject to harassment by the authorities. Meyer recounted how in the town of Késmárk the authorities wanted to prohibit his meetings, but were thwarted in their efforts because Meyer followed the established legal procedures set out for holding such public gatherings when he came to visit. Undeterred, after Meyer left the authorities broke into the private Sunday worship service of the Baptists and escorted the hymn-singing worshippers through the streets to the jail. When Meyer learned of this he wrote to the *főszolgabíró*³²⁷ in Lőcsé. This proved to be a fortunate event for Meyer. The person to whom Meyer wrote was Count Albin Csáky. Meyer described Count Csáky as a “noble-spirited, pious Catholic, with whom later, when he was the *kultusz* minister, I enjoyed a relationship over several years.”³²⁸ Meyer even commented that Count Csáky was criticized by some of the Bishops of the received confessions during his time in the Upper House of Parliament for his friendly attitude towards him. In any event, after receiving Meyer’s letter, the Baptists in Késmárk did not have any more troubles.³²⁹

Of course Heinrich Meyer was not the only Baptist to experience such opposition to his work in the region. A brief article in the June 6, 1886, issue of PEIL detailed a

326. In the village of Eisdorf, Meyer was hauled before the *jegyző*, only to be confronted by the local minister. “He explained that he did not need any help since the congregation was comprised of pious believers, and he gave the number of people partaking of the Lord’s Supper.” Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 45. From the *jegyző* Meyer was to be taken to the *szolgabíró*, but Meyer’s intelligent handling of his encounter with the minister won him some sympathy from the *jegyző*, and so he was allowed to leave the village peacefully.

327. The *főszolgabíró* would be the Chief Magistrate of the county, the top law enforcement official to whom Heinrich Meyer could appeal.

328. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 55.

329. This instance of persecution was not an isolated incident. In the July, 1878, issue of the Missionsblatt, approximately one year before the incident that lead Meyer to write to Count Csáky, Meyer’s co-worker Adolf Hempt wrote of a letter they had received from the brethren in “Zips”, the German term for upper Hungary. From the list of people mentioned by Hempt, this could have taken place in Késmárk, but it is impossible to be certain. Hempt wrote: “On Whit-Monday [the brethren] were hauled off from their meeting place by Evangelical-Lutheran christians (!), reviled, [and] beaten with sticks; br. Kren was beaten until he bled; one of the sticks broke upon br. Bretz; the presiding judge also reviled the brethren, but he did restrain the people, saying they could not beat the brethren in the house of a judge. ‘What you do outside, however, does not matter to me’, said he!” Hempt, 125–26.

notable disturbance in Pozsony³³⁰, in which the police were called in to quell an unruly crowd of 400 to 500 people throwing stones at a certain building. As it turned out, they were upset because there was a Baptist meeting taking place inside. Johann Tatter, one of the Tatter brothers Meyer had mentioned as occasioning his first foray into the Szepesség, had gathered together a group of people through his work as a Bible colporteur for the British and Foreign Bible Society who collectively formed the basis for a potential Baptist congregation.³³¹ He had invited Johann Rottmayer Jr. from Vienna to address the meeting. The crowd was largely comprised of Lutheran parishioners informed of Tatter's activities by their minister, Johann Fürst. They desired to break up the meeting, but the frightened people inside had closed the large doors which lead into the courtyard of the apartment building. Thus the crowd resorted to throwing stones until they were dispersed by the police. The police briefly questioned Rottmayer Jr., who did not have any identification on him at the time. This accounts for the fact that the author of the article did not realize that Rottmayer Jr. was also associated with the British and Foreign Bible Society. The article did point out that Johann Tatter had told Fürst that although he was a Baptist, he had no other responsibility than the distribution of the Scriptures. This of course was Bible Society policy. The article noted disapprovingly: "The Bible, as the fountain of religious life, is certainly not intended to have its distribution serve as the catalyst for the rending of the Church's body, and for ruining the peace of congregations, and by chance that of cities, as happened in Pozsony."³³² While the author disapproved of the actions of the crowd, in his view the responsibility for their actions rested on those who "upon the high-sounding pretext of Christ's love rather audaciously disturb the public calm."³³³

Meyer noted in his autobiography that in April of 1880, he baptized an ethnic

330. The Hungarian name for Bratislava, the capital of modern Slovakia. Close to Vienna, it rose to prominence as the capital of Habsburg controlled Upper Hungary after the Ottoman's occupation of the heart of the country. The Germans called it Preßburg.

331. All three Tatter brothers seem to have been BFBS colporteurs at one time or another. In the appendix to the 1881 BFBS Annual Report, both Johann and Samuel Tatter are listed as colporteurs attached to the Budapest depot. And in the appendix to the 1883 BFBS Annual Report, Ludwig Tatter was assigned to the Kolozsvár depot.

332. "Baptizmus Pozsonyban [Baptists in Pozsony]," 737.

333. "Baptizmus Pozsonyban [Baptists in Pozsony]," 737.

Slovak, “and with this began the mission among the Slovaks.”³³⁴ Later Meyer sent a young Slovak convert to the seminary in Hamburg, who eventually ended up in America doing missionary work. A Baptist mission among the ethnic Hungarians of the region did not begin until after the turn of the century. Still, Meyer’s predominantly German mission in the region produced the first church to declare its independence from Meyer and call its own pastor. August Meereis was a Bible Society colporteur in eastern Bohemia, and was described by J.H. Rushbrooke as the “pioneer Baptist in Bohemia.”³³⁵ Meereis had been baptized in Russian Poland in 1863, and married Amalie Kejr, a Czech who had been baptized by Edward Millard in Vienna.³³⁶ As a Baptist evangelist, Rushbrooke noted that Meereis had also labored in Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Poland, and Silesia. In the Statistik 1888, a statistical yearbook published by the German Baptists, it was noted that on July 15th, 1888, 81 members belonging to the Budapest congregation of Heinrich Meyer constituted itself as the Késmárk Baptist Church under the leadership of Meereis, with Samuel Tatter attached to the congregation as a colporteur, and four stations connected with the mother church.³³⁷ One of the stations was Vavrišovo, where in fact the first Baptist chapel in Slovakia was built in 1890.³³⁸ A Matthias Steucsek is listed in the Statistik 1888 as living in “Vavriso bei Liptau”.³³⁹ As Rushbrooke described the situation, Meereis was the pastor of the “earliest Baptist Slovak-German Church ... founded in Kežmarok-Vavrišovo.”³⁴⁰ By way of contrast with the growing work in what is now Slovakia, the Novi Sad congregation did not call its own pastor and constitute itself as an independent Baptist congregation until 1890, and even then it remained much smaller than the Késmárk congregation.

334. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 59.

335. Rushbrooke, 68.

336. Randall, “‘Pious Wishes’,” 327.

337. Statistik 1888 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland. Hamburg: J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1888. 16.

338. Rushbrooke, 70.

339. Statistik 1888 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland, 24.

340. Rushbrooke, 70.

The missions to the Délvidék (Vojvodina) and Felvidék (Slovakia) were primarily German missions, and in neither regions did Magyar movements begin until around the turn of the century. In Nagyszalonta and the Alföld the Magyar mission had its origin, although Meyer combined these visits to the Alföld with his German-oriented mission to the Saxons of Transylvania.³⁴¹ Turning now to the mission in Budapest and its immediate environs, the mission began as a German mission, but it soon began to gain Magyar converts. Meyer's work in Budapest was marked by a measure of creativity when compared to the historical churches. As noted previously, Meyer used Sunday Schools as a means of evangelism. This is how he came to have his first candidates for baptism in Óbuda in 1874. The Sunday School in Óbuda continued for several years after the first baptisms, but in the letter to the Continental Sunday School Mission which Meyer wrote sometime after 1883³⁴², the Óbuda Sunday School is not mentioned, although Sunday Schools in "Budapest", "Neupest" (Ujpest), and "Promontor" (Budafok) are mentioned.³⁴³ Meyer mentions the Óbuda Sunday School in his diary as late as October, 1878.³⁴⁴ Perhaps the Sunday School ceased to be a productive use of Meyer's time after the Kaiblinger's were disfellowshipped in 1881? On the other hand, the 1878 diary entry

341. Aspects of the early mission of Heinrich Meyer in Transylvania have been discussed in the previous chapter on the work of Johann Rottmayer and Antal Novák in the region. Apart from the small fellowship gathered around Johann Rottmayer in Kolozsvár, Meyer did not establish any substantial ethnic German stations in the region. There is mention of two other stations among the Transylvanian Saxons in the Statistik 1878, one in Kronstadt (Brassó in Hungarian, modern Braşov in the extreme eastern tip of the Carpathian basin), the other in Broos (Szászváros in Hungarian, modern Orăştie in Romania). Statistik 1878 der vereinigten Gemeinden getaufter Christen. Hamburg: Baptistische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1878. 26. Eventually, more substantial German Baptist congregations did arise in these and other cities. I visited the city of Braşov in 1990 some months after the revolution that overthrew the communist dictatorship. At that time there was a small Hungarian Baptist fellowship, and an even smaller German Baptist fellowship, which was rapidly dwindling as the ethnic Germans took advantage of the possibility of emigrating to Germany.

342. Only the date of July 24 is clear from the letter, but not the year. I am working from a copy made from the microfilm of photographs of the Copybook maintained by Meyer. A copybook was a method of creating a duplicate of a letter written in ink. The duplicate was made by pressing the letter onto the sheer pages of the copybook while the ink was still moist. Unfortunately, the quality of the photographs of the copybook was rather poor, and thus a good deal of the letter is illegible. The letter must date from July 24, 1883, or, more likely, a few years after, because 1883 is the last year given for the founding of various Sunday Schools which Meyer mentions in the letter. Since we also know that Meyer always encouraged the establishment of Sunday Schools wherever possible, it is reasonable to assume that the letter was written within a year or two of the last founding date given in the letter.

343. Meyer, Letter to the Continental Sunday School Mission.

344. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 16.

mentions that Meyer required the translation services of a Br. Molnár for the Óbuda Sunday School, which demonstrates that the Sunday School was now a Magyar as well as German work. We do know that Meyer began his evangelistic work in Promontor in the beginning of January 1881. Since Óbuda is to the north of Buda, and Promontor was at that time a village several kilometers south of Buda, maintaining both ministries would have proven difficult. The Ujpest Sunday School began in 1879, and Meyer mentions that he went to Óbuda on weekdays, and to Ujpest on Sundays.³⁴⁵ Kovács credits Meyer with starting three churches in Budapest, the Wesselényi Street church, which came out of the meetings in his home in Pest, the Ujpest congregation, and the Budafok (Promontor) congregation.³⁴⁶ This is perhaps the best answer to what happened to the work in Óbuda, Heinrich Meyer chose to concentrate his efforts elsewhere. In any event, the locus of Meyer's work was his apartment in Pest, which housed one of his Sunday Schools and was the meeting place for Sunday worship.

A major step forward was taken in 1877, when the small congregation began to rent space for their fellowship. Meyer wrote: "On February 1st, 1877, we moved into our beautiful new church on Dohány Street. The place used to be a large rundown café. The room was 9 x 6 x 4.5 meters in size, with an entrance with direct access to the street, and with two large shop windows. Our beautiful new benches were filled with our church members. We did not need to feel ashamed if unknown guests arrived. Our poverty also came to an end, because the German-American [Baptist] Association from that point on gave us \$200 a year. Until this point we had to hold our services in my apartment."³⁴⁷ The location was a central one, in a section of the city called "Erzsébetváros" [Elizabeth City], just outside of the "Belváros", the downtown heart of Pest. The neighborhood was a lower middle-class and upper lower-class area, very crowded, and with a growing Jewish population.³⁴⁸ For this reason it was (with the help of the German-American Baptists) within the price range of the congregation. A reporter for the Pester Journal visited the church, and commented that the pulpit occupied the space where not too long ago the

345. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 29.

346. Kovács, Géza, "A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)]," 60.

347. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 50.

348. Lukacs, 45–46.

cashier-woman sat, and that instead of dance music visitors could enjoy the music of the choir.³⁴⁹

Another evangelistic tool Meyer made use of was open-air evangelism in the Városliget [City Park], Budapest's version of New York City's Central Park. This was a favorite place for the city's working class and middle class families to spend their leisure time, and thus a good place for Meyer to attract a crowd for his preaching. The diary entry for Friday, June 29th, 1877, describes one of these outings. "After 4 o'clock we went to the City Park, we passed out tracts and sang some songs, through which we attracted a number of people - somewhere between 50 and 100 - who attentively listened [to the message]."³⁵⁰ In an excerpt from a daily journal sent on to the German Baptists, which was then published in their organ Missionsblatt, Meyer shared the following experience: "On Sunday, April 28th, [1878], after the afternoon service, we made the first attempt this year to preach the gospel in the City Park again. The Lord gave us mercy, such that well more than 100 strangers heard God's Word, and some promised to visit the meetings in the city."³⁵¹ This was exactly the response Meyer hoped to get from those who stopped to hear the singing and preaching.

Fortunately, Meyer's preaching in the Városliget attracted the attention of the editorial staff of PEIL, because there appeared a series of brief descriptions of Meyer's efforts in this paper, providing valuable testimony to their content. The description is worth citing in its entirety.

We were witnesses ... of a Nazarene service at the local City Park on a grassy glade. The small congregation, comprised mostly of women, stood in a circle and sang, after which a member dressed in black began to preach in German; what he said was well-memorized and delivered capably, and for a tradesman he gave a skillfully enough constructed orthodox dogmatic address that was presented in this manner: If we want to recommend something, it is necessary that we demonstrate its useful or delightful character. I also want to recommend something to you, and this is Jesus Christ. Consequently I must say in what way is Jesus Christ profitable? You have met some, like the world's philosophers, who say that Christ was an excellent teacher, and they are correct, Christ certainly was an excellent teacher, because he taught the people the purest morality, and everything which is useful for your salvation. Others present Christ as one of humanity's eminent models. These people are also correct. Christ was by all

349. Szebeni, "Meyer Henrik születésének 125. évfordulóján [The 125th Anniversary of the Birth of Heinrich Meyer]," 295.

350. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 9-10.

351. Meyer, Heinrich. "Tagebuch von Br. Meyer." Missionsblatt 36.9 (Sept 1878): 166.

means the model of the most pure, the most holy life. Yet Christ was more than all this to us... and here he related the orthodox dogmatic teachings on justification, on Christ's work of redemption and on sanctification in such a manner, that it would have been fitting in the mouth of any orthodox Protestant minister, except that instead of rhetorical variation on the topic, he fell into tiring and boring repetition. Finally came the application, which answered the question, how can we have a share in Christ's blessings? The answer: if we confess Christ, if we make his teachings our own, and if we follow his example and openly proclaim his teachings, if for these we are ready to sacrifice, in short, if we follow Christ. After this talk another song followed. It seems that the North-German prophet held the service on that particular day, which was a Catholic holiday, and in which the City Park was especially crowded, in order to recruit believers from the circle of hearers; but it was difficult for [the listeners] to come to know this, because when the talk came to an end, there were fewer people around them than when they began.³⁵²

One of the most striking things from this description is how closely Heinrich Meyer's evangelistic sermon conformed to what one would expect to hear from any "orthodox Protestant minister" giving a sermon. While the editors of PEIL may have faulted Meyer for his repetitious and dull preaching style, they could not accuse him of strange or heterodox teaching. Of course the editorial staff of PEIL was partial to the rationalistic theology then reigning in Protestant circles, so one wonders if any orthodox message would have elicited real appreciation from them? Apart from the Baptist distinctive of believer's baptism which Meyer proclaimed, his teaching comported with that of more traditional Reformed or Lutheran piety. This testimony confirms the appeal that Meyer's Baptist proclamation would have with those hearers nurtured in pietistic or puritan streams of Protestantism.

Another interesting observation is the difficulty PEIL had in classifying Meyer and his congregation. At first they assumed he must be a Nazarene. This was the only sect that had made a broad impression upon Hungarian society at that point. In the next issue, the editorial staff attempted to correct their mistake, but did so rather poorly, suggesting that Meyer was "not a Nazarene, but an Anabaptist".³⁵³ It was in this correction of the record that they observed that Meyer taught believer's baptism "with more zeal than wit".³⁵⁴ Of course this correction stood in need of correction, but it is perhaps understandable given the literature Meyer and his colleagues were handing out. In the last notice on Baptist activities in the Városliget, it was noted that "The Budapest

352. Különfélék [Notices]. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 21.33 (Aug. 18 1878): 1062–63.

353. Különfélék [Notices], 1092.

354. Különfélék [Notices], 1092.

Anabaptists, after the police did not find holy preaching and pious singing reconcilable with the noise of the reveling people, which led them to break up their worship service in the Városliget, [these Anabaptists] found other modes of sharing their faith. Their colporteurs went everywhere laying hold of people and putting in their hands - as they did with us in the museum garden - a plainly made German sermon published in Hamburg, in which the nameless preacher sought in a rather tiresome manner to impress into us the holy scriptures.”³⁵⁵ It is not surprising that Meyer’s preaching was accompanied by the distribution of tracts. The dissemination of Christian literature was a hallmark of Baptist evangelistic methodology. This Hamburg published tract was apparently produced by the German Baptists, and likely contained an evangelistic sermon by one of the noted German Baptists such as J.G. Oncken. What is noteworthy in this case is that the tract had printed on it an invitation to visit Meyer’s congregation. “At the end of the sermon the readers, however, are invited to attend at 9:00 AM Sunday morning and at 4:00 PM in the afternoon the worship services of the ‘baptized christians’, which are held in their church at Tobacco Street 12. The Hungarian person however, even if he could read this invitation written in a foreign language, would politely thank them and say that his stomach can withstand even lard, but that kind of Anabaptist strangeness he could not stomach.”³⁵⁶ The invitation was obviously published in German. A brief article in PEIL appearing a few years later cited in German a similar invitation to “visit the public worship service of the baptized christians in Budapest” printed on one of the Baptist tracts which read: “Zum Besuche der öffentlichen Gottesdienste der getauften Christen in Budapest.”³⁵⁷ The strangeness of the term *getauften Christen* conjured up in the minds of the Baptist’s Protestant critics their old opponents, the Anabaptists. In fact, this last article mentioned appeared in 1882, four years after the first encounter of PEIL with the work of Heinrich Meyer, and yet the opprobrious appellation of “Anabaptist” was kept.

As the PEIL editor mentioned, the police broke up the evangelistic service after a while, and this incident is described by Meyer.³⁵⁸ The narrative is worth citing if only to

355. Különfélék [Notices]. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 21.35 (Sept. 1 1878): 1120.

356. Különfélék [Notices], 1120.

357. “Az anabaptisták terjedése [The Spread of the Anabaptists].” Különfélék [Notices]. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 25.2 (Jan. 8 1882): 61.

358. The incident described in the PEIL article occurred on August 15, 1878, and in the follow up article it was noted that the service fell on St. Istvan’s Day. The incident Meyer describes also happened on St. Istvan’s Day, although he asserts that it occurred on August 20th, which is the traditional day to celebrate

point out the contrast in treatment Meyer received in the capital city as opposed to other towns and villages. Meyer had just arrived back from Broos³⁵⁹ and was feeling ill. Meyer met the brethren in the park in the early afternoon. Although Meyer mentioned they were standing for two hours between the singing and preaching, he noted that he did not speak very long. He then describes what happened after he finished speaking:

After my talk a gentleman beckoned and asked that I follow him to the city police headquarter. I went with him without causing a scene. "I wouldn't have come", he said, "if they hadn't sent me." At the headquarter the on-duty official filled out a report and then released me, saying that I would be summoned. I did not get my hymnals back. A few days later I went and sought out one of the police superintendents. He filled out an official record of the incident in a manner favorable to me. "We did not assent to you holding such meetings" he said, "and so we must bring this matter before the ministry." I waited a long time before an answer came back. The ministry did not respond and so I continued my work.³⁶⁰

Meyer's activities in the City Park fell into some kind of legal limbo - not exactly officially tolerated or proscribed. It is interesting that the Interior Ministry responded by not responding, thus giving tacit permission but no more to Meyer's open-air evangelism. The police could disperse Meyer's Baptist congregants, but as PEIL reported, the brethren simply turned to passing out tracts individually.

Literature distribution was, of course, a traditional method of advancing the gospel in the German Baptist community, beginning with the work of Oncken himself. So it is not surprising that Meyer continued with literature distribution even after his resignation from the British and Foreign Bible Society. As the PEIL article disclosed, much of this literature came from Hamburg, and in fact the German churches in Hungary remained dependent upon German Baptist publications from the homeland to meet their needs. In 1879, Meyer had a German Baptist tract by Moritz Geissler, a teacher at the Baptist seminary in Hamburg, translated into Hungarian and printed by Viktor Hornyánszky in Budapest.³⁶¹ Entitled "The Baptists, who are they, what do they believe, where do they come from, and some special characteristics", it was used to introduce

St. Istvan's Day. I cannot account for the discrepancy in dates.

359. In Hungarian the town is Szászváros, the modern Romanian town of Orăștie in Transylvania.

360. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 54.

361. Meyer turned to Hornyánszky to publish the tract because Hornyánszky did publishing for the BFBS, and Meyer had met him during his time as a colporteur with the BFBS. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 39.

Hungarians to the Baptist message and to counter typical prejudices.³⁶² Meyer also utilized certain brethren as colporteurs as funding from abroad allowed, so that literature evangelism could propagate the Baptist message.³⁶³ Finally, Meyer also maintained a *Leihbibliothek* for the benefit of those who wished to read religious literature.³⁶⁴

The feverish pace of activity that Meyer subjected himself to through trying to establish a strong presence in Budapest while at the same time undertaking a grueling schedule of missionary trips throughout the far-flung regions of Hungary began to take a toll on his health.³⁶⁵ He wrote: “When at the beginning of 1876 I began my travels, I determined that if I continued my work at this pace, my physical constitution could at best last for five years, but that well before that I would suffer a nervous breakdown.”³⁶⁶ In fact, his first setback from exhaustion came much sooner: “On Friday, April 2nd, [1877], I completely broke down ... Brother Millard sent 10 Gulden so that I would take a holiday and rest.”³⁶⁷ Even as Meyer began to turn over more responsibility to others, particularly to Mihály Kornya and Mihály Tóth to manage the rapidly expanding Magyar mission, the pace he maintained continued to cause his body to break down. “In 1879 I was sick a lot. From January to March an intense weakness hindered my work.”³⁶⁸ The long overnight trips, one on top of another, in the cheapest, most primitive rail cars, especially wore Meyer out.

This exhaustion, along with the pressures of the ministry, caused Meyer to doubt his ability to carry out the task he had set for himself. He wrote: “I frequently worried

362. Szebeni, “Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer],” 287.

363. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 58.

364. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 16–17.

365. This was not unusual for Meyer. He noted that during his ministry in Odessa, “I preached myself sick for the first time, such that for 14 days I could not move.” Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 23.

366. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 50.

367. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 51.

368. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 55.

about whether my methods were suitable when taking into consideration the local conditions. I wrote to Brother Oncken asking him to send someone to us who would examine our missionary work and methods. He sent Brother Fritz Oncken, who had come to Hungary once before in 1849. He arrived September 21st, [1877], to Pest. His arrival inspired a greater pleasure in travelling around the country.”³⁶⁹ Prior to Oncken’s arrival, Meyer discussed the impending visit with his inner circle. He emphasized to them that Oncken was not his personal guest, but the guest of the congregation. Then he expressed how Oncken’s arrival would impact the leadership of the movement, “During my absence no church business should be conducted, unless brother Oncken completely takes over the leadership. But so long as I am supposed to lead the congregation, I wish for my influence in the congregation to remain undiminished.”³⁷⁰ Meyer did not wish for Oncken’s visit to turn into an occasion for anyone to question his leadership, and he made this clear to the men he had called to subsidiary leadership roles. At this early point in the movement, whatever worries Meyer may have had about his ministry, he remained the unquestioned leader, and he desired it to remain that way. For his part, Fritz Oncken seemed suitably impressed not only with the dramatic change the city had undergone since 1849, but also with the work of Meyer and his compatriots. He reported back to the Baptists in Germany: “Our brethren are free to move around here now like in any city in Germany and are very busy. The meeting place is in a new house in the middle of the city. In particular it seems that the Lord has opened the door for the gospel to penetrate among the ethnic Hungarians in various provinces, because already there are some groups of converts there. The many demands placed upon brother Meyer can hardly be satisfied.”³⁷¹ Oncken confirmed in his report the great burden Meyer was carrying upon himself, in part because of the Magyar mission that was growing. In fact, Oncken participated in the ordination council for Kornya and Toth that passed on some of the burden for the Magyar mission to these men, because the weight of constant travel to the Alföld was becoming too much for Meyer.

In the early 1880’s Meyer undertook mission work in two German villages outside of Buda that proved among the more difficult challenges he faced as an evangelist. The

369. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 52.

370. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 10–11.

371. Donat, 437.

villages, Promontor and Budaörs, were Catholic villages in which Meyer's efforts were met with violent resistance, and this no doubt contributed to the exhaustion and health problems that began to take a heavy toll on Meyer. In Promontor, which within Meyer's lifetime became known as Budafok³⁷², Meyer experienced opposition from the village authorities, at the instigation of the Roman Catholic clergy, which hindered the beginning of his work. He wrote in his autobiography: "I went there once or twice as a colporteur... Somehow I took a real liking to this place. The thought lived within me that if I had some helpers from among the youth, we could start something here."³⁷³ Accordingly, once he had some youth lined up to help him, he arranged to rent a room to give a "religious lecture", and gave advance notice to the village authorities of his intentions. When he arrived in Promontor, a messenger said the village magistrate wished to see him. Meyer obliged, and when he entered the office, he was faced by the gathered leadership of the village, and was implored to give up his plans. Meyer refused, and was treated rudely as he departed. When he arrived at the inn where he planned to hold the meeting, he found that under pressure the owner had canceled their agreement. Given the deteriorating situation, Meyer decided that this was for the best, and resolved to look for another place to hold the lecture at a later time. He wrote in his journal, "Wednesday, January 19th, 1881. Left for Promontor at ten o'clock, I had an argument with the magistrate and had to return empty handed because the landlord of the inn refused me [use of the space]."³⁷⁴ He found such a place, but again the owner was pressured to cancel the agreement. Finally, Meyer wrote to the sheriff of the county to complain about the interference coming from the village leaders. With cooperation from the sheriff, Meyer was able to arrange a meeting repleat with five police officers provided by the sheriff from outside Promontor. When the village magistrates and police surveyed the situation, they quietly gave way. Meyer was able to proceed, and approximately 200 people attended this first meeting. Later in 1883, the village priest incited a riot on one occasion in which Meyer and his wife were stoned and badly injured. This incident invited international attention from the Evangelical Alliance, which sent a delegation to the Emperor. Meyer also

372. Budafok now comprises the majority of district XXII of Budapest.

373. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 59.

374. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 20.

received advice from Irányi, the champion of religious freedom in parliament.³⁷⁵ More on this incident later.

A foretaste of this violent incident was provided in Budaörs, a purely Roman Catholic village then a two hour trip from Buda, and one which did not tolerate members of other religions. Meyer went through all the same administrative procedures to set up a meeting in Budaörs, and arrived in the village on February 23rd, 1881. Prior to this the owner of the meeting place pleaded with tears to get out of the agreement he had made with Meyer, because of the harsh abuse he had received from the priest as a result. But Meyer was determined to go ahead, and arrived in a carriage with benches and a table for the lecture. At the meeting place Meyer was again asked to cancel the meeting, to which he replied: “I have rented the house, and now it is mine.”³⁷⁶ At this point the magistrate began to intervene, asking Meyer to give back to the village its peace, since it was evident that the population was aroused by his presence. To this Meyer replied that he could not turn back, because he brought with him the “message of the gospel of peace.”³⁷⁷ The magistrate had his hands tied, confessing to Meyer that he had “received the command from the sheriff to provide for your protection.”³⁷⁸ So Meyer began to proceed with his message. However, the audience had other plans. Meyer noted that there were many young men in the audience, and instead of sitting quietly on the benches, they began to rock back and forth on them until the benches began to break apart. At this point the magistrate asked Meyer if he should clear the room, and Meyer responded affirmatively. After giving only a short talk, Meyer left the broken benches behind, and was escorted out of the village by the magistrate, who was forced to protect Meyer and his companions from the threatening crowd by placing himself between the two groups.

For the next visit, Meyer took a different approach. He gave a shorter notice of his intention to speak, so as not to give the priest sufficient time to arouse the village against him. He also asked some of the brethren to gather together the remains of the benches,

375. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 64.

376. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 61.

377. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 61.

378. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 61.

and put them into a pile, “because these will help preach.”³⁷⁹ Another crowd gathered to hear him give a gospel message, mostly men and youth. While he was able to gain a respectful hearing from the men, he had to stop often in order to counsel the youth in the audience. In the end, it was a successful event, because he was able to give his talk and the crowd dispersed peacefully. However, as they were preparing to depart the village, Meyer and his companions were confronted with a rowdy crowd. As they continued on their way, the crowd became larger and more threatening. With the crowd following them, Meyer and his friends were showered not only with insults, but increasingly with pebbles and mud. This was a problem because the pebbles began to turn into rocks, and as Meyer observed, Budaörs was a village “rich in stones.”³⁸⁰ During this ordeal, Meyer noticed some soldiers in the village, and since one of his companions was a soldier, he sent him to arrange for a protective escort. He wrote: “We received an escort who placed himself between us and the crowd, holding them back with a drawn sword.” A few moments later, Meyer spied an officer with several soldiers, and informed him: “Our lives are not secure here.” With this larger company to protect them, the crowd was driven back and, as Meyer described it, “while bloodied and stained, we fortunately were able to make it home.”³⁸¹ Amazingly, Meyer continued to return to Budaörs. But given the problems he had encountered, he would often preach to the assembled crowd from the door of a house.

Sometime after Meyer had begun his work in Promontor and Budaörs, he completely lost his voice. Under doctor’s orders he was required to take bed rest for several weeks. From this point on, Meyer would often not take part in congregational singing in order to preserve his voice. In the summer of 1881, Meyer travelled to Königsberg for the conference of the Prussian Baptist Union. He wrote of this: “I went in the hope that I would find someone to take over my work, or help me.”³⁸² Meyer remained in poor health for much of the year, and this had a profound impact upon the

379. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 61.

380. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 61.

381. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 61.

382. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 62.

work in Hungary. “Because of my sickness and weakness, on June 16, 1881, three brothers, brothers Kornya, Tóth, and Balogh were ordained ... so that they could perform baptisms.”³⁸³ In his diary for June 13, 1881, Meyer noted simply: “Election of brother Tóth and Kornya as elders.”³⁸⁴ Around this time, Meyer wrote to a brother Braun in Hamburg, requesting permission to attend the newly opened *Predigerseminar* in Hamburg for half a year. A letter from J. Georg Fetzer is preserved in the Hungarian Baptist archives which is a letter of invitation. It reads in part: “If now the Lord does not intervene in an extraordinary way, the School Committee expects to see you here in April of next year in order to study for the summer semester.”³⁸⁵ In this way Meyer was able to enjoy a half-year sabbatical from his work in 1882. These events also mark the close of a period where Meyer was the only pastor/elder of the Baptists in Hungary.

4. The Internal Life of the Early Hungarian Baptist Movement

The preceding has explained how Heinrich Meyer built, it is time to look now at what he built. What was the internal life of the Baptist movement in Hungary like? I will get at these questions by looking at four topics. First, what was the social composition of the early Baptist movement in Hungary? Second, what did the congregational life of the fellowship look like; how was one admitted to the fellowship, what were the expectations for those within it, how was church discipline and pastoral care practiced, and what was the pattern of worship? Third, what was the content of the Baptist proclamation in Hungary? And fourth, what was the internal organization of the movement?

4.1. The Social Composition of the Baptist Movement

One wonders if Heinrich Meyer often appealed to the apostle Paul’s observation that “not many of your were wise” (1 Cor. 1:26) when preaching and teaching before the brethren, for this passage certainly applied to the social composition of the Baptist movement in Hungary. The Baptist message appealed for the most part to the tradesmen and factory workers in Budapest, and to the peasant smallholders and agricultural

383. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 62.

384. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 21.

385. Fetzer, J Georg. Letter to Heinrich Meyer. Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, 1881. 1. Original letter with typed transcription.

proletariat in the countryside. Mészáros noted that the first Baptists did not come from the village's "leading people" or the higher classes, "but from the simple people with a few acres, or rather the cotters working with two hands. In the cities they came from the artisans and factory workers..."³⁸⁶ He cites a speech from a peasant character in József Katona's famous drama *Bánkbán*, in which the peasant complains that the priests only cared about getting their church tithes out of the peasantry, but otherwise they hardly could be bothered to interest themselves in the lives of the simple people. Mészáros argues that such was still the case when the Baptist mission under Meyer began, and this accounts for why the Baptist mission was so appealing to the lower classes. Of course, it was advantageous to stress this fact under socialism, which accounts for why Hungarian Baptist historiography of the last few decades often emphasizes this theme. Nevertheless, it is true to the history of the Baptist movement among the Hungarians; it has always been a movement of the lower classes, with only a few notable exceptions. Among the historic Protestant Churches, this alienation of the lower classes from the clergy was not addressed in any meaningful way until the rise of the *Erweckungstheologie* and concepts of *Innere Mission* in the late 1880's and the following decades under the influence of the Scottish Mission. Oliver Szebeni researched this question by examining the entries of the first baptismal register of Heinrich Meyer during the first seven years of the movement (the period during which only Meyer was performing baptisms), and comparing the data for the three prominent centers of Baptist life: Budapest, Újvidék, and Nagyszalonta.³⁸⁷ The findings are most illuminating.

Before looking at the social composition of the congregations, a summary of the pattern of growth will put the data into context. For Budapest, primarily a German mission, and obviously an urban mission, there was steady, if not spectacular growth. It went from a congregation of four people in 1874 to one of 25 in 1881. The similar work in Újvidék exhibited the exact opposite pattern, going from 25 people in 1875 to five people in 1881, primarily through members, including former Nazarenes, being disfellowshipped. It was in the Magyar and rural center of Nagyszalonta that the movement experienced its greatest growth. From a beginning of eight people in 1875, it grew to 62 people in 1881, more than double the total of Budapest and Újvidék

386. Mészáros, Kálmán. "Meyer Henrik munkássága kora egyházi és társadalmi viszonyainak tükrében [Heinrich Meyer's Work in the Mirror of the Period's Church and Social Conditions]." *Theologiai Szemle* 16 <new series>.3-4 (1974): 119.

387. Szebeni, Olivér. "Adatok az első gyülekezetek életéből [Particulars from the Life of the Earliest Hungarian Baptist Churches]." Congress of Pastors. Balatonföldvár, 1968.

combined. In terms of the gender distribution, the number of women baptized exceeded the number of men by 56% to 44%. The average age of those baptized in Budapest and Újvidék was 28-29 years old, while in Nagyszalonta it was 36 years old. One wishes that the former religion of the converts were noted, at least for Budapest. We know from Meyer's writings that most of the converts in Újvidék were Germans from the Nazarene sect, which accounts for the instability and peculiar growth pattern of the work. It was an unusual, and unrepresentative congregation. From Nagyszalonta the converts were from the Magyar Reformed peasantry. It is in Budapest that it would be helpful to know if the German converts were Protestant or Roman Catholic, and the same for the Magyar converts.

Not surprisingly, the list of professions in which the Baptist converts were engaged differed greatly between Budapest and Nagyszalonta, since the former was the urban, industrial center of the country, and the latter was an agricultural center in the Alföld. Yet in both cases, the professions represented were those of the lower classes. In Nagyszalonta, 21 men were listed as smallholders, seven men were farm hands, and only a few were artisans of one kind or another. By contrast, no one was engaged agriculturally in Budapest, most all were artisans, such as carpenters, smiths, and tailors. An even greater difference was found between the women. In Nagyszalonta all 38 women were homemakers, whereas in Budapest, eleven out of 27 were such. Eight women were servant girls, probably the most humble vocation represented. Szebeni observed that the "Budapest Baptist servant girls achieved for the first time social recognition within the fellowship... In the realm of labor ethics they are the Baptists first role models," because by their perseverance amidst great difficulties, these meek village girls gave "silent sermons" and "mute testimonies" to the gospel that were heard far and wide.³⁸⁸ Three women in Budapest were dressmakers, three were washerwomen, and one worked in a factory. Thus more than half the women in Budapest were engaged in work outside the home. What is not found in either Budapest or Nagyszalonta is a convert from among the gentry or emergent bourgeoisie, that is, from the gentlemanly class. Eventually, there were a few exceptions to the rule (Attila Csopják being the most prominent among them), but the Baptist movement was essentially a movement among the lower classes.

388. Szebeni, "Adatok az első gyülekezetek életéből [Particulars from the Life of the Earliest Hungarian Baptist Churches]," 5.

4.2. The Congregational Life of Hungarian Baptists

The congregational life of the early Baptist movement in Hungary was rather different in some aspects than Baptist life in Hungary today; this is attributable in part because Hungarian society has undergone dramatic social change since this time, and in part because an embryonic movement under a charismatic leader always evidences characteristics that are moderated over time. This is true of the early Baptist movement in Hungary, which was dominated by the personality of Heinrich Meyer in a way that would not be possible to duplicate today. These differences expressed themselves primarily socially rather than theologically; in other words, social norms have changed much more dramatically over time than theological norms among Hungarian Baptists. Yet even beyond what may be attributable to Meyer's strict personality, one only needs to call to mind the strict social codes of behavior that characterized the early Quakers or Methodist movements in the past, or more recently the Pentecostal movement,³⁸⁹ to understand that moral rigorism often accompanies nascent evangelical movements. It is frequently the case that these social boundary markers are used in religious movements so that members may differentiate themselves from those within the broader society and to give substance to their theological beliefs.

In many respects, the early Baptist movement in Hungary sought to pattern itself after the primitive Christian movement. There has historically existed a self-understanding among Baptists that their fellowship was one that sought to be faithful to the model of the primitive Christian community evidenced in the New Testament.³⁹⁰ In

389. For example, during my time teaching at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Croatia, in the mid-1990's, an interdenominational evangelical school with Pentecostal roots, I heard many stories about how strict the moral code of the first generations of Pentecostals in Yugoslavia had been. While modesty still was the norm among young Pentecostal women, use of cosmetics was permitted, something unimaginable to the older generations. Likewise, I often played football (soccer) with my friends, something that was also forbidden to the first generations. My good friend Damir Špoljarić, a prominent leader in the seminary and the Evangelical Church in Croatia, and my contemporary in years, told me that his reputation as a godly young man was cemented among the other believers when as a new convert he decided to get rid of his collection of rock music albums. Here was a clear testimony that he was turning from the world to embrace a path of Christian discipleship, whatever the costs.

390. Sometimes taken to extremes, such as in the case of Landmarkism among the nineteenth century Southern Baptists. Landmarkism was an odd high church Baptist ecclesiology. It held that only Baptist churches are true churches, because only they evidence the marks of the true church in their observation of the ordinances, polity, and proclamation. Given this fact, Landmarkists also found it necessary to argue that Baptist churches have always existed in every age, if not in name, at least in practice, by an unbroken historical succession.

the Baptist movement in Hungary, this was evidenced by the process for joining the fellowship, the stricter exercise of church discipline, and the simple pattern of worship.

It has been said of the early Baptist movement in Hungary that it was difficult to join, but easy to leave. It may seem paradoxical that these Baptists would be aggressive evangelists and yet erect such barriers to full membership in the fellowship. The paradox, in their view, was rooted in Scripture, for all disciples are called to proclaim the gospel (Mt. 28:18-20); yet each disciple is also told to count the cost before pledging himself to a path of discipleship (Mt. 16:24). It was the father of the German Baptists, J.G. Oncken, who gave the famous dictum, “Jeder Baptist ein Missionar”, to explain his view of ministry and discipleship. If the evangelistic fervor of contemporary Hungarian Baptists has abated from that of the first generation, so have the rigorous standards set for membership. Szebeni observed: “A century later much has been lost in the strictness of the process of applying for church membership. At that time questions arose concerning the proper behavior in certain situations, abstinence from destructive passions, self-restraint, biblical knowledge, and a carefully thought out decision.”³⁹¹ Szebeni’s description, based upon his examination of Meyer’s personal papers, is in agreement with the description provided by Louis Balint.³⁹² Candidates for baptism had to be adults, a necessary restriction, since only adults could change their religious affiliation. They also went through a process that, while not codified, bears some resemblance to the expectations of the catechumen: “The process of becoming a regular member was rather elaborate and difficult. First of all the aspirant for membership was regarded as a mere visitor, and after a certain period of steady church attendance he was considered a friend, but before he was officially regarded as such, he was expected to be able to pray in public and to have made a public confession of his sins before the congregation of the church membership. After being a friend of the church for about a year he was permitted to apply for membership. During all of this period regular daily Bible study was required.”³⁹³

391. Szebeni, “Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer],” 286.

392. Balint was a Magyar American who wrote his Th.M. thesis on the history of Hungarian Baptists at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1936. At several points he mentions his travels in Hungary and his discussions with Hungarian Baptists who were co-workers with Heinrich Meyer. As such, his descriptions of early Hungarian Baptist worship and practice are valuable, although his observations on Meyer are obviously biased by his own Magyar sympathies. It is instructive that nearly two decades after his death, Meyer could still evoke such passions from Magyar Baptists who knew him.

393. Balint, Louis. “The Background and the History of the Baptists in Hungary.” Thesis. Philadelphia: Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1936. 91–92.

Once the friend of the congregation had proven sufficient spiritual progress and a firmness of purpose, he or she was allowed to request baptism and membership in the fellowship. As described previously, every candidate for baptism had to be examined before undergoing the rite. Balint continued:

At the occasion of accepting him for baptism, the candidate was put to a severe test by the local congregation. Either a special meeting of the members was called or the members were asked at the mid-week prayer meeting to remain for a special session. The meeting was opened with a prayer and then the local leader or evangelist began the testing of the candidate by asking him about thirty-two questions, and they were of this nature: how were you converted? Why do you desire to join the church? Why do you wish to be baptized by immersion? Do you believe in the deity of Jesus Christ? Why don't you want to remain in your present denomination? Do you intend to contribute the tenth of your weekly income to the church? Do you believe in working on Sunday or buying things... Do you promise to keep yourself away from the amusement parks? Do you promise never to attend a theater or a dancing hall? Do you promise to attend the church services regularly, twice on Sundays? After the leader was through with the questioning, the general assembly was permitted to continue the examining. It was a regular inquisition in every sense of the word. The old ladies asked the most personal things that one could imagine, do you believe in kissing your future wife or husband before the engagement? Do you promise to abstain yourself on Sunday from having relationship with your wedded wife or husband as the case may be?³⁹⁴

The questions thus ranged from doctrinal to behavioral, examining the candidate's theological beliefs and his or her willingness to conform to expected Baptist praxis. Confirmation of this picture is given by a diary entry by Heinrich Meyer dated May 31st, 1877:

We proceeded to examine those who presented themselves for joining [the congregation]. We heard some beautiful testimonies. There were also some instructions for them: about the duty of even the poor to help build the kingdom of God through their contributions, even when they were being supported by the congregation. About divorce, etc. About the especially important virtue for the sisters of silence and avoiding loose speech.³⁹⁵

We find the same pattern in this passage, a confession of Christ followed by examination and instruction on behavioral expectations. The following entry from the *Gemeindestunde* minutes give an intimate picture of this process under Meyer's leadership. This is an

394. Balint, 92–93.

395. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 9.

extract from the church conference minutes for July 30th, 1882, in which Joseph Labadamus presented himself for membership:

Joseph Labadamus was presented on the recommendation of brothers Gromen, Schwarz and Flor, and was asked to tell what the Lord had done for him. He related that the Lord had shown him the misery of his sin and that came to recognize that he was a sinner, but that he had made things right through faith in Jesus Christ. Why do you want to join? Because the Lord has ordered that we should have fellowship with one another, and I can only achieve this through joining. Are your sins forgiven and are you born again? Yes! - How? - Because the Lord commanded it, and because he went before us to give us a good example. - Have you read our confession of faith? - Yes! - Have you also compared it with the Bible? No! - We recommend that you compare it with the Bible. In this way you can see if it is in agreement with the Bible. Do you want to celebrate the Lord's Supper with us? - Yes! - Will you support the mission? - Yes! - Do you smoke? - No. - Do you drink schnapps? - No. - Do you eat blood? - No. - Will you allow your children to be baptized? - No. Do you know that believers can only marry other believers? - Yes. Will you talk about what goes on in the congregation of God? No. - Will you admonish yourself, or accept admonishment? - Yes! - Will you attend weddings? - No. He was requested to leave and then brother Meyer asked if the congregation was pleased with his profession? The congregation decided unanimously to accept him.³⁹⁶

The same movement from theological questions pertaining to conviction of sin, repentance, and faith in Christ on to practical questions of Christian living are found here. There is a concern, manifested here and in other minutes, for the candidate for church membership and baptism to have read the Baptist confession in use by the church and to compare it with the Scriptures.³⁹⁷ Every candidate was also asked if he or she would support the Baptist mission with their giving, if they would subject themselves to church discipline, and if they would promise not to talk with those outside the fellowship about the internal life of the congregation. These questions were all to discern if the candidate would be committed to supporting the work of the church, to submitting to the guidance of the church, and to protecting its reputation.

This concern for the reputation of the church fellowship is revealed in another situation, when Frau Theresie Hess, a "friend from Promontor", presented herself for church membership at the December 12th, 1882, *Gemeindestunde*. She must have been among the first fruits of Meyer's efforts in that German Catholic village; she was

396. "Gyülekezeti tanácskozások jegyzőkönyvei 1882. júl 30. - márc. 18-ig [Minutes of Church Conferences from July 30, 1882 until March 18, 1883]." Typed transcription of original church notebooks. Heinrich Meyer Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, Hungary. 1-2.

397. This confession was no doubt borrowed from the German Baptists and probably translated into Hungarian at some point.

presented for church membership by Meyer himself, with his wife among those recommending her for membership. She was asked quite directly: “Will you not flinch from persecution and ridicule?”³⁹⁸ It was expected that she would face a measure of persecution in her village for her decision. The most interesting exchange was as follows: “Have you declared your exit from the church? - No. - Do it this week, ... so that we are not exposed to any unpleasantness.”³⁹⁹ The congregation did not wish to face difficulties for accepting into membership and baptizing someone who had not formally renounced membership in the church to which she belonged. While they could expect condemnation for their evangelistic work, the congregation was conscientious about following certain procedures to make sure they could counter the reproaches that would follow.

Another interesting situation concerns a woman identified as Frau Böss, also from Promontor, who presented herself for membership on December 14th, 1882. When it came time for her membership to be discussed following her interview before the congregation, it came out that Frau Böss was illiterate. “Brother Eiler thought that she was quite weak and, in consequence of the fact that she cannot read, that we could not rely on her testimony, but only upon her way of life, and upon the witness of the Promontor brethren that her way of life possesses the characteristics of one who has converted. The congregation unanimously accepted her.”⁴⁰⁰ In this instance, where someone could not read and ascribe to the congregation’s confession of faith, nor could this person read and study the Scriptures, the decision was made to judge Mrs. Böss by the way she demonstrated her Christian faith in her life. Convinced that she had a true conversion experience and that she demonstrated this conversion in her way of life, the congregation was happy to accept her into fellowship. Baptist polity has been based upon the principle of the believer’s church, a voluntary fellowship that strives in as much as it is humanly possible for a pure church. In a hostile social environment in which Baptists were closely scrutinized by those outside the fellowship for any possible hypocrisy, the brethren made baptism and full admission to fellowship difficult so that only those

398. “Gyülekezeti tanácskozások jegyzőkönyvei 1882. júl 30. - márc. 18-ig [Minutes of Church Conferences from July 30, 1882 until March 18, 1883],” 13.

399. “Gyülekezeti tanácskozások jegyzőkönyvei 1882. júl 30. - márc. 18-ig [Minutes of Church Conferences from July 30, 1882 until March 18, 1883],” 14.

400. “Gyülekezeti tanácskozások jegyzőkönyvei 1882. júl 30. - márc. 18-ig [Minutes of Church Conferences from July 30, 1882 until March 18, 1883],” 15.

committed to a path of radical discipleship would seek to enter their company. And yet, it is also clear that a measure of grace was evident in their deliberations as well.

It was this same concern for personal holiness as an essential mark of discipleship and as a fundamental prerequisite for an effective corporate witness that motivated the strict enforcement of church discipline. Prior to the question of discipline is the question of what was expected of the believers. From the description of questions asked baptismal candidates, we know that believers were expected to fully participate in the life of the congregation, to contribute to the church, to keep the Sabbath rest, and to refrain from worldly amusements. Balint described the Christian morals among the brethren as follows:

The Christian life among the Baptists was maintained at a high level. It must be mentioned again that Meyer over stressed the external appearance of a converted Christian. Sunday cooking was considered sacrilegious, hats for women were regarded as a worldly luxury, wearing of any kind of rings including the wedding ring was forbidden. It is interesting to note that Baptist leaders visited Hungary from the United States, but before they were permitted to speak to the congregation they were requested to remove their wedding ring or the school ring while they were speaking. The reading of novels was under ban. To wear a flower in the button hole, to wear a colored dress, or ear-rings was regarded as frivolous. A deck of cards was considered as the thirty-two page Bible of the Devil. Dancing was looked upon as the action of the Devil who was pulling and pushing a poor soul around. Smoking was strictly prohibited. The only questionable thing Meyer failed to forbid was the drinking of beer and wine. Whisky however was strictly prohibited to all. The violation of any of these taboos was a sufficient cause for excommunication from the Church fellowship. We may also include not paying the Church dues, buying a newspaper on Sunday or anyone marrying a non-Baptist Church member.⁴⁰¹

Balint was writing at the period when America had just recently repealed Prohibition and the temperance movement was still strong in evangelical churches, which accounts for his views on alcohol. Interestingly, Szebeni notes that Meyer himself was a teetotaler and recommended abstinence to others.⁴⁰² Various entries in Meyer's diary support the picture given here.

For example, Meyer apparently had a difficult time instilling in some members the necessity of giving from their earnings a portion to the church to support its mission. One must remember not only that members of the fellowship were either of modest income or less, but also that since the Baptists were not a recognized religion, its members were still

401. Balint, 99–100.

402. Szebeni, "Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer]," 287.

legally considered members of their former church and subject to the church tax. Meyer's entry, dated Sunday, November 3rd, 1878, states: "I spoke about giving to the mission, and called for whoever will give a portion of their wages every week in the future to stand up, whereupon everyone stood up."⁴⁰³ It will be seen that mission giving and control over the mission fund was a divisive issue.

Another entry addresses the issue of who it is appropriate to marry. Dated February 20th, 1879, Meyer wrote: "Today the congregation unanimously decided to ask sister Serafi to not go through with [her] wedding until she had the consent of the congregation. She did not follow the congregation's command, and thus she is to immediately be considered as disfellowshipped. All the brethren were herewith commanded to not attend any weddings before they received the congregation's permission."⁴⁰⁴ Such intrusion into a highly personal decision seems offensive by contemporary standards. A few observations will provide some perspective. The intention of Meyer and the Baptist brethren was not to introduce some form of arranged marriage, but rather represented the congregation's understanding of Paul's command in the Corinthian correspondence that believers not be unequally yoked with non-believers. Marriage was seen not strictly as a personal decision, but as a God-given institution with divine purposes. The divine intention for marriage would be thwarted if a believer would marry a non-believer. A prospective spouse had to be a Baptist, because the individual member had pledged him or herself to that fellowship and its understanding of Christian discipleship. This was the import of the question frequently asked of candidates for admission to the fellowship about believers being forbidden to marry unbelievers. One need only remember the bitter struggle of the Reformed Church in Hungary against the Roman Catholic Church with regards to the issue of *elkeresztelés*, the 'baptizing away' of Protestant children by Roman Catholic priests, to realize that getting married and having children had social and legal ramifications for Hungarians of all denominations. However, it would appear that when two church members became engaged, church oversight was not so strict. In the minutes for the church conference for March 18th, 1883 it states:

Also brother Meyer informed the congregation that brother Répai and Anna Szabadi had gotten engaged, and asked for the congregation's opinion. Brother

403. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 17.

404. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 17-18.

Gromen suggested that the congregation reserve from making a decision until their next meeting. Brother Meyer said that the congregation could not do anything to stand in the way [of the engagement], and therefore if perhaps some of the brethren would have some questions, they could go along with the suggestion of brother Gromen. The congregation all decided to accept this advice.⁴⁰⁵

It is apparent that Meyer counsels that the wishes of the couple be respected, and that the next meeting should consist merely of questions about the couple's plans for their marriage.

One final example from Meyer's diary exemplifies the high expectations he and the brethren had regarding the spiritual disciplines of believers. Dated October 10th, 1878, Meyer wrote:

Afterwards I made a motion that it would not only be obligatory for brother Peter to hold devotions with his own family, but also to care for the spiritual condition of each individual member. The motion was seconded and adopted. I further made a motion that in the future nobody would be admitted from whom we do not know that he reads God's word and prays with his family and roommates. It was seconded and adopted. I made a third motion that members who in spite of this admonishment neglect to regularly read the word of God with their family and to pray will be expelled. It was seconded and adopted, and then prayed about.⁴⁰⁶

Not all the brethren agreed with this decision, according to the diary entry. The concern was likely to ensure that there was not a disjunction between the public worship of Baptists and their everyday lives. Certainly the ample biblical instruction in the wisdom literature and the Pauline *Haustafeln* concerning religious instruction in the family influenced Meyer's thinking on the responsibility of believers to exercise their priestly duties in their households. Szebeni noted of this period: "They did not tolerate domestic tiffs. One woman was expelled because she swore, one man because he hit his wife. Usually there was no disorder in the believing family. Peace was prompted by the family devotional two to three times daily, usually before or after the family meals."⁴⁰⁷ The daily lives of the believers were supposed to be a witness to their neighbors and friends.

Heinrich Meyer was willing to lead by example. In order to understand how the Baptist movement could grow as it did despite what has been described, one must know how Meyer and the early leaders of the movement invested themselves in pastoral care.

405. "Gyülekezeti tanácskozások jegyzőkönyvei 1882. júl 30. - márc. 18-ig [Minutes of Church Conferences from July 30, 1882 until March 18, 1883]," 22.

406. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 16.

407. Szebeni, "Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer]," 287.

Szebeni argues that it was this attention to pastoral care that encouraged the brethren: “The preachers did not visit the families so much to see if they were living up to moral expectations, but rather to nurture their steadfastness of faith. They took into account their human circumstances. They helped those who fell into a bad economic situation, they comforted the afflicted, they looked after the sick. Meyer did not behave like a worker of healing miracles, but he strengthened people in their faith. He visited the suffering and comforted them.”⁴⁰⁸ For example, in the diary entry for Thursday, October 17th, 1878, Meyer wrote: “I visited with sister Grosser, who I found to be very sick. I gave her some medicine and prayed with her.”⁴⁰⁹ In a society where ministers often held themselves aloof from the laity, the Baptists were different: “The Baptist preacher was not an unbearable stickler for propriety with anyone, but rather a wise, experienced, true spiritual adviser. At that time there were no psychologists, but even if there had been, the believers still would not have gone to others for counsel. Meyer and those associated with him gave from the light of the Bible the best to everyone.”⁴¹⁰

Having framed the context of church discipline by describing expected Baptist praxis and the practice of pastoral care, it is time to delineate the exercise of church discipline by Meyer and the early Baptist movement in Hungary. There is little debate as to the distinguishing features of church discipline during this period: it was strict, probably excessively so, and the process was early on dominated by Meyer, who imprinted his dominant personality on the development of its practice. Hence Kovács commented about church discipline in the early Baptist movement: “Heinrich Meyer was in this area very determined, sometimes he strived to establish perhaps too strict an order in the congregations.”⁴¹¹ Szebeni remarked: “Heinrich Meyer strictly watched over the doctrinal and ethical purity of the Baptist congregations. Occasionally it appeared he did so in an embarrassingly meticulous manner. The disciplinary decisions were written into the registers. There is hardly anyone [in the register] who does not have after their name notation of their expulsion and readmission. It was sufficient if one talked back, lied, engaged in course chatter, gossip, or swearing, or perhaps something more serious, to

408. Szebeni, “Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer],” 287.

409. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 16.

410. Szebeni, “Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer],” 287.

411. Kovács, Géza, “A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)],” 79.

bring upon oneself judicial measures. In a word, it was difficult to find one's way into the Baptists, but not to find one's way out."⁴¹² He noted that upon the examination of Meyer's first register, of the first 358 entries, covering the period up to 1881, 157 people were disciplined and expelled; in nine cases the reasons for expulsion were noted, which included "malice", "adultery", "back-sliding", "lying" (twice), "spiritual sickness", "wife-beating", and "swearing" (twice).⁴¹³ These disciplinary actions always took place in the business meeting of the church⁴¹⁴, which was only open to members of the church, for at these meetings all the business of the church was conducted.⁴¹⁵ For example, Meyer noted in his diary for Friday, January 6th, 1882, "At the business meeting brother Kämpfner was expelled due to his repeated backbiting. The brother threatened that he would never come back."⁴¹⁶ A rather colorful description of these meetings is given by Balint:

The business meeting of the churches usually preceded the Lord's Supper by a day or two. At these meetings only the members gained permission to attend and all others were kindly requested to leave. All the grievances, spiritual, material and personal were expected to be settled. Generally, Meyer presided at all these meetings. He used unlimited power. In the city of Magyarboly, Baranya County, he expelled one member after another because they were behind on their church dues. Incapacity to pay was thoughtfully considered. Meyer was the law for all the cases. These business meetings were detrimental to the Baptist movement as a whole, due to the temperament of the Hungarian people, who have a tendency to become overheated too quickly in any discussion. Often these business sessions lasted well into the night. Many a time they were not closed before 2 o'clock in the morning. These meetings had the tendency to become too personal in nature,

412. Szebeni, "Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer]," 287.

413. Szebeni, "Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer]," 291.

414. In German this was called the *Gemeindestunde*, and in Hungarian it was called the *zárt óra*, or 'closed-hour', because of the restricted attendance allowed at the meeting.

415. Kovács described the business meetings as follows: "An important and intimate occasion in the congregations was the so-called 'closed hour'. It was the kind of conference in which only church members could take part. Here important teaching for the nurture and sanctification of the congregation's members was given. They talked about the congregation's internal affairs. They chose the preachers, the leaders of the prayer meetings, Sunday School teachers, ushers, the congregation's treasurer, those who would watch over fiscal matters, the church leadership, etc. In a word, they chose those who would perform the most important ministries, and afterwards these people would from time to time report back to the congregation. Within the closed hour important financial decisions were made, or perhaps a decision about calling someone to a ministerial position. Of course, church discipline was a theme of the closed hour, the admonition of a believer who had stumbled, the reconciliation of those not at peace, or even the expulsion of one hardened in sin." Kovács, Géza, "A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)]," 79.

416. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 21.

and as we know, too much familiarity breeds contempt. Petty grievances had to be settled at these meetings because the church members refused to go to the worldly court, so the business meeting actually became the courts of the local churches. A good many friendships came to an end at these meetings.⁴¹⁷

Kovács suggests that the early practice of church discipline was characterized by Christian love and tears, but that this spirit was later lost.⁴¹⁸ Certainly an unflattering picture of Baptist church discipline was drawn by those Reformed critics who wrote polemical tracts to warn people about the true nature of the Baptists. One interesting example of this was provided by Herman Stern, a Reformed polemicist who as a youth converted from Judaism to the Baptist faith, and was a Baptist for several years before he was expelled for criticizing church leaders. He wrote of the exceeding harshness of Baptist discipline: “And as I grew up and became more knowledgeable of the gospel and of the misery of the people, I came to realize that it didn’t need to be this way, I realized that these people labored under an Egyptian bondage and much pain and numerous complaints touched my ears and my heart...”⁴¹⁹ Stern claimed that he was expelled for publicly complaining about abuses of church discipline among other problems which he saw in the churches. The exercise of church discipline is never an easy matter, and one can well imagine how its exercise might degenerate in time.

This may also explain the different pictures presented of the process of restoration. A very dark and yet comical picture was given by Balint:

Excommunicated members of the Baptist Church were regarded as pagans, and the restoration of such members was made the most difficult if not impossible. Excommunicated members were avoided on the street and they were considered as people possessed by a contagious spiritual disease. The attempts of the lapsed member to rejoin was not encouraged, and their return was made very humiliating. For months the individual with such an intention had to come and make periodic public confessions. The content of his prayer had to indicate the expected humbleness and desirable attitude. The following quotations will reveal the nature of the prayer desired. It is a free translation into English, because it was conveyed to me by the pastor of the church where it happened in Hungary: “Oh Lord, I am ugly as a frog in thy holy sight, and as filthy as a pig in the midst of thy chosen children,” referring to the Baptists. It was impossible to be reinstated in less than a

417. Balint, 101–02.

418. Kovács, Géza, “A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)],” 79.

419. Stern, Herman. *Báránybőrbe bujt farkasok [Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing]*. Debrecen: Hoffmann és Kronovitz Könyvnyomda, 1902. 7.

year's time. Probation was seriously applied.⁴²⁰

This portrayal suggests that restoration of expelled members was not desired, and so the process of restoration was made to be difficult and humiliating.

A different picture is given by Kovács, one in which restoration was not discouraged: “The admonished or expelled member could only sit on those benches reserved for them (usually in the back of the room). It is a testimony to the preserving power of Jesus Christ and the congregation that those undergoing discipline in most cases humbly accepted the sanction, and with brokenness and repentance sought readmission.”⁴²¹ Likewise, Szebeni observed: “The expelled member could, after a period of time and after fulfilling the conditions, achieve readmission into the church... The expelled member so grieved over the loss of his right of membership in the church, he was like those who have befallen life's worst losses. He would urgently endeavor to make right his error.”⁴²² Meyer recounted such an occurrence in his diary, dated Sunday, December 2nd, 1877, during a meeting of the church in Újvidék: “Brother Bernhardt made a very humble confession, he praised God for his great mercy, and asked for forgiveness and readmittance. The request was approved with one voice, and sister Bernhardt and sister Bichi also were readmitted.”⁴²³ It would appear that for those people who earnestly sought readmission, the path to restoration was made open to them.

An example of this is found in the *Gemeindestunde* minutes from 1882 and 1883 concerning a Brother Nagy. On December 29th, 1882, Heinrich Meyer opened the *Gemeindestunde* with prayer, and then went into the first order of business.

Brother Meyer shared with us that since the last meeting brother Nagy had found himself at strife with the brethren, and especially so last week, when he even swore that he would no longer attend the worship services and in his great anger he also called the congregation and its members cheats and religious impostors. Brother Nagy had come to realize that he was not right and to some extent had also laid aside his anger, which is something the congregation can be happy about. Brother Meyer said that the congregation should give their own opinion about this matter. Brother Gromen and Eiler said that this situation can be used for brother Nagy's healing, if he were to be expelled, because he has been in this condition

420. Balint, 102–03.

421. Kovács, Géza, “A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)],” 79.

422. Szebeni, “Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer],” 287.

423. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 13.

for a long time. Therefore the congregation all decided to expel him. Brother Meyer admonished him to change, to humble himself, and to ask God to give him a new heart and to renew him from the ground up. He also said that we as a congregation will carry you in our praying hearts, that our love will not be withdrawn from you, but that we shall prove to you our goodwill and love, and that we shall readmit you into our midst if you show penitence.⁴²⁴

What is noteworthy is that disciplinary expulsion was not seen as a final act, but as a painful, though necessary step towards true repentance and restoration. Despite the harsh words of Brother Nagy, which he evidently had already begun to regret, the fellowship promised their love and concern to him in order to fulfill their part of the biblical process of restoration. What was expected from Brother Nagy was true repentance and a change in character. This process did not take many months. In the *Gemeindestunde* minutes from February 10th, 1883, Meyer announced that Nagy was applying for readmittance to fellowship. Again the fellowship was asked to give their opinion.

Brother Eiler said that we should give him credit, because since his expulsion he has lead a Christian life. Brother Holzer also asked for his readmittance. Brother Steiner as well said that so far he has been earnest in his discipleship with the Lord. Brother Schwartz offered a good testimony about him, and recommended his readmittance. Sister Posany said that he had become more composed and quieter than before. Brother Meyer himself said that he was now a different person from who he was before. Several brothers made a motion that brother Nagy be allowed to rejoin the congregation, and the congregation was united in voting for his readmittance. Brother Nagy was invited by brother Meyer to explain to the brethren what he had done. So brother Nagy explained that following his expulsion he felt like a son cast out of his father's house, which really hurt him, but that he also realized that he deserved it, and that he alone was responsible for his expulsion, and so he prayed that God would grant him mercy to enable him to repent. God did this, and he humbled himself. He would now allow himself to be admonished, and will admonish others, which he so far had neglected to do. Brother Nagy was also told by the chair that he was only readmitted due to the hope of the congregation, and that things will be better now that he will allow himself to be admonished and will also admonish others...⁴²⁵

It is true that this instance of church discipline proceeded as well as one could hope. What stands out in this last account was the palpable sense of loss experienced by Nagy at his expulsion, and his earnest seeking of grace from God to change his attitude and behavior in order to be reconciled to his church family. At the same time, it is clear that the members of the congregation also experienced loss and desired Nagy's repentance and

424. "Gyülekezeti tanácskozások jegyzőkönyvei 1882. júl 30. - márc. 18-ig [Minutes of Church Conferences from July 30, 1882 until March 18, 1883]," 17–18.

425. "Gyülekezeti tanácskozások jegyzőkönyvei 1882. júl 30. - márc. 18-ig [Minutes of Church Conferences from July 30, 1882 until March 18, 1883]," 20–21.

reconciliation. Also noteworthy is that this process took a little over one month, not the one year Balint spoke of above.

Naturally, the process of discipline had different results depending on the person disciplined. At the meeting in which Nagy was expelled, Meyer also shared another case for discipline. “Brother Meyer furthermore shared with us that our brother Krusch had neglected to attend worship services for two to three weeks so far, and he even worked on a Sunday, and it appears that he is spiritually dead.”⁴²⁶ Meyer also shared that Krusch said he would not be attending the congregations’s worship services anymore. Meyer recommended expulsion for Krusch, but also commented: “...that the necessary love is no longer in our hearts, nor is the heartfelt admonishment.”⁴²⁷ It is evident that Meyer was concerned about each individual member, and also expected the members of the fellowship to demonstrate the same concern for weak or fallen members.

Which picture then is accurate? Was restoration of the lapsed encouraged or discouraged? I have examined almost the entire run of the German Baptist statistical yearbook from its first appearance in 1878 until 1892, comprising the majority of the period in which Meyer dominated Baptist life in Hungary. Meyer almost always furnished statistics for the church in Hungary.⁴²⁸ Thus it is possible to form a rough count of the number of expulsions versus readmissions for the Baptist movement in Hungary during this formative time. At the end of 1892 the number of Baptists in Hungary stood at over 2000 people, and during this period over 450 people were expelled, while over 150 were readmitted to fellowship.⁴²⁹ If these figures provide a reasonable proximity of the course of the formative period of the mission’s development, then one can draw some tentative conclusions about the practice of church discipline by Heinrich Meyer and the early Baptists. It would appear that approximately one in four Baptists was subjected to church

426. “Gyülekezeti tanácskozások jegyzőkönyvei 1882. júl 30. - márc. 18-ig [Minutes of Church Conferences from July 30, 1882 until March 18, 1883],” 18.

427. “Gyülekezeti tanácskozások jegyzőkönyvei 1882. júl 30. - márc. 18-ig [Minutes of Church Conferences from July 30, 1882 until March 18, 1883],” 18.

428. The statistics were technically for the church in Budapest, but it must be remembered that Meyer considered himself the pastor of all Baptists in Hungary, with all other congregations considered stations of the mother church in Budapest. During this period only two German congregations, Késmárk and Újvidék, became independent churches.

429. Figures are missing for three years. However, in light of Szebeni’s examination of Meyer’s register from its beginning in 1875 until 1881, during which time 157 of 358 people entered into the register experienced church discipline, it is safe to say the actual figure well exceeded 500 people.

discipline, a high figure indeed. Moreover, only one third of those expelled from fellowship found their way back in through readmission. Perhaps the only numbers more impressive than these are those regarding the number of baptisms performed, which had to far outstrip the number of expulsions in order to realize the growth that the movement experienced. What hinders a final judgment on whether the early movement encouraged restoration is that there is no way to determine how many expelled members sought readmission, nor any way to assess the reasons which stand behind the large number of former Baptists who did not seek readmittance into fellowship. Anecdotal evidence from the diary entries of Meyer suggest that he earnestly desired those expelled from fellowship to repent and seek reconciliation with the Lord and the congregation (such as the diary entry concerning the expulsion of Johann Rottmayer's wife).⁴³⁰ Moreover, Meyer discussed his practice of church discipline in relation to some expulsions that took place in Nagyszalonta in 1877 in his autobiography. He explained: "In my congregation it was the practice that we would pray with the expelled members before their departure. In this way we maintained the bond of love in the place of the bond of fellowship, which because of their sin had to be sacrificed."⁴³¹ Perhaps the best one can say is that reconciliation and restoration was hoped for by most of the members, but as the process of church discipline degenerated over time, restoration became more problematic. One may also surmise that while church discipline was extremely strict under Heinrich Meyer, it was also very orderly and disciplined; it is possible that even as the strictness and frequency of expulsions within autonomous Magyar congregations diminished, variations and excesses in practice crept in that account for the problems associated with church discipline.

Baptist worship was a simple affair. It was neither liturgical nor sacramental. Its Protestant and evangelical character was shown by how the congregations worshipped; they prayed, they praised God in song, and at the center of worship was the proclamation of the Word of God and the good news of the gospel. On Sunday mornings it became the practice for believers to gather together for prayer an hour before the worship service. At the *imaóra* (prayer-hour) the prayer was extemporaneous, personal, and practical. Intercessory prayer for the spiritual and physical needs of the people, as well as prayers of

430. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 11.

431. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 50.

praise for answered petitions was heard.⁴³² Many congregations also met during a weekday evening for a prayer service as well.

We have a description of the typical worship service from Balint, which stresses an unusual aspect of Baptist worship in Hungary:

The worship was simple in its nature. Either the local leader or the travelling pastor conducted the service. The service was opened with a prayer and a hymn was sung. At the very beginning there was no [Magyar] Baptist hymnal, so the German [Baptist] *Glaubenstimme* was used... There was a great demand for a hymnal in Hungarian. To meet this great need the translation began to take place from the German... Singing became the major part of the worship service. The Hungarians love to sing. The Bible was read, by the leader. The pastoral prayer was given by the leader, and the words of the prayer were left to the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The prayer was given in a kneeling posture, and the whole congregation knelt also. The sermon was expository in character. Some of these early pioneer evangelists became impressive and convincing orators in spite of the lack of education. It seems that sincerity was the strength of their sermons. The length of these sermons lasted from one hour to one hour and a half. The service was closed with a prayer and a hymn.⁴³³

Concerning congregational singing, Kovács observed: “A characteristic of every revival is that the new believers very much love to sing and to sound forth God’s praises. This was the situation in the new Baptist churches as well.”⁴³⁴ Meyer’s diary mentions the need to have songs translated from the German into Hungarian, confirming the portrait given above.⁴³⁵ Meyer also mentioned that congregational singing was a part of the evangelistic services in the City Park.⁴³⁶ In his diary Meyer explained what a difficult time he had teaching his converts choral music before these evangelistic efforts, because they were completely unfamiliar with four-voice choral music.⁴³⁷ He also noted with

432. Kovács, Géza, “A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)],” 80.

433. Balint, 96–97.

434. Kovács, Géza, “A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)],” 80.

435. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 17.

436. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 9.

437. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 51.

pride a report from a journalist with the *Pester Journal* who commented about a service he attended in the 1880's that the choir could "sing in the opera".⁴³⁸ A brief history of Hungarian Baptist music is given by Aubrey Wayne Barrett, who summarized: "While church music was nothing new to Hungary in 1887, a spirited *congregational* church music, including not only hymn singing but also choirs and orchestras, was unusual. It has been a hallmark of Hungarian Baptists there ever since."⁴³⁹ Meyer established the first Baptist choir in the Wesselényi Street Church in 1887, although its roots go back to the beginning of Meyer's work. The Magyar congregation in Szada founded the first Hungarian-language choir in 1889, working initially with hymns translated from the *Glaubenstimme*. At first hymnals were hand-written collections of favorite songs translated from other hymnals.⁴⁴⁰ In time Magyar hymnals were produced, as well as periodical literature for singing.⁴⁴¹ Barrett commended the dedication of these simple peasants or laborers who "committed their evening hours to the task, using oil-lamps and whatever homes or facilities were available", and even resorted to "homemade" instruments for accompaniment.⁴⁴²

The gospel was proclaimed in two ways. All members of the congregation were encouraged to give a testimony about God's work in their lives when they felt lead to do so. This was to give praise to God and to encourage the brethren in their faith. Meyer encouraged the giving of testimonies when the congregation would celebrate the Lord's Supper.⁴⁴³ The preaching of the word was entrusted to those men who had good knowledge of the Scriptures, sound doctrine, and had demonstrated a gift for preaching. Biblical teaching was also at the center of the Sunday Schools organized by Meyer, with singing also having a prominent place.

438. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 69.

439. Barrett, Aubrey Wayne. "A Study of the Choral Music Tradition in Hungarian Baptist Churches: Its History, Leadership, Literature, Personnel, and Practice, Including an Anthology of Representative Choral Works." Diss. Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1992. 17–18.

440. Bányai, Jenő. A magyarországi baptista egyházzene története [The History of Hungarian Baptist Church Music]. Budapest: Baptista Kiadó, 1996. 38–40.

441. Barrett, 19–20.

442. Barrett, 18–19.

443. Kovács, Géza, "A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)]," 79.

Baptists in Hungary, as elsewhere, recognized two ordinances given by the Lord: baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper was a special occasion for the congregation. Only members of the church could participate in it, and at first only Heinrich Meyer administered the ordinance. In time, permission was given that the local deacon could administer the Supper, unless one of the evangelists sent out by Meyer was present, in which case he would preside over the meal. The first deacons ordained by Meyer to fulfill this ministry were Mihály Kornya and Mihály Tóth in 1877.⁴⁴⁴ The usual practice was to observe the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of the month at the conclusion of the evening service, to be followed by the "holy kiss" of the brethren, women to women, and men to men.⁴⁴⁵ Baptism has been described in several contexts already. What should be noted is that baptism could only be performed by an ordained elder. For the first several years of the movement this meant that only Meyer performed baptisms, but the growth of the Magyar mission constrained Meyer to share the burden. "Because of my continual sickness and weakness on June 6, 1881, I ordained three brothers, Br. Kornya, Br. Tóth, and Br. Balogh as deacons so that they could perform baptisms."⁴⁴⁶ Actually, Meyer should have used the term "elder" (*Mitältester*), since Kornya and Tóth had already been ordained to the diaconate in 1877. It was not until some of the Magyar churches declared themselves independent that Heinrich Meyer lost control over baptisms.

4.3. The Content of Hungarian Baptist Proclamation

I do not wish to give an extended examination of the theological content of Heinrich Meyer's preaching, or the early Baptist proclamation in Hungary. Heinrich Meyer was not a theologian, he was a missionary pastor to the Germans first, and then to the other nationalities of Hungary. He preached what he learned from Oncken and other German Baptists. Familiarity with German Baptist preaching, or with the preaching and teaching of C.H. Spurgeon for that matter, would give one a reasonable understanding of the gospel taught by Heinrich Meyer. Except for the Baptist distinctive of believer's baptism by immersion, the editors of PEIL who overheard Meyer's preaching in the City

444. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 53.

445. Balint, 94.

446. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 62.

Park conceded that it was a very conservative, orthodox message. Of course, these Protestant rationalists did not care for Meyer's preaching. The feeling was mutual. Meyer wrote of his travels among the Saxons of Transylvania: "About their spiritual life, all I can say is that according to my knowledge there were hardly to be found six ministers in Transylvania who did not deny from the pulpit the divinity and resurrection of Jesus. I tried to establish relationships with all those ministers about whom I knew that they were not spiritually dead."⁴⁴⁷ It was his general practice to cultivate relationships with Protestant ministers from within the tradition of confessional orthodoxy and with those in the evangelical renewal; his participation in the efforts to establish a Hungarian branch of the Evangelical Alliance testify to his interest in this area.⁴⁴⁸ Some of these relationships proved helpful when Meyer sought state recognition for the Baptist faith. This reflects Meyer's desire not only to establish a Baptist mission in Hungary, but also to encourage spiritual renewal in his adopted country.

An interesting fact about Meyer's own ministry is that while Baptist converts were drawn primarily from the lower classes, his preaching was not populist or inflammatory, a charge often leveled against the eschatologically occupied preaching of the Nazarenes. Mészáros observed: "Frequently intelligent visitors came in order to marvel at his speaking ability and to hear a well-crafted German talk. His preaching was of a high level, proclaiming the pure gospel, and persuasive. He advocated a fundamentalist theology, the Word and its teaching was the only rule in teaching, in reproof, in exhortation, or in church order and in matters of discipline."⁴⁴⁹ Balint also spoke of Meyer's conservatism:

Meyer had no training in theology and his conviction grew out from his home training and from his experience. He occasionally paid a visit to the Baptist Seminary in Hamburg, Germany. Meyer was a firm believer in the inspired Bible, it was given to humanity by God through selected men by special inspiration. Critical studies never entered his mind. He was inclined toward the Calvinistic theory of predestination. His orthodoxy was well known in every aspect. He believed in the Trinity ... and the divinity of Jesus, [and in] the sinful nature of man which needs to be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Heaven will be the abode of the saved, while Hell will be a place of the unsaved. The death and the

447. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 55.

448. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 58.

449. Mészáros, "Meyer Henrik munkássága kora egyházi és társadalmi viszonyainak tükrében [Heinrich Meyer's Work in the Mirror of the Period's Church and Social Conditions]," 120.

resurrection of Jesus on the third day was a part of Meyer's theology which was naturally reflected by his converts and by his trained leaders. His thinking was characterized by an extreme rigoristic and ascetic puritanism. He was conservative in every sense of the word; Meyer believed that conversion must express itself in dressing, talking, walking and in abstinence from amusements. He believed that only the Baptists were saved and members of other church denominations were regarded as unbelievers.⁴⁵⁰

This last claim is most certainly an exaggeration, and Balint's prejudiced portrait can be ascribed to two factors: his absorption of Magyar resentment against Meyer by some of the Baptists he met in Hungary, and the fundamentalist/liberal divisions that were tearing apart the Northern Baptists in America at that time. Meyer was not a narrow sectarian in the way the Nazarene's arguably were at that time, even rebaptizing converts from the Baptist movement. Szebeni argued:

The sign of a sectarian denomination in the first place is a turning inward, the complete isolation from the rest of the world. Meyer never behaved in such a manner. From the beginning he was never a "Sectarian Preacher".⁴⁵¹

The use of the term "fundamentalist" to describe Meyer's theology is perhaps anachronistic, for Meyer predates the rise of the term to describe the conservative Christian coalition gathered together primarily in America to battle theological liberalism in the Protestant denominations.⁴⁵² However, in terms of the fundamentalists' support for supernaturalism, historic Christian doctrinal formulations, and a high view of Scripture, Meyer was firmly within this evangelical tradition from which fundamentalism sprang.⁴⁵³ In the final analysis, Szebeni is correct to argue Meyer was not sectarian, given the evangelical ecumenism he shared with Johann Rottmayer, and, for that matter, his German Baptist mentors J.G. Oncken and G.W. Lehmann.⁴⁵⁴ In fact, with Meyer's evident evangelical ecumenism and his concern to reach the poor with the gospel, a more

450. Balint, 98–99.

451. Szebeni, "Meyer Henrik születésének 125. évfordulóján [The 125th Anniversary of the Birth of Heinrich Meyer]," 295.

452. Marsden, George M. Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982. 118–23.

453. Marsden, George M. Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. 1–6.

454. Railton, Nicholas M. No North Sea: The Anglo-German Evangelical Network in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century. Studies in Christian Mission. Leiden: Brill, 2000. 53.

helpful term to understand his theology and praxis would be that of the *Erweckungsbewegung*, the German Awakening during the nineteenth century that placed an emphasis on faith active in love.⁴⁵⁵ And in this sense, it is better to say that Meyer was a conservative evangelical, orthodox in belief and yet engaged in the public life of Hungary, than to suggest he was a fundamentalist with separatistic impulses.

4.4. The Internal Organization of the Baptist Movement in Hungary

The internal organization of the Baptist movement in Hungary changed over time. Such a simple statement masks the difficult issues, the controversies, the divisions, and the personal pain that were a part of how the movement grew and took shape. The flashpoint for all was simply the person of Heinrich Meyer. During this period in which the Baptist movement was established in Hungary, Meyer was planting seeds of disharmony and strife that would come to fruition in the 1890's and, ultimately, with the split of 1905. Our interest, however, is with the period in which Meyer held undisputed leadership over the movement. All the essential powers, whether the power of the purse, the power of appointment, or the power to command, all were held and exercised by Heinrich Meyer. If decisions formally were made in the business meetings of the congregations, in accordance with the congregational and democratic polity of the Baptists, this external form belied the content, the actual dynamics of the situation. As C.T. Byford later characterized Meyer's leadership: "For nearly twenty-five years Meyer had kept the control of the work solely in his own hands. He was the dictator, whose word was law throughout the churches."⁴⁵⁶

As an introduction into these issues, let us return to the entry in Meyer's diary for September 16th, 1877. This was the description of Fritz Oncken's imminent arrival in Budapest, and the discussion Meyer had with the congregation about Oncken's role. Concerning this Meyer made it clear to the brethren, "But so long as I am supposed to lead the congregation, I wish for my influence in the congregation to remain undiminished."⁴⁵⁷ This business meeting began with a discussion of the issue of problems

455. Crouner, David, and Gerald Christianson, eds. and trans. The Spirituality of the German Awakening. The Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 2003. 26–31.

456. Byford, "The Movement in Hungary: Progress and Difficulties," 106.

457. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 10–11.

surrounding the collection of money. Meyer's description of what was decided is quite interesting:

Read out loud the contributions received for the month of May and added to it the wish that it would be possible to put another arrangement in place because I repeatedly sense signs of mistrust and even of jealousy and envy, which I think I will continue to experience more frequently. I complained about these repeated experiences and asked that someone else make this their own. It was first decided that brother Tatter should receive the contributions for the mission, and that out of this fund the needs of the congregation should be defrayed, after which it should then take care of the rent for the apartment for which the congregation had accepted responsibility. Then I will be paid my salary from the subsidy of 40 Forints a month received from the American Committee, however it shall not pay for housing. Brother Kaiblinger will be the steward of the fund for the poor, from which alone the poor and the sick will be supported from now on, and not out of the mission fund.⁴⁵⁸

Meyer's control over the money was breeding mistrust and envy. In order to introduce a measure of transparency and accountability, Meyer had two men appointed to supervise two different accounts, a newly-formed Benevolence or Diaconal Fund for the needy, and the Mission Fund for the operating budget of the movement. At this early stage in the movement, the issue was not simply Meyer's stewardship of the congregational giving and his accountability to the members. The reality was that a large portion of the operating budget did not come from member donations, but from Baptist support from abroad, particularly from German Baptists in America. Thus it is likely that jealousy over this American money, which was entrusted to Meyer for the promotion of the Baptist cause in Hungary, was the source of conflict. That is why a fixed portion of this money was to be set apart as Meyer's salary, while the church through the Mission Fund would be responsible for the rent for Meyer's apartment.

Distrust and rumors continued to be a problem for Meyer, as a circular letter he sent to the different fellowships in September of 1883 testifies. This was a rather long letter in which Meyer tackled head on the issue of giving by the members and the biblical teaching on the subject of Christian stewardship. The penultimate paragraph makes the following announcement:

In closing I wish to announce that with the approval of the congregation I gave over responsibility for the fund ledgers to brothers, J. Gromen and A. Eiler, at the beginning of this month, and I did so for two reasons: 1. So that I would have more time to conduct my ministry, 2. So that I also would have less to answer for and that I would be protected from false tongues. However, I will still control all

458. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 10.

receipts to maintain full security, so in order to keep the money safely in my custody all money should be sent, as before, to my address. However, the confirmation of receipt will now be given over to the new fund stewards. They must collect the contributions from me.⁴⁵⁹

What is perhaps more clear in this letter is that while Meyer put trustworthy men over the different accounts, this was only to ensure against misappropriation of funds. These measures did not give control over how the money was to be spent to others. That is why even donations from members of the congregations outside of Budapest were to continue to send their giving to Meyer's home address.

It is this centralization of all mission giving into Meyer's hand, to be disbursed by him as he thought best served the needs of the Baptist mission that was so problematic, and in fact was alien to Baptist practice. Mention has been made that giving to the church was required of every member, and that members were expelled for failing to give. Just as Meyer made himself accountable for his bookkeeping, he also sought to hold members accountable for contributing to the church. Meyer gave a description of this dual accountability centralized under his supervision in his autobiography:

From the beginning the money was in my hands. I regularly entered the receipts into the books. Up until 1893 the Mission Fund was for the entire country, in addition to which each church and mission station had its own collection box. A box with two openings was placed in the sanctuary. The collection money was placed into it. The gifts were given in envelopes, usually once a week, either on Monday or Tuesday. The key to the cash box was kept by me, but with the provision that I would never open it by myself, but always in the presence of two or three brothers... They took out the money, with different envelopes for the different collections. Nobody could lay their hands on the cash box by themselves in order to keep the possibility of insinuations far away from us. After the counting they brought the money back to me so that I could countersign the totals in the ledger books. I kept the total monetary receipts in my main ledger, the cashiers opened the envelopes and I prepared the list of names for the final accounting. At the monthly business meeting I announced the financial report... I read out the entered sums from the ledger giving the contributions by name. This was the way the members could supervise the accounting. The bookkeeper reconciled the sums against the financial ledger I kept. If during the announcement of the recorded giving envelopes were handed over, I would not continue until everything was entered into my book. At first the mission stations received full reports of what was reported. Later with regards to these things, the congregations and stations only received reports concerning the giving of their own members. When in the beginning of 1909 people were casting suspicion on me, I clung to the fact that they could examine my books going all the way back to 1875. Finally I was removed from suspicion and the Baptist newspaper *Wahrheitszeuge* reported

459. Meyer, Heinrich. Letter to the Baptists in Hungary. Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, 1883. Typewritten transcription.

this.⁴⁶⁰

This description portrays an accounting system with a great deal of transparency, a transparency that extended both ways to an unusual extent. It is also apparent that Heinrich Meyer was proud of his record of financial management. His attitude seems to have been as long as proper procedures were followed and the proper safeguards were in place, it was proper and good to have the mission finances under his control. Heinrich Meyer was a missionary building a Baptist movement from scratch, and so a firm hand was no doubt necessary at first. Moreover, many Baptist pastors have exercised a firm control over their own congregation.

The question is rather Meyer's missionary paternalism over the entire Baptist movement in Hungary. While each church had its own local fund, these funds were for all expenses except for salaries, salaries for all mission workers were paid from the common mission fund. The centralization of mission giving and Meyer's effective control over disbursement of money from the mission fund to pay mission workers, coupled with his decisive leadership over the process of calling and ordaining men for ministry, long after such was warranted, created tensions and divisions in the work. Baptists have always differed about how to organize for mission, and about how to plant indigenous missions. Meyer's strategy was perhaps unique in Baptist history. Rather than striving to establish fully autonomous Baptist congregations from those church plants far from his immediate sphere of activity in Budapest, Meyer's control over the common mission fund in effect rendered all of the congregations and small mission points into stations of the mother church in Budapest. Meyer considered himself the pastor of all Baptists in Hungary.

According to his critics, what resulted was a Baptist episcopacy with Meyer at the head of the hierarchy. Balint commented: "The Baptist spirit of liberty was unknown. The whole movement was everything but Baptist, except in name and baptism." And as for Meyer, he "assumed the role of a bishop."⁴⁶¹ It is undeniable that the early Baptist movement benefited from several strong leaders. But the fact remains that the German mission was clearly under the commanding leadership of Meyer, and the early Magyar leaders such as Mihály Kornya and Mihály Tóth remained personally loyal to Heinrich Meyer all their lives. Meyer was not challenged by indigenous Magyar leaders until the two seminarians, Lajos Balogh and András Udvarnoki, returned in 1893. It is interesting

460. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 41–42.

461. Balint, 91.

that it was at this time that the common mission fund met its effective demise. Up until that point, Meyer's firm control of the finances of the mission, and his firm supervision of the mission workers, who were appointed at his suggestion and were accountable to him, served to create relationships of dependency upon himself. In the conflicts that were to later plague Baptists in Hungary, Heinrich Meyer was charged with utilizing his control of the purse strings to thwart the emergence of truly autonomous Baptist churches and leaders who were not beholden to him. This proved deleterious to the maturing of the mission and bred resentment among some of the congregations.

Heinrich Meyer rejected this accusation and sought to lay blame for the problems and conflicts that later troubled Baptists in Hungary elsewhere. Critical insight into Meyer's perception of the charge of domineering paternalism and his justification for the way in which he led the Baptist mission in Hungary can be found in a personal letter he wrote to J.H. Rushbrooke in 1908. J.H. Rushbrooke was a prominent English Baptist who at the time was serving as the representative of the Arbitration Commission established by the Baptist World Alliance to reconcile the antagonistic parties which emerged from the 1905 split of the Baptists in Hungary. It was his duty to negotiate the implementation of the Award of the Arbitration Commission with the two parties in Hungary in order to establish a restructured and united Baptist denomination.⁴⁶² The importance of the letter can be gauged from the fact that Meyer had it translated into English before sending it. It is Meyer's personal defense of his ministry against the charges of his detractors. Regarding the charge that he did not establish autonomous Baptist churches, he made a spirited defense.

What concerns "the building up of independent self-governing and fully organized churches of the New Testament pattern," I had not only a full understanding for this from the beginning, but also endeavored with the greatest desire to attain it. After having undertaken the work, I did not expect that I could continue in it for 35 years. Indeed, in March 1877 I had the first breakdown, and after that it happened every second year or more often, and it was a very severe disease every time. Naturally, I endeavored to do everything with the Lord's help that the work might go on in a proper way... Certainly I would not leave behind minors, but I have taught and imposed on every single group its full responsibility. How could I otherwise begin and continue the work at many places in the whole country for many years being quite alone? How could I otherwise nurse a healthy and vigorous christlike life of faith?⁴⁶³

462. Baptist World Alliance, Continental Committee Minutes. American Baptist Historical Society. Rochester, N.Y., 1908.

463. Meyer, Heinrich. Letter to J.H. Rushbrooke. Oncken Archives. Hamburg, 1908.

Meyer makes an unusual appeal to the physical infirmities he experienced as a result of the stress of his work as proof that it was not his intention to keep everything dependent upon his person. He also argued that the impossibility of his being able to meet the needs of the many fellowships he worked with without support demanded that he teach them how to be autonomous congregations. As proof of this intention, he began to list the leaders he called out to be ministers to the churches, citing Kornya and Tóth as the first men he ordained for ministry.

Yet this argument takes an interesting turn when he enters into the issue of autonomy, congregational self-government, and money, which is the crux of the problem.

Moreover, all our congregations in the whole country were so independent from each other, so self-standing, so autonomous as this may be somewhere else, although they were called “stations” according to a certain use of language and although we had one common mission fund, out of which the salaries of all workers were paid. Each group had its treasurer from the first day of its existence, that is from the day when regular meetings at a place were arranged and this sometimes happened before somebody had been baptized. Each group had its own local fund, had its own local property and managed and settled its own affairs. No such group or church, however small, could later on be more dependent on itself, had more to care for itself and be more completely autonomous and self-reliant than from the very beginning. How could it be otherwise? I had to restrict myself to the duty to pronounce the great truths of the gospel, to put Christ before their eyes, to educate the single ones to become christian characters and to impose on themselves, on the single persons and groups, on each and all, the full responsibility for themselves, for the honor of the Lord and his gospel and for the continuance of the work.⁴⁶⁴

Heinrich Meyer would certainly have argued that there were practical reasons for having a common mission fund to pay workers, since so few churches would have been able to afford to pay for their own pastor. It certainly stretched meager resources farther than would have otherwise been the case, and it allowed for a bold effort at evangelism as itinerant mission workers, both colporteurs and those ordained like Kornya and Tóth, continually brought the Baptist proclamation into new areas. And yet the fact that Meyer concedes exactly what he is arguing against, that these congregations were called stations and had a common mission fund to pay workers, demonstrates that the autonomy he is speaking of had important constraints. While the local congregations were encouraged to manage their own common affairs and to proclaim the gospel in their area, Heinrich Meyer kept for himself the teaching office of pastor and exercised great influence over

464. Meyer, Letter to J.H. Rushbrooke.

the process of selecting workers and lay leaders for the Baptist mission.⁴⁶⁵ Meyer's concession that the congregations were referred to as stations of the Budapest church could hardly be denied, as that is how he reported annual statistics to the German Baptist statistical yearbook. The first station reported in the *Statistik* to have called its own pastor and to have become fully autonomous was that of Késmárk in 1888.⁴⁶⁶ And up through 1893, no fully autonomous Magyar congregation was reported to the *Statistik*. Why then the discrepancy between Késmárk, a German congregation, and Nagyszalonta, a Magyar congregation, when the latter was clearly stronger than the German congregation which had become fully autonomous? No other explanation is plausible than Meyer's missionary paternalism. Predominantly German missions under German leadership were permitted to become fully autonomous⁴⁶⁷, but not Magyar congregations.

The divisions over the mission fund and its structural implications for the Baptist congregations grew to such a point that it even was picked up as a point of criticism in an anti-Baptist tract by Reformed minister Lajos Eröss, who sensed keenly the subtext of German chauvinism in the dispute. He criticized how the poor Hungarian peasants were constrained to give out of their poverty to a fund over which they had no say or control, and which went to support the denominational leaders and even foreign congregations.

465. Prior to the intervention by the Baptist World Alliance, the German Baptists sent a delegate by the name of Janssen to investigate the causes for the split and to make a recommendation as to possible steps to heal the breach. Known as the *Janssen Bericht*, an abbreviated annotated typed copy exists in the Hungarian Baptist Archives in which Heinrich Meyer comments on the text of the report. In response to a similar observation in the report concerning the dependence of the Baptist periphery on the center in Budapest, Meyer argued that "Alle Gemeinden im Lande haben von Anfang und auch später nie mit der Budapester Gemeinde, sondern nur mit mir in Verbindung gestanden. Da sie die Frucht meiner arbeit im Herrn, und von mir getauft worden waren, war und blieb ich ihr Lehrer, bis ein anderer für sie gefunden wurde." Meyer, Heinrich. "Abschrift von Br. Janssens Bericht, mit Bemerkungen von Br. H. Meyer." Typed transcription of a letter with comments. Heinrich Meyer Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, Hungary, no date. 2. Of course this was exactly the problem, particularly with the Magyar mission. Meyer may have performed all of the baptisms until 1881, but the Magyar mission was built upon the evangelistic zeal of the Magyars themselves. Finally, the strain of the work forced Meyer to ordain Kornya and Tóth to allow them to perform baptisms. Why then did Meyer jealously guard his privilege as pastor of all these people with whom he was not able to converse and with whom he was only infrequently in contact? The simple answer is that he did not trust the ability of indigenous converts to assume pastoral responsibilities in his stead. He believed himself to be the indispensable man.

466. *Statistik 1888 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland*, 16.

467. Even in this situation Meyer apparently resisted the diminution of his influence. When in the *Janssen Bericht* it was noted that Késmárk was the first congregation to become independent, Meyer commented: "geschah hier keine Constituierung, sondern nur die Einführung des Br. Meereis in diese Gemeinden, und meine Zurückziehung von denselben und zwar, gegen ihren Willen und nicht zu ihrem Nutzen." Meyer, "Abschrift von Br. Janssens Bericht, mit Bemerkungen von Br. H. Meyer," 2.

So I say to you my good Magyar people, where does your money go? What is collected by the false adventurers - about whom often times you don't even know who they are and where they come from - but I can tell you ... that they take it all to a certain gentleman, who sends some of it abroad, he eats some of it, part of it goes to support the ease of the peddler prophets, and thus some of it indirectly goes to support the formation of other congregations. So don't believe that every Baptist congregation is free to organize its own affairs. A few leaders control the reins, among whom one - although he arrived here from abroad with just a walking stick and until this day he cannot show his regard for our people by at least learning to speak Hungarian - lives in such a glorious palace of an apartment that our poor Reformed ministers in their dilapidated clothes would not even be allowed to stand in its doorway.⁴⁶⁸

Eröss was eager to paint the common mission fund as a slush fund for a German foreigner to live a life of ease, tapping into Magyar political resentments against Austria to color the Baptist movement as an example of religious imperialism in contrast to the “Magyar religion”, the Reformed faith, which had proven its patriotic commitment to the Magyar people.

This missionary paternalism and the creation of relationships of dependence between center and periphery when it came to mission funding was deleterious to the health of the Magyar mission in the long run. The best example of this contention can be found in some comments in the 1920 Baptist World Alliance report entitled Baptist Work in Europe, prepared by Charles Brooks and J.H. Rushbrooke. These two men were commissioned by the Baptist World Alliance to tour continental Europe after the Great War to ascertain Baptist needs. While touring through Transylvania, they were suitably impressed by the “vigorous and aggressive life” among the brethren, but they noted this dire problem:

The moral condition of the Churches is good, but the people have not yet learned to give freely. The old conditions, under which all payments were made from Budapest, have tended to pauperize them. (We had learned at Budapest of a similar effect of Heinrich Meyer's system upon communities still left in Hungary.)⁴⁶⁹

Even after Meyer's death, the negative impact of his system for organizing the mission work was being felt among the churches that had not learned to become self-sufficient. It is ironic then that Heinrich Meyer, who required mission giving as a part of church

468. Eröss, Lajos. A Baptista: vagy hogy véded meg a te református kálvinista hitvallásodat? [The Baptists: Or How Can You Defend Your Reformed Calvinist Faith?]. Debrecen: Hoffman és Társa Könyvnyomda, 1897. 16–17.

469. Brooks, Charles A., and J.H. Rushbrooke. Baptist Work in Europe. London: Baptist Union Publication Department, 1920. 52.

membership and could write at length on the biblical teaching on stewardship, actually weakened stewardship by removing it from the context of the local church.

Let us examine more closely the second aspect of the complaint against Meyer's leadership of the Baptist mission through his control of the purse strings, that he stifled the emergence of indigenous Magyar leadership for the churches. Meyer exercised his preeminent influence as the pastor of the Baptists in Hungary to select men for ministry within the Baptist mission. This went hand in hand with his control over how the mission fund money was spent, in part because much of the money that supported evangelists and colporteurs for the Baptist mission was given to Meyer for just this purpose by outside supporters of his work. One such benefactor was Mr. Bergemann from Neuruppin, a city not far from Berlin. Meyer describes how he received an unsolicited letter from this gentleman who was previously unknown to him, in which Bergemann offered sufficient financial support to employ more colporteurs to distribute Christian literature. Meyer wrote: "From this point on until 1887, when we built our chapel, Mr. Bergemann maintained a relationship with us. During this time he sent 20.000 Gulden to Hungary, part of this in the form of money, and part in the form of books to support the work of the colporteurs and missionaries."⁴⁷⁰ His diary contains an entry for Sunday, November 2nd, 1879, in which Bergemann's letter was discussed: "Read aloud again the letter from Mr. Bergemann, after which several brothers expressed their opinions and it was decided to accept the offer of this friend of our mission and to employ another brother."⁴⁷¹ From this description it sounds as if this was a congregational decision. However, in another passage from Meyer's autobiography, Meyer again brings up the financial support from Herr Bergemann in the context of a brother who could not settle in a pastoral ministry position for lack of financial support. He wrote:

There was the support from Mr. Bergemann, but he sent the money in order to support colporteurs and distributors of tracts, although he was forbearing with us. He visited us in 1880 and supported us until 1887...to the tune of 20.000 Gulden. I didn't ask for it. He offered to support colporteurs; but unfortunately I did not find as many suitable persons as he would have liked to put to work. For it was up to me to assume responsibility for the persons employed as colporteurs.⁴⁷²

470. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 58.

471. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 19.

472. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 70.

From these remarks it is clear that Meyer controlled who was employed as a colporteur. We also know Meyer determined who could be ordained for ministry.

For example, he mentions in his autobiography a painful incident in which he felt obliged to cancel a diaconal ordination. The context for his account can be found in the diary entry for Sunday, June 15, 1879, which reads:

A business meeting was held in which brother Hempt and brother Möse were elected as deacons, and it was decided that their ordination should be held if possible sometime in August. It was suggested that brother Lotz be brought in as a helper. Brother Gromen was also elected to serve as a colporteur, and should be sent out as soon as possible.⁴⁷³

Shortly before the ordination was to take place, the two men asked Meyer to give a talk at a church gathering on the theme of the diaconate.

The question came up whether deacons receive a stipend. I answered that it was not my understanding that deacons are supposed to receive a stipend, but that in any case our poverty would not allow it. One of the brothers selected to become a deacon had purchased some furniture under the assumption that he would be entering into a [paid] pastoral position. From this point on I had many problems with both of them. Brother Hempt went to Belgrade as a colporteur. We did not hold the ordination.⁴⁷⁴

The fallout from this incident must have been great, for in the entry for June 6th, 1880, Meyer writes: “I explained how difficult it has become to carry out my ministry since the 19th of August, 1879, and how happy I would have been to pass it on to cleverer hands.”⁴⁷⁵ Indeed, within one week of this entry, Meyer records that Möse was expelled from the fellowship. Ironically, the next two entries in the diary, both in August of 1880, one year after the canceled ordination, note that both Lotz and Gromen were brought on with paid ministry positions. Gromen was a colporteur paid with money from Bergemann. The narrative pieced together here demonstrates that while decisions appeared to be made on a congregational basis as to who would serve in different ministry positions, it was Meyer who had the final say over who would serve and how much, if anything, they would be remunerated for their labors. It is also evident from Meyer’s comments about

473. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 18–19.

474. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 57.

475. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 20.

the financial support he received from Bergemann that he was very selective about who he considered suitable for service.

Meyer appeared particularly reluctant to bring on non-Germans. Balint commented somewhat hyperbolically:

Meyer's co-workers lived under the impression that he was thoroughly convinced that no one but a German could be really right and intelligent. He was very particular in selecting future leaders, they had to be either Germans, or at least they had to speak the language.⁴⁷⁶

It has already been shown that Meyer only reluctantly ordained Kornya and Tóth because of his poor health. The difference between how Meyer wrote in his diary about German workers and Magyars is suggestive. Regarding Johann Gromen, Meyer wrote in August of 1880: "Gromen's appointment was unanimously decided and he shall be paid 700 to 725 Marks, and he should begin his work on Monday the 16th."⁴⁷⁷ Earlier that year in January 1880 Meyer wrote of Mihály Kornya: "It was also decided to request 100 Dollars from the American Committee to give to brother Kornya so that he could spend the winter months evangelizing."⁴⁷⁸ And two years later in 1882, Meyer wrote about Lajos János, one of the original Magyar converts, and an effective evangelist: "In the business meeting it was decided to provisionally extend the work of brother Lajos and that the negotiations should only take place after communication with me."⁴⁷⁹ Why the temporary or provisional employment for the Hungarians, while the German Gromen was given a permanent position?

In his letter to Rushbrooke, Meyer of course rejected the charge that he did not want to encourage the development of indigenous leaders for the Baptist mission. He argued that he simply could not find enough truly devoted men who were set apart by God for the ministry. After mentioning that Kornya and Tóth were the first men he entrusted with leadership positions in the Baptist mission, he went on to argue:

476. Balint, 89.

477. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 20.

478. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 20.

479. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 22.

The great deficiency of our work was always that we had not many, in every case not enough such men. We cannot educate a man who is not existing. The best seminary cannot give a profession to a man who did not receive it from God. The best theological education cannot grant a sufficient substitute to a man who has not - even without the education of a seminary - the quality and qualification demanded by the Lord. But we had still other difficulties: whence, in those first few times should we take teachers and means for keeping up a school: nobody cared for Hungary as far as that. We might have sent men for education into foreign countries, and this has been done, but those who spoke only Hungarian, Servian, Roumanian or Slavic first had to learn the language of the seminary. And there is another thing yet. Men who do not possess the whole measure of the godly quality have become less fit for use in these countries than they were [beforehand,] even if they came back.⁴⁸⁰

Meyer was by this time rather bitter about this point, as he held that his troubles began by sending Udvarnoki and Balogh off to Hamburg for seminary training, which, as he put it, “has costed us much money and still something else, what is dearer than money.” Thus Meyer argued a little later that the “right men work successfully even without special training, although they derive great advantage from it. Such a man might be sent to another country for education without hesitation. A character, however, who is less devoted, sanctified and firm in God becomes less useful for this country by training in a foreign country.” The question then becomes how Meyer evaluated who had the necessary character to be trained for ministry.

As it turns out, one of the qualities that Meyer most valued was an ability to speak German. When one examines the names of the workers attached to the Budapest congregation in the German Baptist *Statistik* during much of the 1880's, the number of German workers employed are out of proportion to the number of German believers relative to the growing Magyar mission.⁴⁸¹ By the time of the evangelical revivals in the 1880's, the Magyar mission far outstripped the German mission in size, and yet this was not the case with the paid evangelists and colporteurs of the mission. When one considers this, and further observes that German congregations were encouraged to become fully autonomous while Magyar congregations were not, it must be confessed that Meyer's

480. Meyer, Letter to J.H. Rushbrooke.

481. In 1880, Kornya is the only Magyar listed against three Germans (Meyer, Steiner, and Lotz). In 1882, Mihály Tóth joins Kornya among the Magyars, whereas Pfaff and Eiler join Meyer and Steiner among the Germans. For 1884 we find five Germans (Meyer, Eiler, Pfaff, Bretz, Steiner), two Magyars (Kornya and Lajos), and one Rumanian (Flor). Only in 1893 do the Magyars start to be better represented (Kornya, Tóth, Seres, Brassoványi, Fancsaly?, Bodoky) against the Germans (Meyer, Peter, Gromen, Potschka, Tatter), when taken in consideration with the other nationalities represented (Lehotski - Slavic, Flor - Rumanian).

ethnocentric orientation resulted in his favoring the German mission over the Magyar mission, and the charge of missionary paternalism can be sustained. As long as the most important Magyar leaders remained personally loyal to Heinrich Meyer, as Kornya and Tóth did, this missionary paternalism could not be effectively challenged. It was when the two young seminarians returned from Hamburg in 1893 and refused to play by the old rules, but decided to write their own rules, that Meyer's missionary paternalism was forced to retreat and yield increasing portions of the field to new indigenous leaders.

5. The Origins of the Magyar Mission

One of the defining ironies of the early Baptist movement in Hungary is that its turning point came not because of the vision of Heinrich Meyer, but in spite of it. The truth is that Meyer envisioned his ministry as one to his fellow Germans, the Magyar mission only came after Meyer was strongly encouraged to move in this new direction. Of the four early centers of Meyer's activity, three were German missions: Budapest, Újvidék, and the Szepesség. In time Meyer's work in Budapest attracted Magyar converts; but as we shall see, Meyer struggled to keep the work German-oriented, and frictions arose between Meyer and the Magyar Baptists in Budapest. It was in Nagyszalonta that a purely Magyar work began, the first breakthrough to the predominant population. Within a few years, the Magyar mission surpassed Meyer's German mission. How different would the history of the Baptist movement in Hungary be if Meyer had not overcome his hesitancy to move beyond his German-oriented mission?

The importance of the events in Nagyszalonta for the Hungarian Baptist movement can be discerned by the following observation; Hungarian Baptists esteem Heinrich Meyer as the father of the movement, but the true hero of the Hungarian Baptists is the Magyar "peasant prophet" Mihály Kornya. It is not surprising, therefore, that several voices have spoken to the beginnings of the Magyar mission. But as is so often the case when recalling important events of the past, some of the voices are dissonant. Therefore a measure of circumspection is called for in presenting the narrative.

Some things are certain. It is certain that the bridge between the first converts in Nagyszalonta and Heinrich Meyer in Budapest was the British and Foreign Bible Society colporteur Antal Novák. And it is sure that the person who introduced Novák to the circle of Bible-reading Reformed peasants in Nagyszalonta was the gun-smith János Lajos, who was also the member of this circle who went the farthest fastest in terms of adopting a positive conviction concerning believer's baptism. And, finally, it is certain that on

August 26, 1875, Heinrich Meyer baptized eight Magyar converts from Nagyszalonta in the Fehér Körös River, not too far from the house of Antal Novák in the town of Gyula.

However, the precise chronology of the events leading up to the August 1875 baptisms, and how the question of believer's baptism arose in Nagyszalonta is obscure. A helpful starting point is to answer the following question: What was it about Nagyszalonta that proved conducive to the emergence of the Magyar Baptist mission?

Nagyszalonta was an agricultural center in the Alföld that was largely Magyar, and the Magyar population was mostly Reformed. Istvan Körösi noted that a cholera epidemic had ignited a spiritual hunger among the people of the region,⁴⁸² and indeed the British and Foreign Bible Society Annual Report for 1874 noted that the epidemic had aided Novák in his colportage work.⁴⁸³ Yet what was unique about Nagyszalonta was the early emergence of the “gyülekezet”, or “congregation”, a lay movement among the Reformed population of the town which revived Magyar Puritan practices of corporate Bible-reading, singing, and prayer. In his study of the Nagyszalonta Gyülekezet, Ferenc Kiss wrote:

The organization and life of the congregation was very simple and truly biblical. There was no membership, dues, or admission process, rather anybody could take part there and, according to their spiritual gifts, help with leading singing, with prayers, or with explaining various passages of Scripture. The main part of the gathering was devoted to reading through and explaining passages of Scripture, or with reading through the chapters of an old Bible commentary. Many times they read Pilgrim's Progress from beginning to end...⁴⁸⁴

Kiss also describes how the congregation would pray for the sick (even going to the sick to pray with them at their bedside and to read Scripture to them) and look after the needs of the poor among them.⁴⁸⁵ This was a movement of the peasantry and lower classes, “the so-called city intelligencia kept themselves completely apart from the congregation.”⁴⁸⁶ The Reformed clergy in town also sought to convince those who attended the

482. Körösi, István. “Alföldi krónika I. [Alföld Chronicle, part 1].” Békehimnők 47.26 (June 29 1941): 106.

483. 1874 Annual Report, 63.

484. Kiss, Ferenc. “Magyar parasztproféták [Hungarian Peasant Prophets].” Zarándok Gyülekezet [The Pilgrim Church]. Budapest: Primo Kiadó, 1954. 372.

485. Kiss, Ferenc, 373.

486. Kiss, Ferenc, 371.

congregation to refrain from doing so, but to little avail. Ironically, these simple people were the most faithful members of the Reformed churches.⁴⁸⁷ At the same time, this evangelical lay renewal movement, drawing upon the Puritan resources of the past, proved to be fertile ground for the Baptist message. It was in this context that János Lajos began down a path of Christian discipleship that resulted in a Baptist movement among the most dynamic of the nineteenth century.

The difficult question is exactly how this happened. Of the many voices recounting this story, only one belongs to an eyewitness of the events. That eyewitness is Mihály Tóth, second only to Mihály Kornya among the “peasant prophets” of the Hungarian Baptist movement. Lajos, Kornya, and Tóth were active in the congregation, and all three became pioneers of the Baptist movement. On February 8, 1900, Mihály Tóth gave the funeral sermon for János Lajos, and András Udvarnoki recorded in the *Békehírnök* his reminiscences of Lajos. Given the importance of this witness, I wish to cite extensively from the article as a starting point to discuss how the events in Nagyszalonta unfolded.

I came to know János Lajos better in 1871-1872, he was one of those who loved to read and to research. Mostly he occupied himself with the Bible, spending hours in this way, although at that time this happened rarely in Protestant families ... From this point on we came to each other on Sunday afternoons and searched the Scriptures. I can say that even at that time brother Lajos had friends who with one mind read the Bible with him.

I can remember one time brother Lajos said to me about a Bible colporteur: “Hey, if only this great guy would come that I met with the last time, he really knows the Bible, I think it would really enlighten us!” This was the Bible colporteur Antal Novák, who lived in Gyoma at that time.

We were all curious about him, [and so] brother Lajos wrote to him and he came. There was real joy after that. In this manner the congregation was started in 1872, in the morning we were in church, but in the evening in the congregation. Brother Lajos read the Bible and explained it, and from this Christian teaching we prayed, and we also sang from the Reformed hymnal...

During the harvest time I met with brother Kornya and talked with him and invited him to come along with me to where I was going. Once he came and after that he never stayed away. After that I invited brother Kőrösi, and he stayed. Already brother Lajos was constantly mentioning baptism.

By 1873 brother Lajos was constantly asking: “Why do we continue to go to church; it would be better for us to get together in the morning as well.”

“Did you hear that,” I asked brother Kornya, “Did you hear what he is asking?”

487. Kiss, Ferenc, 372.

“There’s nothing to hear,” said Kornya.

Brother Kornya nevertheless came to agree with him soon enough. So they split from the church, but this was a stumbling block for me, and so I left them there. Brother Lajos announced, “I say to you all very plainly, I am raising the flag, whoever wants to come with me, come, and who doesn’t want to, then don’t come.” In this way four people remained with him, but I and the rest went to the church.

Split into two, we held two different congregations: mine was the church congregation, that is, we went to church by day, but met together in a house at night, but the one held by János Lajos was outside the church.

After that Lajos’ congregation recognized more and more the necessity of baptism, since they saw that only adults were baptized in the Bible, [that] they were baptized on the basis of their faith and confession. In 1875 during the winter, they invited brother Meyer, who was working in Budapest at that time, and eight were baptized amidst the ice.⁴⁸⁸

To this narrative Udvarnoki added that Tóth believed Novák had probably awakened János Lajos to the need for conversion and had set him on the right path by 1871, before any Baptists were working in the country (that is, before Heinrich Meyer had arrived in Budapest).

What can we conclude from this narrative? To begin with, the winter baptisms are clearly a misrecollection. Heinrich Meyer performed eight group baptisms of converts from Nagyszalonta between 1875 and 1881, after which Mihály Kornya, upon his ordination as a *Mitälterer*, took over performing baptisms in the area.⁴⁸⁹ Mihály Tóth was in the third group baptized in May of 1876, while the second group was baptized in January of 1876, which is likely the group Tóth is recollecting. But Lajos and Kornya were baptized in August of 1875, when there assuredly was no ice in the Fehér Körös River. This obvious mistake casts some doubt on the chronology and content Tóth gives in his narrative. Did a split occur in the congregation as early as 1873? And was the split over the issue of the inability of the Reformed Church to provide spiritual nourishment, as Tóth suggests, or was it over the issue of baptism, as is commonly recounted? Moreover, Tóth states that Lajos’ group achieved a conviction on believer’s baptism on their own, although Antal Novák is given credit for leading Lajos and the others towards evangelical convictions. A somewhat similar narrative is given in the Nagyszalonta

488. Udvarnoki, András. “Elhunyt [Deceased].” *Békehírnök* VI.4 (Feb. 28 1900): 33–34.

489. Kirner, *Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances]*, 51–52.

Baptist Church church register, written by Ferenc Kiss, a pastor of the church well after these events. It recounts how Novák was responsible for Lajos' conversion, and that he encouraged Lajos to share his faith with others. Then a year after the initial contact between Novák and Lajos, Novák came back to Nagyszalonta and found a group of seekers "who had come to such a knowledge of biblical truth, that they desired holy baptism. Again after a short while, Novák visited his Bible friends and when he became convinced of their seriousness, he wrote to the great German pastor, Heinrich Meyer, who had come from Germany to reside in Budapest, that he should come down to Békésgyula."⁴⁹⁰ As with Mihály Tóth's retelling, Kiss recounts how a conviction concerning believer's baptism arose among the group through their study of the Scriptures, while Antal Novák is portrayed as one who encouraged their evangelical convictions and served as the bridge between the believers in Nagyszalonta and Heinrich Meyer in Budapest.

Another important early witness comes from Attila Csopják, one of the three key leaders of the Magyar mission who broke away from Meyer's paternalistic control, and the first historian of the Hungarian Baptist movement. While not an eyewitness of the events in Nagyszalonta, Csopják knew all of the principal people very well and could recount the early history on the basis of first-hand testimony from Meyer, Lajos, Kornya, and Tóth. His brief exposition raises similar questions. Concerning Kornya's conversion, he wrote: "In 1872 he received into his hands a Bible and with some others began to read from it regularly. The following year he met Antal Novák, who could give him more light on the subject."⁴⁹¹ In this Csopják differs from Tóth by giving a later chronology. Turning now to his narrative of the movement's origins, he recounts:

Meanwhile among the Bible-reading and praying people in the Christian congregations far from Budapest the question of biblical baptism rose to the surface. Many recognized that it is not necessary to baptize infants, but rather those who have converted and become believers, those people who voluntarily present themselves for it. The desire for baptism became greater and greater, but they did not know the way to reach this goal. They heard that in the capital of the neighboring country, in Vienna, there was a pastor who could baptize them. But the road was long and a railroad ticket was rather expensive. Nevertheless, a man who had been awakened and brought to a living faith was willing to give up his house to cover the ticket expense.

490. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 50.

491. Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 13.

This desire reached the ears of Millard, the Bible Depository in Vienna, and because he was a Baptist as well, he wrote to Heinrich Meyer in Budapest that he should baptize these lively converted people in the countryside.⁴⁹²

As Csopják unfolds the rest of the story, Meyer travels to Gyula in August, 1875, to meet Novák and perform the baptisms.

As with Mihály Tóth, Csopják does not directly address how the question of baptism arose, but simply notes that some in the congregation came to Baptist convictions through their own study of the Bible. What is interesting in this narrative is that the people seeking believer's baptism in Nagyszalonta heard of the presence of Baptists in Vienna, and that one among them was willing to sell his own house to go there and seek baptism. This was János Lajos.⁴⁹³ This news reaches the ear of Edward Millard in Vienna, and it is Millard who encourages Meyer to go and perform the baptisms. Since Csopják notes that Novák served as the person who arranged for Meyer to meet with the baptismal candidates, it seems logical to conclude that Novák was the person who brought this matter to Millard's attention (and conversely, first brought the presence of Baptists in Vienna to the attention of Lajos and Kornya). It is not surprising that Novák would turn to Millard first as both his supervisor within the British and Foreign Bible Society and his mentor in the Baptist faith. This does not contradict the fact that Novák was the bridge between Meyer and the believers in Nagyszalonta, it merely adds that Edward Millard also played a role in these events.

How do these narratives comport with the recollections of Heinrich Meyer? One would think that Meyer would offer some thoughtful reflections on these critical events. However, Meyer's narrative is brief, interspersed with his description of how he was helped in transitioning from his work as a colporteur for the British and Foreign Bible Society to full-time Baptist ministry, and colored by his apologetic agenda to defend his ministry in Hungary. In his autobiography, Meyer describes how he met Antal Novák, a Baptist colporteur for the Bible Society, at a June 1875 Bible Society meeting, along with a number of other Bible Society colporteurs who happened to be Baptists. Because so many Baptists from the wider region were present, it was decided to hold a Baptist conference as well. The main topic was how to support Meyer financially so he could engage himself full time in pastoral ministry. It was here that "brother Novák told me that

492. Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 12–13.

493. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 46.

he had preached the word in Nagyszalonta, where there were several inquirers who were seeking after the truth. These were devout people. As a result of what this brother shared with me, I was very enthusiastic about the possibilities, and I went home and hoped that some good results would come of it. Already by August he called me, not to Nagyszalonta, but to Gyula.”⁴⁹⁴ Two observations concern us here.

First, we know that Meyer had met with Novák prior to this conference. The picture that Meyer wishes to paint in this narrative is that he quickly acted upon the opportunity that Novák presented to him, making his way down to Novák’s home in Gyula two months after their initial discussion to examine and then baptize the seekers from Nagyszalonta. However, Meyer’s diary entry for April 1, 1875, reads: “Brother and sister Novák departed.”⁴⁹⁵ This means at the very least that Meyer had met with the Nováks by late March of 1875. Kirner noted that the Nováks moved from Gyoma to Gyula in April of 1875 and that they had invited Meyer to come down and examine the faith of the Nagyszalonta seekers.⁴⁹⁶ This invitation no doubt came in March. When one also takes Attila Csopják’s testimony into account, one can imagine that Novák had discussed this matter with Edward Millard prior to his meeting with Meyer, at which time Millard wrote Meyer encouraging him to follow up on the matter. Moreover, Meyer was in Vienna in early March to meet with Edward Millard, at which point Meyer was invited by the congregation to assume the pastorate of the Vienna Baptist Church.⁴⁹⁷ Perhaps this issue was raised then as well. Thus some time in early 1875, shortly after the controversy over Meyer’s December baptisms had erupted with the Filialgemeinde which lead to his departure from service with the British and Foreign Bible Society, Meyer learned of the Nagyszalonta seekers. Far from acting expeditiously, Meyer hesitated when confronted with the opportunity to expand his ministry beyond his focus on the German minority in Hungary to the majority population. Just how much so will become evident later.

494. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 34.

495. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 7.

496. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 48.

497. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 7.

Second, Meyer makes it clear that he played no role in preparing the Nagyszalonta seekers for baptism prior to his meeting them in Gyula. Whatever discipleship was received by Lajos, Kornya, and the other seekers in Nagyszalonta in preparation for their baptism, it was given by Novák. Meyer recognized this when he wrote concerning the baptismal candidates that “brother Novák had prepared these people beforehand.”⁴⁹⁸ So Novák had “preached the word” to these seekers and had “prepared [them] beforehand” when Meyer came down to Novák’s house in Gyula to examine them for baptism. But what role did Novák play, if any, in leading them to specifically Baptist, as opposed to broadly evangelical, convictions?

A simple and logical assumption would be that Antal Novák raised the issue of believer’s baptism during the course of his preaching in Nagyszalonta. This is precisely what Ferenc Kiss argued:

In the early 1870’s Antal Novák, the colporteur, came to Nagyszalonta, and hearing about the congregation, he sought it out. He spoke with the congregation’s leaders about the German Baptist churches, about biblical baptism, and about questions related to these things. These things were completely unknown and new to those within the congregation, and they began to examine the Holy Scriptures, particularly those sections addressing believer’s baptism and immersion.⁴⁹⁹

Kiss recounted how many told him of the intense spiritual struggle that broke out in the congregation and the town over these issues.

Similarly, one could point to the testimony of Gyula Garzó, the Reformed minister in Gyoma, who spent much time in conversation with Novák before he moved to Gyula. Garzó wrote:

At this time I came to learn that he often visited some kind of artisan in Nagyszalonta, who he often sought out at his place. When he was at this person’s place, this person would shut everything up, and Novák would teach. I don’t know if this was Kornya or not, I cannot remember the name anymore.⁵⁰⁰ I used to ask myself, “Who could this be, what are they doing?” Not long afterwards I asked, expressing my sorrow, that he had not introduced to me this good friend of his. And he acknowledged that this was his spiritual son, about whom he could say along with the Apostle Paul, “I gave birth to you.” Before long he spoke of this person’s past, about how he was such a bad person, but that he converted to such

498. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 34.

499. Kiss, Ferenc, 374.

500. It was not Mihály Kornya, who was a peasant smallholder, but rather János Lajos, the gunsmith.

an extent that now he was a very godly man.⁵⁰¹

He therefore provides independent confirmation that Novák taught in the house of János Lajos. Moreover, it confirms that prior to this discipling relationship Novák had with Lajos and the friends that Lajos invited to his house in order to hear Novák teach, that Novák had already witnessed to Lajos and was instrumental in Lajos' conversion to a vibrant evangelical faith. It is interesting that Garzó presents himself as slowly realizing Novák was a sectarian, and that he asked leading questions in order to confirm his suspicion. Concerning the conversation recorded above, Garzó wrote: "There was no longer any doubt in my mind, this person was a Baptist, or rather Nazarene believer⁵⁰², and that he had attempted his conversion work in Gyoma as well."⁵⁰³ This raises the question: was Novák reticent about sharing openly his Baptist convictions with Garzó because Garzó was a Reformed minister, or because of his commitment to the rules of the British and Foreign Bible Society? More to the point, was Novák equally reticent to share Baptist convictions with Lajos and his circle in Nagyszalonta as he was with Garzó? Garzó certainly believed that Novák was undertaking sectarian "conversion work."

A different answer as to how the issue of believer's baptism was raised was provided by Istvan Kőrösi. It is an answer so exquisite in its irony that one wonders why it was not recounted in print by the first generation of Baptists. Kőrösi recounts that as the son of one of the early converts in Nagyszalonta, he grew up listening to the stories of Kornya, Lajos, and Tóth about the beginning of the Baptist movement. As he heard it told, "One time in the church the Reformed minister, who was much beloved, preached on baptism. In his sermon he faithfully and clearly explained that the first Christians only performed holy baptism upon converted people, and they did so in such a way that the whole body was immersed in the water, just as John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus taught and practiced."⁵⁰⁴ In this way the Reformed minister provided a new and previously

501. Garzó, "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]," 335.

502. Again we see that it was common rhetorical practice for Protestant ministers from the historic churches to lump all sectarians under the Nazarene banner. The exceptions to this polemical practice were those ministers in the historic churches who were part of the evangelical renewal movement. They were often willing to recognize substantive and positive differences that differentiated the Baptist movement in Hungary from the more sectarian Nazarenes.

503. Garzó, "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]," 335.

504. Kőrösi, "Alföldi krónika I. [Alföld Chronicle, part 1]," 106.

unknown theme for the congregation to discuss! During these discussions, some among those in the congregation confessed that “their reading of the Bible passages relating to this theme had for a long time produced such feelings about baptism in them, but they had not been able to give expression to those feelings.”⁵⁰⁵ As Kőrösi developed the narrative, the congregation invited the minister to come address the congregation further on this theme, with the intention of requesting believer’s baptism. When the minister came to address the congregation, he naturally declined to perform the baptisms. When asked if there was a people who performed baptisms according to the practice of the first Christians, he replied that none existed in Hungary, but that in Germany there was such a denomination.⁵⁰⁶ The minister encouraged them to accept the current practice of the church, reminding them that faith was the most important thing. Many accepted this counsel from the minister.

[B]ut eight set out from among them (the same number as sought refuge in the ark) and they said they would hold on to what they understood from the word and that if it was necessary to bring such a minister from Germany who could baptize them the original way, then they would make the sacrifice necessary for that.⁵⁰⁷

It was only after these events that Kőrösi introduces Antal Novák as the key individual who served as a bridge between the seekers in Nagyszalonta and Meyer in Budapest.

As the seekers were gathered together to hear from Novák, the theme again turned to what they had come to believe about baptism. As they explained their difficult situation, they were overjoyed to learn from Novák that there was a German preacher in Budapest who could baptize them. With Heinrich Meyer’s address in hand from Novák, they wrote him a letter. They received an answer in German. “All they understood from the letter was that baptism was only for converted individuals, and they could hardly be suitable candidates for it yet.”⁵⁰⁸ Kőrösi appears to have been the first person to recount this incident in print. And yet it is consistent with the obvious reluctance of Meyer to

505. Kőrösi, “Alföldi krónika I. [Alföld Chronicle, part 1],” 106.

506. Kőrösi was writing in 1941, when Austria, and Vienna with it, had been incorporated into Germany, and this likely accounts for the apparent divergence from what Csopják wrote about the seekers hearing of Baptists in the neighboring country of Austria from Novák.

507. Kőrösi, István. “Alföldi krónika II. [Alföld Chronicle, part 2].” *Békehírnök* 47.27 (July 6 1941): 110.

508. Kőrösi, “Alföldi krónika II. [Alföld Chronicle, part 2],” 110.

move beyond his German-oriented ministry. It also reasonably explains a well-known event that took place next.

At this point in Kőrösi's narrative, the bold and garrulous Mihály Kornya steps to the fore. It was suggested that someone needed to go up to Budapest to talk with Meyer in person, and tell him that they already were converted. Mihály Kornya was chosen and he did not hesitate to accept the task. Bertalen Kirner, Kornya's Hungarian Baptist biographer, remarked that "Kornya often remembered this trip to Budapest."⁵⁰⁹ Kornya went up to Budapest and sought out Meyer at his apartment. The conversation could only take place after a translator was found. Kornya explained that he was sent to bring Meyer back with him. Meyer wished to avoid complying with Kornya's request, and so he explained that he had much work to do, and could not come because of his obligation to do his Sunday School work. Meyer's reluctance to become involved in a ministry among the Magyar population was more than equaled by Kornya's determined rejoinder. Kornya announced that "he had brought his satchel with him and he would not leave until his friend Meyer completed his more important work so that afterwards he could come with him to Nagyszalonta."⁵¹⁰ Kornya's determination finally compelled Meyer to expand the scope of his mission work.

How Kornya, Lajos, and their friends arrived at this strong conviction concerning their desire for believer's baptism is evident. All the early Baptist witnesses point to a period in which the people in the congregation struggled with the Biblical teaching on baptism. How the people answered this question had profound implications for the way they viewed Christian discipleship and ecclesiology. What is not so evident is how the issue of believer's baptism was raised. Could the spark for this flame have come from the sermon of the Reformed minister in Nagyszalonta? This narrative seems highly improbable, all the more so because of the lack of corroboration from others. Among the chief objections, it was fairly well known among the Protestant clergy that a people did exist in Hungary who practiced believer's baptism, and they were called Nazarenes. The Nazarene's were certainly better known at this point in Hungary than the German Baptist movement, which had only a minimal presence in Vienna. In fact, everything about Kőrösi's narrative concerning the Reformed minister makes him sound like one of the

509. One colorful note about this trip that Kornya remembered was that he went to the big city wearing his *guba*, a long sleeveless cape common among Hungarian peasants, and many of the city residents laughed at his attire. Kirner, *Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténelmi emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances]*, 46.

510. Kőrösi, "Alföldi krónika II. [Alföld Chronicle, part 2]," 110.

more irenic members of the evangelical renewal among the Reformed clergy. But that would be anachronistic, because the evangelical renewal did not gather any momentum until the late 1880's at the earliest. Prior to that the strongest Protestant evangelical center of renewal was the Scottish Mission in Budapest. We know from Ferenc Kiss that the Protestant clergy in town did not look kindly upon the congregation, and that characterization of the situation appears much more probable.

Did then the subject of believer's baptism arise on its own? This is possible, particularly if the activity of the Nazarenes had made an impression on a member of the congregation. Did Antal Novák raise the issue of believer's baptism? This seems the most probable answer. Novák is mentioned by all the early Baptist witnesses as having played a significant role in leading these seekers to a fuller understanding of the Scriptures. In particular, we know from Attila Csopják and Gyula Garzó, the Reformed minister in Gyoma, that Novák was instrumental in the conversion of János Lajos. Lajos then invited Mihály Tóth to come hear Novák, and Tóth invited Kornya to come join him in attending the congregation, probably around 1873. Finally, we know that Novák was eventually transferred to the Kolozsvár Depot of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1876⁵¹¹, which was under the leadership of his old friend Johann Rottmayer, due to complaints from Protestant clergy about his proselytism which resulted in baptisms in Nagyszalonta and Berettyóújfalu.⁵¹² While the Bible Society encouraged evangelical witness of a non-sectarian nature among its colporteurs, the depth of the friendship between Novák and Lajos, in which Novák disciplined Lajos in the faith on a regular basis, suggests that Novák would have shared his entire testimony with his friend. This would include his experience of believer's baptism in Vienna in 1870. This also explains why the group in Nagyszalonta would have known of the presence of Baptists in Vienna and Lajos' willingness to sell his house to be able to afford the train ticket to the imperial city. Perhaps in late 1874, before Heinrich Meyer performed the baptisms in Budapest that would lead to his departure from the Bible Society, Novák was trying to discern what to do about the group of seekers in Nagyszalonta who had left the Reformed Church and had come to a similar faith. He of course passed this information on to Edward Millard, his

511. The fact that Novák was transferred to another depot, rather than forced to resign, suggests that Millard acted out of necessity, rather than out of any conviction of wrong-doing on Novák's part. This is understandable if we take into consideration that Novák had come to Millard with an honest narrative of his activities in Nagyszalonta and sought counsel from Millard as to what to do.

512. Szigeti, "Novák Antal halálának centennáriuma [The Centenary of Antal Novák's Death]," 55.

supervisor and fellow Baptist. When it became apparent that Heinrich Meyer would have to leave the Bible Society, and would likely engage in full-time Baptist pastoral ministry, both Millard and Novák informed Meyer of the situation in Nagyszalonta in early 1875. Novák also shared Meyer's address with his friends in Nagyszalonta around this time, and they wrote to Meyer. When they got a disappointing response from Meyer, Kornya went up to Budapest to impress upon Meyer both their readiness and their eagerness to be baptized. Once Meyer was impressed that action needed to be taken, it was left up to him and Novák to make arrangements for Meyer to come to Novák's home in Gyula to perform the baptisms. And this is likely how the Magyar Baptist mission began in Nagyszalonta.

When it comes to the question of the actual baptisms, we are on much more solid ground. Picking up on Heinrich Meyer's remembrance of the beginning of the work in Nagyszalonta, he wrote that Antal Novák summoned him in August of 1875 to Gyula:

Among the souls mentioned, br. Novák directed eight here. These were as follows: br. Kornya and his wife, br. Lajos and his wife, his son and daughter. [Also] sister Bordás and her married daughter, these eight people br. Novák prepared beforehand. It was his desire that we would accept them into church membership. I spent a few days with them, in part so that I could examine their spiritual worldview, and in part to get to know them better. I undertook their baptisms with great joy. Under the veil of dark night I baptized these eight people about three quarters of an hour's distance from the city of Gyula in shallow water chosen for this purpose. With this we layed the foundation for the Nagyszalonta mission, and the work among the Hungarians began.⁵¹³

Why did Novák arrange for Meyer to come to his home town of Gyula in August? It was because a market was being held there at that time, attracting many people from the region. This provided the perfect cover for all involved to gather in Gyula and to enjoy the anonymity of the crowds. The market was held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, August 24th through the 26th, 1875.⁵¹⁴ Meyer wrote in his diary that on Tuesday, August 24th, "Departed at 6:30 on the train to Gyula, and was met there by brother Novák. The joy of seeing each other again was very great..."⁵¹⁵ And in the *Mitglieder Register*, Meyer's first baptism of an ethnic Magyar, János Lajos, is recorded

513. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 34.

514. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 48.

515. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 7.

as the 42nd entry, having taken place in Gyula on August 26th, 1875.⁵¹⁶ Thus Meyer used the entire time of the market to meet with the baptismal candidates. The fact that the baptisms took place under cover of night outside the city reveals Meyer's concern to have the baptisms proceed unmolested. Kirner relates that at 3 o'clock in the morning the small group walked out of the town to the chosen spot at the Fehér-Körös River for the baptisms. After Meyer had examined the baptismal candidates and listened to their testimonies, he delivered to them a pastoral charge. During this process, Meyer was moved by their zeal and knowledge, and especially with Mihály Kornya. Meyer noted of Kornya in his diary, "He was willing to leave everything behind, even the making of *pálinka*."⁵¹⁷ *Pálinka* is the Hungarian equivalent of brandy. It is made from a fruit, often apricots or plums, and it is very strong. It was a favorite drink of peasants. This zeal that Meyer noted would be confirmed by the rapid growth of the Baptist movement in Nagyszalonta.

Bertalan Kirner noted that in the membership list of the Baptist congregation of Nagyszalonta, which no doubt was begun several years after these events, Kornya was the first person listed. Moreover, next to his name one reads as his occupation "missionary".⁵¹⁸ Kornya, however, was not alone in his missionary zeal, even if his talents for communicating his faith to his peers were unrivaled. If the baptisms were performed in secret, it was a secret the small group of converts were eager to share with whoever would listen to them once back in Nagyszalonta. Between the time of Kornya's baptism in August of 1875 and his ordination as a deacon in November of 1877, there were four baptismal services in Nagyszalonta. The first took place on January 26th, 1876, with three candidates, János Kőrösi, Zsuzsánna Balogh, and Péter Kenéz. One must remember that at this time all baptisms were performed in rivers. This must be the baptism "amidst the ice" that Tóth recalled. Among those baptized, János Kőrösi is notable as one who for many years used his musical talent as the choirmaster for the Baptist congregation in Nagyszalonta.

516. Meyer, Heinrich. "Mitglieder Register der Baptistengemeinde in Budapest." Heinrich Meyer's first baptismal register with 358 entries up until 1881. Heinrich Meyer Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, Hungary, no date. 8.

517. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 48.

518. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 51.

The next baptisms took place May 9th, 1876, a little over four months later, with thirteen candidates. This third group of converts also included some significant pioneers within the Magyar Baptist mission. Preeminent among these was Mihály Tóth, second only to Kornya among the “peasant prophets”. László Balogh was also in the group, who was set apart as a helper to Kornya and Tóth when these two were ordained as Deacons in 1877.⁵¹⁹ Also Sándor Pájer was baptized; he was an early companion and helper to Kornya on mission trips.⁵²⁰

A little over a year later, on June 2nd, 1877, five new converts were baptized. The most prominent person in this group was Mihály Domján, known in Hungarian Baptist circles as “Big Domján”, because of his outgoing personality.⁵²¹ An effective evangelist, he also was a leader in the Baptist Sunday School in Nagyszalonta because of his love for children.⁵²² He is to be distinguished from Imre Domján, who was baptized in the next group of converts on May 18th, 1878, and was known as “Little Domján”. Although not as bold a figure as “Big Domján” or Mihály Kornya, he was perhaps Kornya’s most faithful mission companion, and was a pioneer missionary in Bihar, Békés, and Csongrád Counties.⁵²³

The rapidly growing Magyar mission required that Heinrich Meyer make frequent trips to Nagyszalonta. These were difficult for Meyer, in part because he was dependent upon translation in order to examine the candidates, preach, and teach. We know that Novák translated at the first baptisms in Gyula. For the fourth baptismal group in June of 1877, Meyer brought with him from Budapest one of the Tatter brothers. However, as appreciative as Meyer was for the help he received, he was still frustrated by the limitations he experienced. He wrote of this trip, “On May 28th [1877] I travelled to Nagyszalonta. Brother Tatter proved to be a conscientious translator. But as a simple

519. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 12.

520. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 52–53.

521. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 52.

522. Kovács, Géza. “A nagyszalontai ‘prófetaiskola’ [The Nagyszalonta ‘School of the Prophets’].” Békehimők VII (LVII).20 (Oct. 15 1963): 6.

523. Kovács, Géza, “A nagyszalontai ‘prófetaiskola’ [The Nagyszalonta ‘School of the Prophets’],” 6.

working man he was often incapable of following my train of thought, and therefore during the course of my talks there were often forced pauses, because even if he understood what was said, he could not always find the appropriate Hungarian expression. We performed the baptisms on June 2nd.⁵²⁴ The language barrier made the logistics of the evolving Magyar mission a difficult burden for Meyer to shoulder.

He was soon convinced by the rapid growth of the Magyar mission and his own physical limitations that it was necessary to raise up indigenous leadership in Nagyszalonta. In November of 1877 Heinrich Meyer travelled down to Nagyszalonta to do this. He arrived on the seventh, a Wednesday, and enjoyed a time of fellowship with the brethren. The difficulties of Meyer's work can be seen, however, by the diary entry for the following day. "I picked up brother Hempt from the train station. Brother Kornya gave us a report."⁵²⁵ From his autobiography one can understand the import of this diary entry, "I was only able to pick up my translator, Brother Hempt, from the station the next morning."⁵²⁶ In short, while Meyer could enjoy fellowship with the brethren in Nagyszalonta, he was not able to get down to business until his translator arrived. After a Saturday worship service, Meyer records that he spoke "about the offices of the church and recommended the brethren cast ballots to vote for two brothers from amongst themselves to be ordained, and to add a third who would serve probationally."⁵²⁷ With the charge given, Meyer apparently left the brethren to pray over the decision.

He was back in Nagyszalonta on Tuesday, November 13th, and picked up a special guest for the ordination service, Fritz Oncken.⁵²⁸ Fritz Oncken, as noted previously, was invited to return to Hungary by Meyer to examine his ministry and to take some of the burden off Meyer's shoulders for a time. He was also one of those sent by J.G. Oncken to

524. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 51.

525. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 12.

526. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 53.

527. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 12.

528. Bertalan Kirner mistakenly thought it was Johann Gerhard Oncken, the father of the Continental Baptists, who had come at Meyer's invitation. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 55.

help the first wave of Baptist pioneers back in 1846. His joy at being invited by Meyer to “take part in the first Hungarian ordination celebration,”⁵²⁹ something perhaps unimaginable to him in the dark days of 1849, can be discerned from the entry in Meyer’s diary. “In the afternoon brother Kornya lead a service. In the evening brother Oncken held a talk, followed by a worship service until five in the morning.”⁵³⁰ Also enjoying this special occasion was Johann Rottmayer, the British and Foreign Bible Society Depository from Kolozsvár, and the leading figure among the first Baptist pioneers from 1846, and Antal Novák, who was the catalyst for the Magyar mission. One can imagine the happy reunion of the pioneers and the eager exchanges between these veteran workers and the rising leaders of the Magyar mission.

After such a long day, there was still much important business to accomplish the following day, Wednesday, the 14th of November. Meyer recorded the events of this day as follows:

I recorded the vote for brother Kornya and brother Tóth to serve as deacons, and of brother Balogh for service on a trial basis. I lifted up the great mercy of God which he demonstrates towards his children, and called for a response of thankfulness and joy. I turned over leadership to brother Oncken to conduct the rest of the service and to carry out the ordination of brother Kornya and brother Tóth, which took place in a festive way.⁵³¹

Mihály Kornya had distinguished himself immediately for his knowledge of the Scriptures, his zeal, and his evangelistic and leadership capabilities. Meyer noted in his diary that when he arrived, he received a report from Kornya, and that Kornya had lead an afternoon service before the vote. It was a foregone conclusion that Kornya would be one of those ordained. It is worth noting that the only apparent reason to ordain two men, with a third selected for a probationary period, was because this was what Heinrich Meyer suggested. While Kornya was among the first converts to be baptized, the other two men were from the third group baptized on May 9th, 1876. Mihály Tóth was the other man ordained. Among the original participants of the Bible circle from which the Baptist congregation sprang, his loyalty to the Reformed Church was eventually overcome by the

529. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 53.

530. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 12.

531. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 12.

persistent witness of his friends. Among those Magyar Baptist “peasant prophets” who propelled the rapid growth of the mission, Tóth would stand next to Kornya in esteem. Both men would prove to be gifted leaders and faithful friends to Meyer.

Several men with the family name of Balogh were among those baptized in Nagyszalonta. The man mentioned by Meyer was László Balogh. Kirner describes him as Kornya’s brother-in-law and a farm hand. He accompanied Kornya after the ordination service on his early missionary journeys to other towns and villages in the region, driving Kornya in his own cart.⁵³²

Concerning the service, it is interesting that Meyer supervised the vote and lead in prayer afterwards, but then turned over leadership of the ordination service to Fritz Oncken, who performed the ordination of Mihály Kornya and Mihály Tóth. The act of ordination among Baptists consisted of the laying on of hands on those being ordained accompanied by prayer. One can picture the two ordinands before the congregation, with men such as Johann Rottmayer, Antal Novák, Adolf Hempt, and Heinrich Meyer laying hands on them, with Fritz Oncken leading them in prayer for God’s blessing upon their ministries. Meyer characterized the service as proceeding in a “celebratory” manner.

However, the key point to observe is that because this was a diaconal ordination, Mihály Kornya and Mihály Tóth were empowered to administer the Lord’s Supper in Meyer’s absence. Kornya, at the very least, was already shouldering the responsibility of preaching when the believers gathered for their worship services. They were not, however, ordained as Elders to the pastoral ministry. The import of this distinction is that they were not entitled to perform baptisms. At this point Heinrich Meyer was still the only one baptizing converts. In short, he was still the only “pastor” for all the Baptists in Hungary. In reality, Kornya and Tóth were functioning as pastors to the Nagyszalonta congregation. Nevertheless, Heinrich Meyer was not yet ready to elevate these men to a full-orbed pastoral ministry, to a position equal (at least formally) to his own. Ordained to the diaconate, Kornya and Tóth were to enter into formal ministry positions under Meyer’s mentorship.

The ordination service proved to be an empowering experience for Kornya, Tóth, and the Nagyszalonta believers. Kirner commented that following his ordination, a “spiritual fire” was ignited in Kornya, which compelled him to carry the Baptist message

532. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 56–57.

beyond Nagyszalonta.⁵³³ An early mission trip took place just after Pentecost 1878. Kornya travelled north from Nagyszalonta to Biharugra, accompanied by László Balogh, who drove Kornya in his cart. From Biharugra they drove through Berettyóújfalu on to Derecske. At this point Balogh turned back home, but Mihály Kornya continued on by foot, turning west to Földes, then south to Zsáka and Darvas before he wended his way home through Komádi and Zsadány.⁵³⁴ This 100-120 kilometer circuit through Bihar and Hajdú Counties encompassed some of the early centers of the Magyar mission spearheaded by Kornya. He extended his early efforts as far as Gyoma to the west in Békés County, where Antal Novák had once lived, and where the family of a Budapest convert lived.⁵³⁵

Kirner painted an interesting picture of Kornya's first efforts in Biharugra.⁵³⁶ As they arrived, Kornya and Balogh observed the people of the village sitting about on benches on the street, as was their habit. They approached one group next to the barracks and asked where they might find a place for their horses, adding that it was their desire to hold a service that evening or the next afternoon to talk about their conversions and why they became Baptists. No one answered them. So they went on. Again Kornya asked another group of people the same question, focusing his attention on an older man among them. This time he got a response: "I would like to accommodate you, but you see, I have this godless son-in-law and he would not put up with you." Unfortunately for the old man, his son-in-law heard from within the courtyard his father-in-law's excuse, and so Kornya heard a voice responding: "Well if I am that godless person who is the reason you cannot come in, just come on in." And so Kornya and Balogh entered in. Once the horses were taken care of, the man invited them in and asked his wife to bring in some Kalács (a Hungarian sweet bread) to share with their guests from Nagyszalonta. As the three men sat down around the table to eat, Kornya began to say a prayer to thank God for His provision of food and hospitality. Apparently this prayer displeased the wife of the

533. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 56.

534. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 60.

535. Garzó, Gyula. "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]." Pt. 2. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 25.12 (Mar. 19 1882): 368.

536. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 57–59.

“godless son-in-law”, because she angrily grabbed the plate of Kalács from the table, saying “Don’t express your gratitude for me like some cow on the ice,” and stormed into an adjacent room. At this surprising turn of events, her husband simply said: “And these people call me godless.” As Kornya and Balogh prepared to leave, the son-in-law told them, “I’ll show you a house where they will take you in.” At this second house, Kornya explained for the third time what they were seeking. They were told, “We would gladly take you in. But as you can see, we are just about to go to church. Come with us, and then on the way back we can tell some other people to join us.” This they did, and when they returned, Kornya began to preach to a full house.

While Kornya was preaching, the news swept through the village of the preceding events. One young man explained to his friends that “Nazarenes are making mischief” at one of their houses. The messenger, Dániel Szabo, Károly Nagy (at whose house Kornya was preaching), and János Kis decided to go and drive out the Nazarenes from the house. When they arrived, one of them looked through the window and saw among the people sitting quietly and listening attentively Bálint Nagy, Károly’s father. Bálint Nagy also happened to be the Mayor’s Counselor. At this the youth marveled. After some time they returned to their other friends, who were waiting to join in on thrashing the Nazarenes, and explained how their strength left them when they saw Bálint Nagy sitting there. Kornya was able to preach his sermon without interruption. This story was related to Kornya’s co-worker, Mihály Tóth, thirty years later in Fugyivásárhely, in August 1908, when one of the youth, Károly Nagy, presented himself for baptism. When this story was related to Kornya, he simply exclaimed: “See that, thirty years later the seed hatched.”

This story is instructive of how the early Magyar mission began to grow under the leadership of Mihály Kornya and his compatriots from Nagyszalonta. The missiological paradigm they pursued was drawn from their understanding of the primitive Christian community portrayed in the New Testament. Unquestionably this is how later Hungarian Baptist historians have understood the labors of the pioneers.⁵³⁷ This apologetic used by the Magyar Baptist pioneers, comparing themselves and their proclamation to the first disciples of Jesus, was of course turned on its head by their opponents. Take for example the caustic irony that Gyula Garzó, the Reformed minister in Gyoma, used when he decided to confront Kornya in a house where he was to talk.

537. Kirner provides an example of this when he describes the reaction of Kornya and Balogh to the unexpected behavior of the offended wife in Biharugra. “The two men from Nagyszalonta looked at each other and according to what is written in the gospels they departed from the house.” Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 58.

It has come to our attention that some kind of prophet was to come among you, one who speaks of such wonders by God about which you have never heard of before. Therefore we also decided to come, the pastors of the Protestant churches established here, so that if God did indeed send a prophet to you, we too could learn something from him; but if his commission is not from God and some would-be ‘wandering false brother’⁵³⁸ is about, we could immediately demonstrate before you in this place his powerlessness and ignorance.⁵³⁹

If Baptists of a later generation speak with admiration about the ‘peasant prophets’ or ‘peasant apostles’ when referring to Kornya and the pioneering peasant evangelists of the Hungarian Baptist movement, one must recall the origin of the term ‘Christian’ in Antioch to appreciate the irony of such language.

And yet while it was common to refer to Kornya and his companions as ‘prophets’ or ‘wandering apostles’ in a mocking tone, even some of their critics had to respect their efforts. In a letter to PEIL responding to an article about the success of Kornya’s ministry in Földes, the Debrecen theologian Lajos Zóltai wrote of Kornya’s methods admiringly.

That wandering apostle spreading the Baptist faith won some families in Földes and, I believe, in some other places as well with the same manner and means which he employs from place to place; that is, in one or another private home with some family or neighbors gathered together, he takes some passage from the Holy Scriptures, reads it, and explains the passage; prior to the exposition and at the end there is prayer (during which the believers kneel down) along with singing. *Simply put, it is a simple, truly beautiful and powerful worship service held by those gathered together in which we perceive the religious life of the primitive Christians is revived.* Indeed these missionaries and their believers for the most part complain about and raise before our eyes the fact that we greatly neglect Bible-reading, our pastors give little weight to the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, and that generally we have no religious life. And are they not correct in saying this? (*emphasis mine*).⁵⁴⁰

It is instructive that Zóltai uses the language of a revival of the primitive Christian religious life in explaining the success of the “wandering apostle” Kornya, and even goes so far as to admit that the Baptists were justified in their criticisms of the Reformed ministers and the lack of spiritual vitality in Reformed congregations. The strength of the missiological paradigm employed by the peasant prophets was that it focused on reviving

538. A verbal reference to the ‘false brethren’ of Galatians 2:4.

539. Garzó, “A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes],” 369.

540. Zóltai, Lajos. “A földesi nazarenusokról. II. [About the Nazarenes in Földes, Pt. 2].” A letter from Lajos Zóltai, a Reformed Theologian from Debrecen. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 25.5 (Jan. 29 1882): 150.

the basic Christian practices they found in Scripture in a way understandable and personally relevant to those they were trying to reach, other peasants just like themselves. Even Garzó borrowed from Kornya's practices in his struggle against Kornya's outreach in Gyoma. "Indeed, I did even more! Recognizing the spirit of our people and their particular love of poetical language, for the evening studies I conducted I wrote one or two songs for each occasion, just as Kornya often did, which I regularly recited."⁵⁴¹ One could argue that it was the success of the Baptist and Nazarene evangelists that convinced some within the historic Protestant churches to push for *belmisszio*, the Hungarian equivalent of *Innere Mission* then prevalent among the conservative Protestants of Germany and Switzerland. Thus Zóltai argued that "if our pastors would conscientiously fulfill the *cura pastoralis*, if they would more frequently hold bible studies (not just on Sunday afternoons and during Advent week, but a few times each week)," then they would be able to see a revival of Hungarian Protestantism.⁵⁴² Similarly, a front page article in PEIL by the Krassó Region Ministerial Circle of the Reformed Church, which sought to address the challenge presented by the Nazarenes and Baptists, suggested the following:

In the second place is the need for the organization of what is called inner mission. We have many of our more populous churches in which almost the entire worship service is in vain; and yet in scattered settlements, among those living in the countryside, in cities, in villages, we have members of our churches who are visited during the course of the year maybe once or twice, factory workers, mineworkers, who are isolated far from our churches or who live in areas mixed together with the members of other denominations: it would be the responsibility of the inner mission to provide care, spiritual nourishment and religious teaching to these people, and in consideration of this need it is necessary that enough missionary pastoral stations be established. It is a difficult field, but an exalted field of work awaits these pastors, and certainly many scattered bones from the body of our church could be gathered together.⁵⁴³

The rise of the Hungarian equivalent to *Innere Mission* is usually dated to the evangelical awakening of the 1890's, and in particular with the work of Aladár Szabó, who was influenced by the ministry of the Scottish Mission during his theological studies in

541. Garzó, Gyula. "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]." Pt. 4. *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* 25.14 (Apr. 2 1882): 428.

542. Zóltai, 150.

543. Krassó Region Ministerial Circle, 327.

Budapest in the 1880's.⁵⁴⁴ The centrality of Szabó's work in this area is undeniable, as are the roots of the evangelical awakening in Hungary in the ministry of the Scottish Mission. Nevertheless, this 1883 article by the Krassó Region Ministerial Circle suggests that the challenge presented by the evangelistic work of the Baptists and Nazarenes awakened some within the Reformed churches to the need for home mission work of their own.

Another aspect of this emphasis upon primitive Christian practice as gleaned from the Bible was the importance the peasant prophets gave to personal testimony in their preaching and teaching. It was the combination of expositing the Scriptures with a focus on Christian praxis and always incorporating personal Christian testimony of their experiences with Jesus that often proved compelling to their listeners. This is the import of Kornya stating the purpose of their visit to Biharugra, which was "to hold either in the evening, or even in the afternoon, a worship service, as simple peasants, just like the poor, simple fishermen who were Jesus Christ's disciples, and in this way to explain our conversions, how and why we became Baptists."⁵⁴⁵ Similarly, the sermon Gyula Garzó reports Kornya giving in Gyoma was a combination of Kornya's personal journey from his roots in the Reformed Church to becoming a Baptist, in which he gives an apologetic for believer's baptism, in concert with a very evangelistic message on the necessity of repentance and conversion through faith in Jesus in order to be saved.⁵⁴⁶ Kornya's testimony elicited ad hominem attacks and ridicule of his intellectual capacity from Garzó, interspersed with some biblical arguments against believer's baptism and criticism of his perception of Kornya's claim to moral perfection following his baptism and his concomitant call for a pure church; missing, however, was any personal testimony on the part of Garzó, his appeal was entirely rooted in his position of authority as a minister of a historically received church.⁵⁴⁷ While such appeals were often effective, they were also indicative of the alienation of much of the Protestant clergy from the peasant laity. It was

544. Bucsay, Der Protestantismus in Ungarn 1521–1978: Ungarns Reformationskirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 113–17.

545. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 57.

546. Garzó, Gyula. "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]." Pt. 3. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 25.13 (Mar. 26 1882): 394–95.

547. Garzó, "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]," 395–400.

an alienation that the Baptist peasant prophets used in their own polemics against the received churches, though not as harshly as did the Nazarenes.⁵⁴⁸

Zeal was also an important part of the narrative concerning Kornya's success in his ministry. He completed more than half of his first missionary circuit on foot. No doubt during the course of his evangelistic journeys he often slept outside or went hungry. Kirner noted that Kornya did not usually use a horse and wagon for his trips. "If he could not walk or if he had to go on a longer trip, he would take the train, sitting in third class so that he had the opportunity to speak with peasant wisdom and reach others with the warmth of the gospel fire."⁵⁴⁹ Zeal was also necessary to undertake pioneering work where rejection and often persecution would await him, where the Baptist message was either not known or where if the people had heard of it, they had heard negative reports which prejudiced them against it.⁵⁵⁰

Finally, we see a process of indigenization at work in the Magyar mission that appears to have taken Heinrich Meyer by surprise and to have mystified the established Protestant clergy. The process of indigenization in relation to Heinrich Meyer is readily apparent. Heinrich Meyer was not able to effectively reach the majority Magyar population. Thus when Meyer wanted to expand his ministry in the environs of Budapest to the Magyar population of Pest County, he invited Kornya to come evangelize in towns such as Szada, Órszentmiklós, Rákoscsaba, Dab, and Kunszentmiklós.⁵⁵¹ He quickly

548. Ferenc Márk, in his article suggesting that the diligent use of state power, as allowed by a decision of the Interior Minister, was needed to curb the sects, recounted the kind of polemics the Nazarene evangelists used in his area. "Why do you go to the church dear brothers, when it is written that God does not live in temples built by hands? Why do you listen to the priest there, the devil's trumpet, who preaches for money, when the Lord says: Freely have ye received, freely give. Do not believe the priests, truly they do not preach from conviction, but they only preach to you so that they may live from your earnings, adulterating the Word of God." In a humorous aside in an otherwise strident article, Márk mocks the Nazarene polemic. "Indeed, thank you very much for the beautiful title. But I think it sounds a little funny: Reverend Minister devil's trumpet!" One can understand better why he wished to resort to state power given some of the prophetic-apocalyptic rhetoric the Nazarene's would use in their polemics against the established churches. As he put it: "Indeed this is drastic medicine, but no doubt useful." Márk, 261–62.

549. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 75.

550. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 63.

551. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 85.

realized that the most dynamic growth was that being experienced by the Magyar mission, and he turned to Kornya to help in his core area of ministry.

The process of indigenization was more subtle in relation to the Magyar Protestant clergy. It could also be seen as a process of laicization, although that term is better suited to a Roman Catholic or Orthodox context, and does not capture the cultural aspect of the divide between the Protestant clergy and the peasant masses. Kornya could say to his peasant listeners that he wanted to talk to them “just as simple peasants,” as one of them. On the other hand, the attitude of Gyoma’s Reformed minister, Gyula Garzó, was typical when he said to those gathered in Andras Eiler’s house to hear Kornya preach:

But this pious brother, who was called by providence to be a peasant, brought ruin to his true duty when he left the honorable sphere of work God prepared for him and became a vagabond in order to live off of the sweat of others in these difficult times, when I can certainly say that poor people have enough worries if they want to see the people in their own houses with bread... I tell you the truth, my brother, because you are a sick person who is more worthy of a place in an insane asylum rather than among people of sound judgment... Don’t be an idler and don’t scamp about, but turn back to the work you were called to as a peasant, where you can be useful both to your household and yourself.⁵⁵²

Garzó’s rhetorical strategy would have sounded more appropriate in the mouth of a Hindu Brahmin priest, or at the very least a Roman Catholic prelate, than it did in the mouth of a Protestant pastor who was an heir to the Reformation recovery of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Also note the recurrent motif of the sects as a spiritual disease afflicting the body of Protestantism. Garzó’s interpretive paradigm for understanding Kornya and his motivation was to attribute his call as a ‘prophet’ as evidence of mental illness. The economic angle of his verbal assault, falsely accusing Kornya of abandoning his economic station in life to live off of other poor peasants,⁵⁵³ combined with the clear class assumptions in his diatribe, would provide a rich trove for a Marxian analysis of the conflict between Garzó and Kornya. These various lines of attack all point to one truth, and that is that the ministers of the established churches were incredulous that simple

552. Garzó, “A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes],” 399–400.

553. Kirner made a point of dispelling this accusation, noting that Kornya was not from the agricultural proletariat when he became a believer, but was a small-holder peasant who was able to provide for himself and his family and continued to do so after he began his ministry. “He was therefore not unemployed nor a poor person without his own means, he was not someone who would have fallen into the gospel service as a means to earn his bread or because of hunger.” Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 80.

peasants would presume to go from village to village, upsetting their congregations, in order to teach discredited Anabaptist doctrines and rob them of their sheep and source of livelihood.⁵⁵⁴ It was an usurpation by inferiors that they could not tolerate. And yet it was precisely because Kornya and his companions were peasants who understood the lives and concerns of those they spoke to that they were able to gain a hearing for their proclamation. What the established clergy saw as a disadvantage was only proof that too often they were alienated from their flock.⁵⁵⁵ Note too that Kornya was able to gain an audience in Biharugra when he was introduced to a religious household. The peasant prophets most receptive audience was among those pious members of the Reformed peasantry who were amenable to their critique of the religious life within the established churches. This was the solid foundation upon which the Magyar Baptist mission was built, and why it began to flourish in the 1880's and 1890's.

6. Persecution of the Baptists, Anti-Baptist Polemics, and Heinrich Meyer's Struggle to Achieve State Recognition for the Baptists

554. This is the irony of Garzó's economic line of attack. While Kornya had no economic motivation animating his ministry, Garzó, like many Protestant pastors, was concerned that continued success by the sects would further weaken the position of the established Protestant churches. The Protestant endowments were much smaller than those of the Catholic Church, and the Protestant ministers were much more dependent upon the state for their support from both endowment funds and for the collection of church taxes. They were also discouraged by the weak giving of the people. If the sects continued to successfully convert from among their flock, there was a potential for an economic impact. That this was on Garzó's mind is demonstrated by his description of the first Nazarene movement in Gyoma in 1876, which occurred in the Matakerti area of town, following the introduction of free public education. The people in this district did not want to pay the church tax now that the state was providing for education. "There was a revolt among our people, particularly in the Matakerti district of our town. *'We won't pay, instead we will become Nazarenes'* was the sound of the blind clamor." Garzó, "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]," 366. In this case, conversion to a non-recognized denomination was threatened by some people as a way of avoiding the mandatory church taxes which were perceived as unjust. Garzó was determined to nip any similar movement in the bud.

555. It is perhaps interesting to note the different ways that the Protestant writers in PEIL treated Heinrich Meyer and Mihály Kornya. When Meyer's City Park sermon was reported upon in the pages of PEIL, it was noted to be a rather typical orthodox sermon, if not a bit dull and repetitious. Heinrich Meyer gave every impression of being an educated German, and therefore Meyer was not attacked as mentally ill or intellectually challenged. But concerning Kornya's sermon, Garzó was merciless. "Let me say that upon its first impression, I tried to put together this speech - which was given in such a truly laughable cadence - into an orderly whole as much as it was possible, but Kornya's presentation was so tattered, porous, and flittering here and there that I am not able to give it back word for word." Garzó, "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]," 395. One must wonder how it is that Kornya was such a ridiculous figure as a preacher and yet he was to convert numerous people to the Baptist faith. Obviously what was laughable to Garzó was winsome and convicting to many of Kornya's hearers.

As the leader of the Baptists in Hungary, Heinrich Meyer's experiences of persecution and his efforts to achieve state recognition for the Baptists are but opposite sides of the same coin. The former was the primary motivation for the latter. For the received Protestant churches, state recognition afforded a measure of protection against the depredations of the Catholic Church and its allies in the monarchy, as well as offering the might of the state in enforcing church discipline, and it also guaranteed them financial sustenance as the state collected the church tax and provided other subsidies to fund its activities. As a Baptist, Meyer had no interest in having the state's involvement or support in enforcing church discipline or in the financial affairs of the Baptist mission. He did, however, desire state recognition so that during his evangelism tours he could rightfully demand of local authorities not only that they desist from hindering his activities, but that they also afford him protection, should the local clergy incite hostile crowds to break up his meetings. What Heinrich Meyer wanted, in short, was that the Hungarian government live up to the liberal rhetoric of a 'free church in a free state' that would secure his place in Hungarian society as a minister of the gospel.

Hungarian Baptists would eventually become the only free church Protestant denomination to achieve state recognition under the Dual Monarchy early in the twentieth century in the aftermath of the Hungarian *Kulturkampf*. But this effort was led by indigenous Magyar Baptist leaders who had broken with Meyer, leaving Meyer, ironically, as the leader of the 'unrecognized' Baptist faction in Hungary. The development of church politics in the aftermath of the Compromise has already been laid out, with its illiberal implications for the sects. Under the system that evolved, while confessional equality was the stated goal of the successive Hungarian governments following the Compromise, until the church political impasse could be resolved, sects such as the Baptists were in the view of the state merely 'tolerated' and not 'received' or 'recognized' along with the attendant privileges and rights that such a status conferred. As such the sects were subject to VKM ministerial oversight and ordinances developed through customary law in order to determine the limits of their place in Hungarian society. Oftentimes the responsible Minister found himself under pressure from Protestant church leaders to crack down on the burgeoning sects. This too has already been discussed, as has the variety of Protestant responses to the challenge of the sects. Here I wish to narrow the focus to the actual experiences of persecution faced by Meyer and his co-workers, his attempts to achieve state recognition in response to these troubles, and the ways in which various Protestant churchmen responded to the Baptist evangelistic efforts and to Meyer's campaign for recognition.

If Heinrich Meyer had been content to confine his evangelistic activities to Budapest, where relative anonymity and broad toleration was the norm, his entrance into the church political debates taking place in Hungary would likely have come much later. But because Meyer wanted to be a missionary pastor to all the German diaspora of Hungary, within a mere three years of the beginning of his ministry he was a topic of discussion at the very highest levels of the Hungarian political scene, and was building cordial relationships with powerful people.

The incident that prompted Meyer to seek redress from the Hungarian government took place in Heltau, a Saxon town in Transylvania just to the south of the city of Hermannstadt, or Nagyszeben, the administrative center of the region.⁵⁵⁶ As Meyer noted in his autobiography, Heltau was the home of a young colporteur who worked for Johann Rottmayer, the British and Foreign Bible Society Depositary in Kolozsvár. In this instance, as in so many instances in the eastern part of Hungary, Meyer's work depended upon the contacts passed on to him from Rottmayer or Novák. The colporteur was Johann Gromen, and Meyer described him as a 'seeking soul', by which he signified someone who was not yet a Baptist, but likely of a pietistic bent open to the Baptist message.⁵⁵⁷ The young colporteur's father extended an invitation for Meyer to come visit and share his message with them. Meyer's subsequent letter to Daniel Irányi describing the incident in Heltau places his arrival on Saturday, February 5th, 1876.⁵⁵⁸ That first night, Meyer gave a presentation in the elder Gromen's house, "to which he invited his friends and also the minister."⁵⁵⁹ Meyer later estimated the crowd at 20 to 25 people that first night. The next night that number had risen to around 40 people. On the third night the house was full of people and some were standing outside on the street in the snow to listen to him. Meyer recounted that if he only had been able to continue in this fashion, in time he was certain that a small congregation would have resulted from his efforts in Heltau.⁵⁶⁰

556. Heltau is modern Cisnădie in Transylvania, and is called Nagydisznód in Hungarian. Hermannstadt was one of the seven fortified Saxon cities that gave Transylvania its German name, Siebenbürgen. The Hungarian name for the city is Nagyszeben. It's Romanian name is Sibiu.

557. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 37.

558. Meyer, Heinrich. Letter to Dániel Irányi. Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, 1876. 1. Typewritten transcription.

559. Meyer, Letter to Dániel Irányi, 1.

560. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–

However, on this night a policeman came, asked for his passport, and left. After a short while two officers returned and asked Meyer to go with them. “It was about 9 o’clock in the evening on one of the coldest nights. We were hardly out on the street when both gentlemen began to revile me as a bum, a vagabond, a crook, and similar things.”⁵⁶¹ Meyer was lead a short way until a man with keys appeared from out of the shadows and let them into an cold, dark, and decrepit building, where against his protests Meyer was pushed into a bitterly cold cell and locked up for the night. The younger Gromen tried to have him released, but to no avail.

The next morning Meyer was roughly interrogated, indicted, and sent to Hermannstadt to go to court. In a bureaucratic comedy, Meyer was lead from one court to another until at last “I was released through the intervention of the Police Director and the City Captain of Hermannstadt until a residency card for Hermannstadt was issued for me.”⁵⁶² Since his passport and luggage were back in Heltau, Meyer returned to collect them, arriving at 8 o’clock in the evening. The elder Gromen reported to the local authorities Meyer’s return and the disposition of the proceedings. The following morning as Meyer was eating breakfast, he was told he had half an hour to leave Heltau or he would be locked up again.⁵⁶³

From Heltau Meyer travelled to Timișoara, and from there he made his way to Novi Sad in order to visit the Baptist brethren. Meyer registered with the local authorities and experienced the same difficulties. This time, however, he was not arrested and he decided to ignore the order to leave. After an eight day stay, as he boarded the carriage to leave the city, the police finally showed up to enforce the order.⁵⁶⁴

The continuous harassment by the local authorities, usually at the instigation of the clergy, which Meyer experienced whenever he moved beyond the cosmopolitan confines of Budapest, drove Meyer to seek redress from the central government.⁵⁶⁵ There

1919], 37.

561. Meyer, Letter to Dániel Irányi, 1.

562. Meyer, Letter to Dániel Irányi, 1.

563. Meyer, Letter to Dániel Irányi, 2.

564. Meyer, Letter to Dániel Irányi, 2.

565. Meyer does not say whether his rough treatment by the local authorities in Heltau came at the instigation of the minister, but it is likely that Herr Gromen made a mistake in inviting him to hear Meyer. In the latter half of Meyer’s letter to Irányi, he makes explicit the persecution he experienced in the

are two primary sources for Meyer's first efforts in the church political realm, a letter written to Dániel Irányi at the time of these incidents and then the narrative written down later in Meyer's autobiography. Of these two sources for Meyer's first efforts, the contemporaneously written letter is to be preferred over the recollections jotted down decades later in Meyer's autobiography.⁵⁶⁶

In this letter to Irányi, dated October 16th, 1876, Meyer recounts two meetings with government officials in April of that year. According to his later recollection, it was Irányi who suggested that Meyer seek a meeting with the Prime Minister, and he gave Meyer his name card to facilitate the meeting.⁵⁶⁷ It is instructive to cite in full the progress and result of these meetings from the letter:

On April 1st of this year I turned in a petition to the Prime Minister and the Interior Minister in which I complained about the evils I again experienced and asked for help. On April 5th I had an audience with State Secretary Baron Kemény, in which he explained that the government can practice toleration to a certain extent, but when the affected ministers complain, things must be handled according to the law, although the activities in which I was engaged did not

German villages of Zips, the German designation for what is now Slovakia, came at the instigation of the Lutheran ministers.

566. The reason for this is that the narrative in the autobiography is convoluted and departs from that of the letter in ways that are hard to reconcile. Among the recollections that must be treated with some doubt is Meyer's contention that it was the new Prime Minister, Kálmán Tisza, of the Liberal Party, who suggested that Meyer should turn to Dániel Irányi, the leader of one of the more radical opposition parties, the 1848 Party, for support. While this is not impossible, it seems unlikely. Any close observer of the church political debate in Hungary of that time was aware that since the time of the Compromise, Irányi was the champion in parliament of the ideals of 1848 in the area of religious liberty. It did not take the leading politician of the time to direct Meyer to Irányi. I remain agnostic as to how Meyer came into contact with him. Then, according to the autobiography, after Irányi suggests that Meyer take his complaints directly to the Prime Minister, Meyer makes an appointment, but states that in the absence of the Prime Minister at the appointed time, he met instead with State Secretary, Count Gyula Szápáry. In the letter, however, the State Secretary is Baron Gábor Kemény, who was at that time the State Secretary for the Interior Ministry. Returning to the narrative in the autobiography, Meyer then briefly notes several meetings with Szápáry before the parliamentary debate that occurred in December of 1876. This aspect of Meyer's narrative also deserves a measure of scepticism because Szápáry's tenure in the Interior Ministry ended before Tisza became the Prime Minister, and during the course of Tisza's government Szápáry's portfolios were in the area of finance. It was his service in this area that resulted in Emperor Franz Joseph asking Szápáry to form the Hungarian government in 1890 when Tisza stepped down, and he served as Prime Minister from 1890 to 1892. By claiming to have met with Szápáry several times in this later narrative, Meyer elevated the importance of his contacts with figures inside the Hungarian government. I will assume that this misrecollection was inadvertent. Nevertheless, in the letter Meyer's second meeting is with Ágoston Trefort, the VKM Minister, and this is undoubtedly the accurate account of what took place. We also know from the diary selections from Heinrich Meyer that he met with Trefort to discuss recognition of the Baptists. Thus in all respects the narrative in the letter is superior to that in the autobiography.

567. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 40.

represent an offense against the law, because such meetings are of a very private nature.

On April 8th I had an audience with VKM Minister Trefort, who received me warmly, and promised to do what he could...

On Tuesday, June 6th I received an answer from the above mentioned Ministers in which I was told in the end that I am permitted to hold private talks wherever I want, only I must report in advance to the affected local authorities, and I must observe the statutory police regulations for private talks open to the public.⁵⁶⁸

The first impression that comes from this narrative is the strange juxtaposition of Heinrich Meyer being treated as a common criminal by various local authorities with being politely received by some of the most powerful politicians in the country.

The second and more substantive issue that comes from this recounting is how clearly the church political stalemate that would characterize the long Tisza era was evident from this early interaction with Meyer. Immediately it is spelled out by Baron Kemény that the new Baptist fellowship is merely “tolerated” by the government, there is no promise of the government striving to soon enact legislation to provide for general religious freedom, nor of a process whereby the Baptists could achieve recognition and a semblance of confessional equality with the received churches. Rather, Meyer is informed that his private meetings do not contravene the law. However, Baron Kemény reminds Meyer that the government has other constituents who are not pleased with the toleration being shown to him. Thus he makes clear that should the clergy complain to the government, the government has a responsibility to ensure that all relevant laws are being enforced. This position was affirmed by the ruling from Minister Trefort, who added the requirement that Meyer register with local authorities and follow all police regulations.

The last part of Meyer’s letter to Irányi is taken up with his experiences in northern Hungary in which he followed the guidelines laid out by Minister Trefort and still faced harassment and obstruction from local authorities at the instigation of the clergy. In Michelsdorf Meyer was confronted by such hostility. He described what unfolded thusly:

I was indeed allowed to come to town that day, but I was strictly forbidden from reading the Bible with anyone. If I was found with someone with an open Bible beside me, I would be punished.⁵⁶⁹

568. Meyer, Letter to Dániel Irányi, 2–3.

569. Meyer, Letter to Dániel Irányi, 3.

It became clear from these experiences that some provincial authorities had no intention of respecting the toleration touted by the liberal government in Budapest.

This explains why Meyer was writing this letter to Irányi, though it is evident that Meyer had already established a working relationship with him. It was something Irányi needed in order to take these matters to the parliament and put pressure on the government to do something about the lack of religious freedom in Hungary. It would appear that Meyer did have a very constructive relationship with Irányi, based upon the source documents. Meyer described Irányi in positive terms:

This gentleman possessed a puritan frame of mind and was independent of the denominations. As the occasion warranted he would declare that to be without a denomination was not the same thing as to be without religion. He was a distinguished politician... He gladly received me, listened to me, and what I presented to him was clearly grist for his mill. He fought for that kind of law on religion which had as its goal the separation of church and state. Year after year he brought forth his proposed legislation. Everything I told him about what I experienced and my difficulties he brought before the parliament and used it to support the need for freedom of religion.⁵⁷⁰

The letter that Meyer wrote to Irányi, which read like an unadorned list of complaints without the usual pleasantries one would expect to find in a letter to a politician, makes perfect sense if it was written in response to Irányi's request to have "grist for his mill" in written form.

What then did Irányi do with the ammunition handed to him by Heinrich Meyer? It was added to his list of reasons why the parliament needed to finish the business it had begun in 1868 of enacting legislation in the spirit of 1848 with regards to religious liberty, although in truth Irányi wanted to move beyond the more restrictive concept of confessional equality and reciprocity to a general principle of religious freedom along the lines of the American experiment. Thus when Irányi was able to bring up for debate again his motion which would require the VKM Minister to draft legislation for submission to parliament providing for religious liberty, and which likewise would require the Minister of Justice to draft legislation providing for civil marriage, he had a new and more sympathetic denomination facing persecution to bring before the members of parliament.

This debate took place on the floor of the parliament on December 2nd, 1876. It was a lively debate which encapsulates the various issues at play when it comes to why the sects were kept in administrative limbo - not truly free, certainly not equal, but not facing systematic repression from the state either. Since this first debate in which the

⁵⁷⁰. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 40.

Baptists were brought before the attention of the deputies was representative of how these issues played out over time, I will spend some space recounting the flow of the debate. Then I will reflect on what this meant for Heinrich Meyer's efforts to be able to carry out his missionary work unobstructed.

Irányi set the terms of the debate from his point of view by noting two things. First, when he put forth his motion on religious liberty at the same time last year, VKM Minister Trefort countered by promising more limited legislation granting recognition to the Nazarenes and providing for civil marriage. This obviously did not happen, which brought him to his second point, which was to reiterate the need for his original motion: "what is required is not just the recognition of a certain denomination, but the presentation of a general law providing for freedom of religion is needed in Hungary so that in every house every citizen is free to worship God according to his own convictions."⁵⁷¹ Irányi followed his call for a general law on religious liberty by recounting the history of the parliament expressing its wishes for legislation to address these issues and the failure of successive governments to enact meaningful reform in anything approaching the spirit of 1848.

Irányi's ringing indictment of the current status of religious liberty has already been cited, where he proclaimed that whoever argued that religious liberty existed already in Hungary, as did the government, either "does not know what freedom of religion is, or he does not know the laws of Hungary and he does not know what is happening in Hungary."⁵⁷² His passionate rhetoric continued as he further developed his argument that mere confessional equality among the received churches was insufficient to qualify as true religious liberty.

In Hungary the states citizens are free to become Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed, they can become Unitarians, Greek Uniate or Orthodox, they are free to convert from one received religion to another, but they are not free to convert to the Jewish religion, nor to any other Christian religion. Despite all of this, the Prime Minister declares that there exists complete freedom of religion in Hungary, and the passage of another law is not necessary. Gentlemen, is this religious liberty?! When a person's conscience must move within a sphere from almost 2000 years ago on the one hand, and from three to three and a half centuries ago on the other hand? It is a procrustean bed, gentlemen! It is moral tyranny, not freedom of religion.⁵⁷³

571. Zeller, 479.

572. Zeller, 475.

573. Zeller, 476.

Of course it was not just in the sphere of conversion from one religion to another that freedom of conscience was violated, but also in the laws governing how children of mixed marriages were to be raised, in which the decision was taken out of the hands of the parents and usurped by the state. Irányi here was referring to the compromise legislation that sought to put a halt to the ‘assurances’ demanded by the Catholic priests that all children resulting from a mixed marriage would be raised Catholic. The legislation was a blow to freedom of conscience in a misguided attempt to ensure confessional equality to the satisfaction of the Protestants. And to add insult to injury, because the law lacked teeth, it was ignored by the priests.

Irányi believed that the only solution to these sectarian problems was to have general freedom of religion and civil marriage. It was also needed to deal with the arrival of new Christian denominations into Hungary. The Nazarenes were the first to rise to prominence, and Irányi spent some time going through their tribulations and the unsuccessful attempts to place them on a firmer legal basis of accommodation. Irányi then introduced the Baptists to his fellow deputies.

In the last few years a new denomination began whose followers are called Baptists. The Baptists, which have millions of believers in England and America, are a Christian denomination, more specifically a branch of Protestantism, who esteem the Holy Scriptures, and especially the New Testament, as the foundation of their religion. They have no priests, but pastors and preachers who perform their religious observances, otherwise they fulfill every obligation towards the state that is required of them. At the head of this denomination stands a gentleman from Germany named Heinrich Meyer. This gentleman, after three years working here in the capital without any hindrance, has gathered a small group around himself...⁵⁷⁴

A couple of observations are worth noting about this introduction of the Baptists. First, Irányi seeks to dispel any notion that the Baptists are a small fringe group, whose growth would be incompatible with a modern, democratic society. He does this by pointing out that in those societies noted for their democratic governance and personal freedoms, the Baptists have thrived and are considered just another Protestant denomination. Second, he immediately makes an implicit contrast between the Nazarenes, who were pacifists who wished to separate themselves from civic entanglements of any kind, and the Baptists who believed in fulfilling their civic obligations, including military service. This contrast would be increasingly emphasized by Irányi and the Baptists themselves in order to win a more sympathetic hearing in an environment in which Magyar nationalism was very strong.

574. Zeller, 479.

After this introduction, Irányi's comments closely mirror both the content and chronology of Meyer's letter to him. Meyer's observation above that Irányi always presented to the members of parliament what he shared with Irányi about his experiences and difficulties seems a fair assessment in the light of the close correspondence between the letter and Irányi's comments about the Baptists.

Irányi then went on to describe problems involving mixed marriages between Catholics and Protestants and intransigence on the part of the Catholic hierarchy in the face of state intervention as further proof of the lack of religious freedom. And this topic was the introduction to his final indictment against the government, the reason that church political reform was at a stalemate:

Therefore gentlemen, if public opinion within the country desires this, if the parliament wants to press on with it, why then has the Minister not fulfilled the wishes of the people and the parliament? The answer is simple and clear: the government is afraid of the priests.⁵⁷⁵

This charge brought forth both loud cheers from the nationalist opposition and jeers from the members of the governing Liberal Party. It was a direct challenge and a slap in the face to the new government. And the sting in the charge was that Irányi was in the essentials correct. The Tisza government could not survive in a confrontation over these issues, and preferred therefore to deal with conflict through piecemeal ministerial ordinances rather than through the perilous legislative endeavor it would require to achieve real reform in the church political sphere.

Tisza's response was varied and vigorous. He of course denied that the government was afraid of the priests, and warned that an ill-conceived push for greater freedom can often produce the opposite result. The substance of his argument was that despite some problems to be resolved, religious liberty existed in Hungary. He argued:

Freedom of religion already exists in Hungary. That I can say about freedom of religion in Hungary, it doesn't exist yet in terms of the law...from the first I have said that in the area of religion there were many questions waiting for a solution. I have recognized that with regard to many questions a law is necessary. I recognized that then, I recognize it today as well, but this I deny, that it is possible to say that there is no freedom of religion in Hungary. Because I would say this, with apologies ... to what the honorable gentleman said, that a law is necessary, [because] in Hungary everybody can freely believe their own faith, before God and man I say that a law [regarding freedom of religion] is not necessary, because it already exists, that very thing exists, that is, that everyone can freely believe

575. Zeller, 482.

their faith.⁵⁷⁶

This argument was open to dispute, and as we shall see, Irányi openly ridiculed it as a tautologous, and therefore empty definition of religious freedom. Tisza argued that the government wanted to solve the various problems in an incremental fashion, not through the lofty rhetoric which characterized Irányi's "excessive liberalism" that would, if implemented, cause more problems and entail more dangers to liberty than presently existed.

As proof that religious liberty existed in Hungary, Tisza attempted to turn Irányi's own words against him regarding the new denominations. He argued:

I just want to note that some singular events to a large measure show that in Hungary - perhaps going beyond the current laws - there is religious freedom; I believe the honorable deputy knows this very well indeed, because he himself mentioned that the Nazarene's numbers are growing, he himself said that in the capital the Baptists have succeeded in planting a small community. So I ask you, in which other country could all this openly take place - even if there are setbacks - but even so does this not prove that here there is no religious persecution, and in this regard he in vain slanders his own homeland.⁵⁷⁷

There is a measure of truth in Tisza's argument, for without the active suppression of suspect religious activity by the Habsburg imposed authoritarian rule following the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution, Heinrich Meyer would not have been able to lay claim to the distinction of being the founder of the first sustained Baptist movement in Hungary, that honor would have gone to Johann Rottmayer. On the other hand, the argument is relative, and it depends on one's definition of religious liberty and what conditions are necessary to obtain it. For example, while the fledgling Baptist movement in Budapest withered and died before the Compromise was reached, the Nazarenes, who were already growing beyond the first few pioneers by the time the Revolution was suppressed, continued to grow even under the repressive conditions that existed during the Bach era. As the Reformed minister Antal Szöllősi noted in 1871,

the coercion with which they wanted to deter [the Nazarenes] from their convictions disciplined them, they began on the one hand to boast of the martyr's crown, and on the other hand they strove all the more zealously to bring to fruition their desire to convert others. The effect of this effort was to bring forth the opposite effect from that desired.⁵⁷⁸

576. Zeller, 484-85.

577. Zeller, 485-86.

578. Kardos, and Szigeti, 122.

If the Nazarenes continued to grow during this time, would Tisza concede that religious liberty existed during the period of passive resistance? How could he when, as he noted during his speech, “I defended freedom of religion and conscience during the time when it didn’t win you applause, but when it was possible to earn a much different reward,” referring to his role in the Patent fight.⁵⁷⁹ So the mere fact that the Nazarenes and Baptists were growing did not prove his point. Rather, his argument was that relative to what preceded the return of constitutional rule in Hungary with the advent of the Compromise, and in view of the fact that his government practiced toleration of the sects, religious liberty could be said to exist in Hungary. The argument has some merit, but for Irányi, religious freedom was a liberal principle to be realized in law, and not a relative good that could exist in practice in some contexts, but not in others. Religious freedom could not truly and fully be said to exist when it existed “beyond the current laws,” rather than being protected and enshrined by the law.

Tisza’s relative arguments were taken up and defended by Gedeon Tanárky, the VKM State Secretary. As he explained, while Hungary has always demonstrated a certain tolerance with regards to religion, there is an organic process in developing towards general religious freedom. “Not every European state has matured to such a standard, on this field we still are not the last, because many European countries are still behind Hungary in this regard, and even now there are state religions in parts of the more cultured West.”⁵⁸⁰ In this manner Tanárky defended an organic and gradual approach to expanding religious freedom along the lines laid out by Tisza, which in practice meant resolving sectarian disputes through ministerial ordinance and customary law rather than through legislation establishing general religious freedom, which would force Hungarian society to transform itself in ways for which it was not yet prepared.

Tanárky also sought to counter Irányi in some of the specifics he cited, and he therefore made some very interesting arguments about Heinrich Meyer that tied back into his general arguments about religious freedom.

As for the question which my honorable friend Dániel Irányi raised about the Baptists, and in particular about Meyer the missionary, the question was improperly raised here, because he also enjoys the beneficence of the Hungarian government and of Hungarian tolerance, for it must be mentioned with regard to this man that he did not come here to practice his religion, but rather to convert people. However, he poorly chose his mission field among the Saxon Lutherans of Transylvania and the Szepesség, who cling very closely to their religion and

579. Zeller, 485.

580. Zeller, 521.

hindered his work. For the question is how should any state settle the question of proselytization and the issue of permitting missionaries... Proselytization is an aggressive procedure. The missionary goes to a people and declares to them that what they have believed until now is false and the true faith is what I am telling you. Every renewal of faith came about in this way and was spread in this way. However, we know that the states to a large extent attach greater weight and turn greater attention to these former things than to other things such as new sects spreading on the state's territory. Such states like Japan do not deal with the issue of missionaries, because they say: We have our own civilization, a state religion, and therefore we have no need for them to ruffle any feathers.⁵⁸¹

Tanárky makes a specific point about Meyer's purpose in residing in Hungary, and about his chosen area of work, and then brings this back to the broader issue of the interests of the state with regard to religious freedom. Tanárky suggested, first, that Heinrich Meyer did not come to Hungary to freely practice his religion free from persecution, but rather he came to Hungary as a missionary to convert others to the Baptist faith. Secondly, he made a mistake in whom he targeted for conversion, namely the Saxon Lutherans in Transylvania and northern Hungary who were just as zealous in holding to their religion as Meyer was in propagating his. The implication was that if Meyer has suffered for his Baptist faith, it was suffering that he brought upon himself. The government, in so far as it had any role in the matter, demonstrated tolerance and forbearance toward Meyer.

Tanárky then moved from the specific to the general and pointed out to the deputies that proselytism is by its nature an aggressive activity. The question then, according to Tanárky, is what are the state's responsibilities towards its own society versus its responsibilities toward missionaries who upset the peace through their preaching. States have an interest in protecting their social order, including the beliefs which support that social order. They are much more concerned about these things than about protecting missionary activity on their territory. Hence the example of Japan that Tanárky cited. Tanárky infers that the Hungarian government must balance these competing concerns, whereas Irányi wants to upset that balance in favor of the sects. Moreover, any trouble that Heinrich Meyer encountered from the Saxons was a natural response of protection to ensure the social well-being of their community, and the Hungarian government can only do so much to protect missionaries.

Following Gedeon Tanárky was Gábor Papp, who sided with Irányi with some interesting exceptions. In particular, Papp is noteworthy for his defense of Heinrich Meyer against Tanárky's comments, which resulted in a warm friendship between Meyer and Papp. What made Papp's defense of Heinrich Meyer all the more interesting is that

581. Zeller, 523.

he was the Bishop of the Dunántúli Diocese of the Reformed Church.⁵⁸² Insight into his point of view can be discerned from the following remark:

Let my distinguished fellow deputy Dániel Irányi be convinced that if anyone is a friend - a friend with a true spirit and a pure heart - to religious freedom and freedom of conscience properly conceived, I am such a friend. I am because I know very well that my own church only achieved its right to existence after a difficult struggle. I am because I know very well that when the Protestant church fought its way into the life of the states, as it were, when they raised their banner on high, the watchword written on this banner was freedom of conscience and freedom of religion.⁵⁸³

Papp was among those who could not reconcile their understanding of Protestant principles and Protestant history with the desire to see the power of the state employed against other religious denominations or to see state sanctioned discrimination based upon religious faith. A different perspective comes from Heinrich Meyer's description of Papp. Meyer was pleasantly surprised to learn that Papp "was a believer" who had an expansive definition of a Protestant Christian; Meyer noted that Papp said: "According to my point of view everyone who believes in Christ and serves the cause of the gospel is a Protestant."⁵⁸⁴ Papp was also frequently critical of the state of his church, he believed that it was not up to the task confronting it and that given the current state of affairs, it was headed towards division. This ecumenical attitude mirrored that of one of the leading voices of the Reformed evangelical renewal, the Debrecen theologian Imre Révész, who wrote in 1877 concerning the Baptist mission that it would "be a shame to hinder them, especially in those places where the modern trends are given a free rein by the church authorities."⁵⁸⁵ As Meyer recounted Papp's point of view: "He expressed his worry that the camp of the faithless was growing larger. He also counted Bishops among the faithless, because they were brought up on a rationalistic theology."⁵⁸⁶ Papp then was,

582. The Dunántúli Diocese was, as the Hungarian word suggests, the diocese beyond the Danube, that is, western Hungary between the river and Austria, with the major centers being Pápa and Veszprém.

583. Zeller, 525.

584. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 49–50.

585. Szigeti, "A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches]," 74.

586. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 50.

according to Meyer, within the evangelical stream of the Reformed Church and possessed an irenic spirit with regard to the new denominations.

However, that irenic spirit did have its limit, and that limit had its origin in another profound commitment Papp held. Continuing on where the above quote ended, Papp explained:

Only in this do I deviate from my fellow deputy Irányi and I want to explain that as the true friend of freedom I desire freedom in the area of religion as well, but not license. There are limits to freedom, and that limit is order, and only when the two go hand in hand is freedom secured. This limit must also be observed with regard to freedom of religion...⁵⁸⁷

Papp desired freedom of religion, but not at the expense of the Hungarian state. It was his belief that the pacifism of the Nazarene's was such a potential threat to the Hungarian state, especially given the fragile relationships among the various nationalities comprising Hungary, that extending freedom of religion to them would represent a move beyond freedom to license.⁵⁸⁸ In this argument Papp demonstrated that Magyar nationalism was another one of his abiding commitments. He proclaimed:

I love my church, I cling to it, but if the Hungarian state was put in danger by the articles of faith of my church... no matter how much I cling to my church, I would rather separate from my church than from my Hungarian nationality... I repeat again that I want freedom of religion in all of its fullness even as my honorable fellow deputy Irányi. I would merely draw a line within which it is necessary to remain, that is that it would not turn into license. I would declare that every church should possess perfect freedom of religion, with the exception of those whose articles of faith endanger the interests of the Hungarian state...⁵⁸⁹

This hesitation to extend full freedom of religion to the Nazarenes because of their pacifism was widely shared, and for the same reason.⁵⁹⁰ Heinrich Meyer shared that Papp

587. Zeller, 525.

588. Papp was engaging in a play on words in this contrast between freedom, which is "szabadság" in Hungarian, and license, which is "szabadosság".

589. Zeller, 526.

590. This concern about the pacifism of the Nazarenes as a danger to the Hungarian state expresses a sentiment similar to that put forth by a common expression in American jurisprudence which declares that the constitution is not a suicide pact. The phrase was made famous by a dissenting opinion by Justice Robert H. Jackson in *Terminiello v. Chicago* (1949), in which he wrote: "The choice is not between order and liberty. It is between liberty with order and anarchy without either. There is danger that, if the court does not temper its doctrinaire logic with a little practical wisdom, it will convert the constitutional Bill of Rights into a suicide pact." In this case the Supreme Court overturned the disorderly conduct conviction of a priest whose anti-semitic and pro-nazi provocations incited a riot.

could not reconcile himself with defending the Nazarenes, because of their pacifism, and when he did rise to their defense, it was only to argue that they should not be persecuted.⁵⁹¹ This hesitation among some to stand up for the Nazarenes hampered Irányi's efforts to convince the deputies and the government of the need for a general law on freedom of religion, and pushed him in time to emphasize the Baptists over the Nazarenes in making his case for religious freedom for all.

We now come to Papp's defense of Heinrich Meyer. His argument was brief, and rested on the distinction between the messenger and the message being proclaimed.

My fellow deputy Irányi mentioned the Baptists and here I want to note that I do not agree with the honorable State Secretary Tanárky's defense, as if [the local authorities] took the appropriate measures concerning Heinrich Meyer, with regards to his proselytism. If ideas do not have their apostles, they do not spread; Heinrich Meyer came to spread the truth according to his own convictions and he strove to make converts to what he believes to be true religion. All ideas have their apostles who spread the ideas, but in this endeavor it is not the missionaries that convert, but the ideas; it is the truth that converts. In my opinion the truth is not the exclusive property of one church, and he who wants to spread the truth cannot make as his main argument - I think - that all truth is in his denomination, but rather it is necessary to step into the field of battle with the weapons appropriate to the truth, because when ideas struggle with each other the truth always wins, for the truth develops out of the fight of ideas. A church which feels it has the truth does not fear the uptake of the battle. But that church which does not fight arguments with counter-arguments, but does battle with the oppressive weapon of force, that church itself recognizes that it has no truth, that its spiritual strength is too weak to oppose others with its weapons, or, if it has the truth, there is no strength in its anointing to prove the truth.⁵⁹²

State Secretary Tanárky wished to suggest that the persecution of Heinrich Meyer by the various local authorities was understandable given the "aggressive" nature of the activity in which he was engaged, evangelism, and because this evangelism was perceived by the authorities as threatening to the existing social harmony rooted in the particulars of their religion and culture. Papp countered by arguing that in a battle of ideas, one must do battle with the message and not the messenger. Since the truth is not the monopoly of one church, it is contested territory. Truth then is best revealed through the reasoned argumentation of ideas. For a church to resort to weapons of force rather than to ideas is a tacit admission that it either lacks the truth or the strength of its convictions. In this way Papp turned the question away from a pragmatic question of the responsibilities of the

591. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 49–50.

592. Zeller, 527–28.

authorities to social order over against the freedom of individuals that upset that social order to a question of principle for both the civil and religious authorities - does not freedom of conscience demand that ideas are free to be spread by those who embrace them and does not freedom of religion demand that civil and religious authorities only counter ideas with ideas, and not coercive force? In making this argument, Papp defended Meyer and his right to spread his understanding of true religion through proselytism.

The last word will be given to Dániel Irányi, as he made his final plea for religious liberty and rebutted the arguments of those opposing his legislative proposal, particularly Prime Minister Tisza. Irányi's counter-arguments correspond to the two arguments made by Tisza. The first argument made by Tisza was that there already was religious liberty in Hungary, because people could believe as they wished. This definition provoked a scornful response from Irányi:

Freedom of faith, according to [Tisza], is as follows: what we hold to be true in the innermost part of our hearts, what we hide in our hearts and do not share with anyone. This is freedom of religion to the honorable deputy! Neither legislation nor its guarantee by the power of the state is necessary. This kind of freedom exists everywhere and has existed in all times. It existed ... in the Roman Empire during the time of the catacombs, it existed in France during the time of the persecution of the Waldenses, Albigenses, and the Huguenots... it existed in Spain and the German lands during the persecutions of the Reformation, it existed in Hungary during the reign of the "Lutherani comburantur" law⁵⁹³ and it existed in England and Sweden under the laws that denied civil equality to Catholics. This is not freedom of religion. This kind of freedom from a political perspective exists everywhere and in all cases, because no one can examine the heart, only God who is all-knowing can look into the heart. But what is necessary in Hungary, just like in every other place, is freedom of religion.⁵⁹⁴

The weakness of the definition of freedom of religion expounded by Tisza during the debate was a tempting target for the sharp polemics of Irányi, and he pointedly ridiculed Tisza's position. Any definition of freedom of religion that would still obtain during noted periods of persecution is open to such a line of attack. In contrast to Tisza's minimal definition, Irányi laid out his own robust view of what constitutes religious freedom:

What constitutes religious freedom? In my opinion religious freedom exists when what we believe to be true in our spirit, we can openly profess and freely make known by our actions whether on our own or in the company of others, in public

593. The 'Lutherani comburantur' law was passed at the instigation of the Catholic hierarchy by the Hungarian Diet in 1524 shortly after the ideas of Martin Luther had begun to take hold among the Saxons of Hungary. It called for the burning of Lutheran heretics, but was never put into practice.

594. Zeller, 543.

just the same as in the family hearth, and without suffering in the least the loss of our rights, providing that neither our doctrines, nor our practices are opposed to the true and highest goals of the state. This is how I understand religious liberty...⁵⁹⁵

Neither the laws of Hungary, nor the reality on the ground measured up to this definition of religious freedom.

This Tisza could not deny, because even he talked of setbacks to religious freedom, though he sought to paint them as exceptions that prove the rule. Tisza also mentioned some areas in which the law was lacking, but he argued that sweeping legislation enacted by parliament was not the answer, but rather case by case rulings and ordinances by the appropriate governmental ministry was a better solution. To this Irányi responded that the grievances he brought before the parliament constituted more than mere setbacks, but rather they were concrete examples of legally sanctioned religious discrimination that the state needed to address in order to provide true religious freedom for all of its citizens:

Among such setbacks which the existing laws run up against are, for example, when a minister changes the birth registration of children born from a legal marriage in order to make the child illegitimate ... Such a setback I believe was used to persecute the Baptist missionary! But much larger problems than this exist which are not possible to be called setbacks, which are outright encroachments on a person's rights as a result of the laws. Because it is not a setback, in as much as it is rooted in the law, that a Jew cannot marry a Christian, and vice versa. It is not a setback, but an implication of what the law commands that a Christian cannot convert to Judaism. It is not a setback, but what the law orders, that the followers of the received religions can only convert to other received Christian religions. It is not a setback, but it is also what is ordered that parents can only baptize and raise their children in certain stipulated religions!⁵⁹⁶

All these were concrete examples of religious discrimination rooted in the current laws. Irányi believed that in order to eliminate the discriminatory legal hierarchy of religions in Hungary, and the infringements against individual freedom for citizens in their choices of whom to marry or how to raise their children that resulted from this legal framework, legislation mandating confessional equality of religions and providing for civil marriage was necessary. Thus Irányi asked: "What hope is there that the government will fix these problems, these encroachments on the rights of individuals?"⁵⁹⁷

595. Zeller, 543.

596. Zeller, 547.

597. Zeller, 547.

In an ironic rhetorical flourish, Irányi then took one of Tisza's arguments and turned it on its head.

I believe the Prime Minister himself also argued that freedom of religion and toleration exists in Hungary because, as he said, the citizens do not persecute one another on the basis of religion - this should clear up every worry. But if citizens truly are so broadminded, if here there is a general toleration, if that is what really exists here, then it should also be expressed through the law, I am just not capable of understanding why it should give birth to outrage.⁵⁹⁸

It is difficult to argue against the logic of this proposition - if freedom of religion exists among the people, its protection should then also be enshrined in the law. Why should a powerful minority dictate that freedom of religion and freedom of conscience be denied to the citizens of Hungary when that is what they practice and desire? Irányi then drove his point home in terms sure to animate the Hungarian nationalist opposition: "And if the Catholic clergy does not want to bow before public opinion, the fulfillment of the will of the people cannot be suspended because of their desires and wants."⁵⁹⁹

Finally, Irányi argues that legislation enacting real freedom of religion is needed in Hungary not just because it is what the people want, but also in order to strengthen religion itself. Far from worrying that such legislation would inflame sectarian tensions among the masses, Irányi believed the opposite to be true:

Indeed I am convinced that the introduction of religious freedom will encourage greater piety. Let me denote the examples of other countries. Gentlemen! Where there is religious freedom, there are the deepest, warmest, and most blessed religious sentiments. The full range of religious sentiments are represented in England and North America and I am convinced that religious freedom would give birth to the same result in our homeland as well.⁶⁰⁰

The vitality of religion in America was a recurrent theme for Irányi, and bears resemblance to the arguments made by Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America*, a work Irányi probably read during his exile in France, which spoke of the strong role of religion in American society that Tocqueville attributed to the separation of church and state.⁶⁰¹ In a parliamentary debate in March of 1879 Irányi argued a similar point:

598. Zeller, 548.

599. Zeller, 548.

600. Zeller, 549.

601. Following the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution Irányi spent his years of exile in France, where he wrote a political history of the Hungarian Revolution. It is reasonable to assume that Irányi was familiar with the arguments made in *Democracy in America*. Irányi's work, *Histoire politique de*

Indeed in England and America countless denominations exist without endangering the interests of the state, but rather inasmuch as the new denominations regularly develop greater religious fervor than the older denominations, they end up competing with each other, the new against the educational and charitable institutions of the older denominations; this just promotes the goals of the state.⁶⁰²

The freedom of the churches to compete with one another served to strengthen the cause of religion, in the view of Irányi. His vision was one that looked towards the contemporary American experiment, rather than to the religious conflicts that had devastated Europe in the preceding centuries. The Hungarian government under Tisza feared moving forward and in so doing unleashing sectarian conflict that would destabilize the country and cause the government to fall.

Before moving to his concluding remarks, Irányi quickly dispatched Tisza's second argument for the existence of religious freedom in Hungary. Since this argument concerned the growth of the sects, Irányi's rebuttal is worth noting.

The Prime Minister deduced from the fact that the Nazarenes and Baptists in Hungary are growing that it must follow that there is religious freedom here and one cannot talk of persecution. I beg the pardon of the honorable Prime Minister, but if the fact that any denomination is growing should prove that persecution is not being employed, then the pages of history are not telling the truth. The first Christians in the time of the catacombs were persecuted by those with authority, the Protestants in Hungary were persecuted in the sixteenth century, but all of us know that even in the face of these persecutions both the Christian religion in the Roman Empire and the Protestants in Hungary grew stronger. Therefore I beg the pardon of the honorable Prime Minister, but it wasn't a very strong argument which he was pleased to use.⁶⁰³

The argument employed by Tisza cannot be sustained by turning to the history of the Christian faith, for history is not that clean. Perhaps a more nuanced argument would not have been open to such ridicule. As stated before, the history of the Baptist movement in Hungary does fit the narrative Tisza sought to portray, but the history of the Nazarenes does not. A more appropriate argument would have been that the trajectory in Hungary since the Compromise was towards greater religious freedom, which the successful implantation of the Baptists in Hungary demonstrated, and that gradual, yet sustainable steps continuing in that trajectory would be undertaken by the government to move

la révolution de Hongrie, 1847-1849, was published in 1859.

602. Zeller, 631.

603. Zeller, 549.

Hungary towards fulfilling the ideas of 1848. This would have changed the terms of the debate in a direction more favorable to Tisza and the government.

But as it was, the government had such firm control over the parliament that it did not feel a need to move towards more defensible territory. And this no doubt frustrated Irányi. Thus in responding to Tisza's charge that he slandered the Hungarian nation by his arguments, Irányi retorted that it "was not my homeland, not my nationality that I could be said to have slandered, but mostly certain authorities, certain agents, and the Ministry. Because, to repeat again, I clearly and strongly expressed my belief that public opinion is in favor of religious freedom in Hungary. Therefore I did not charge my nation with darkness, but rather I maintained that the government and certain authorities are to blame."⁶⁰⁴ The proof of this charge, Irányi continued, is that the VKM had not yet introduced its promised legislation on civil marriage and the Nazarenes, despite the passing of another year. Nor would they.

This debate well encapsulated the ideas which Irányi and some fellow radicals championed in favor of religious freedom modelled after that which existed in England and America. Their arguments were based in principle and rooted in the legacy of the ideas of 1848, but they also argued for the practical benefits of religious freedom in promoting the cause of religion. Conversely, one could hear in the arguments of Tisza and Tanárky the main lines of defense that the government employed to maintain that the status quo was, in the main, acceptable and only needed ministerial tinkering to correct the more pressing deficiencies. While sufficient religious liberty already existed, what was needed was an organic development towards enlarging its sphere guided by the VKM exercising oversight and issuing rulings to deal with new or continuing problems. Moreover, the government had an equal interest in maintaining social harmony. This balance of competing claims had to be kept in mind with regards to the new religious groups, for the growth of the sects disrupted social order and had the potential to cause communal conflict.

In reality the government was walking a tightrope, assailed on one side by the radical opposition which wanted full implementation of the program of 1848, and constrained on the other side by the Crown and the Catholic hierarchy, who for their own reasons wanted to hold onto the privileges they had and distrusted the church political intentions of any reform program as a backdoor attempt by Protestants to impose an anticlerical agenda.

604. Zeller, 549.

Given this stalemate that precluded meaningful reform, the argument was thus contested over what was religious liberty. On the side of the radical opposition, what presently existed in Hungary did not meet their definition, and much was left to be done to fulfill the promise of 1848. This view was summarized well by Ernő Simonyi,⁶⁰⁵ who argued:

That religion which does not offend against public law is a free religion, but when religions which otherwise do not offend against public law are classified by the law of a state into received or not received, or received, tolerated or not free confessions, I cannot reconcile this with freedom of religion.⁶⁰⁶

This hierarchy of religions which had evolved in Hungary was, in the view of the radicals, incompatible with religious freedom. Tanárky expressed the government's point of view when he argued that Hungary was by no means among the laggards of Europe when it came to religious freedom. To the contrary, the reality was that Hungary under the present government was relatively liberal and this was reflected in the toleration extended to new denominations. Religious liberty was still evolving in Hungary, but in the government's view it had already evolved to the point where it could be said to exist.

The introduction of the Baptists to the members of parliament also laid out the themes that would develop. The Baptists were presented not as a strange new denomination, but as the Hungarian implantation of a denomination that already had millions of followers in England and America, countries which set the standard for religious liberty and vital piety for Irányi. They were presented as an orthodox Protestant denomination, and, most importantly, the Baptists were presented as willing to fulfill all their civic obligations. In other words, unlike the Nazarenes, the Baptists were not pacifists. Irányi made this point explicitly in a March 1879 parliamentary debate on his proposed legislation: "However, they will swear an oath and they will fulfill their obligation to perform military service. To sum up, they are Christians and obedient citizens."⁶⁰⁷ As the debates on religious freedom and the sects continued, the Nazarenes would increasingly be supplanted by the Baptists as the more sympathetic new denomination for Irányi to present to his fellow deputies.

605. Simonyi was a member of the National Guard at the outbreak of the Revolution, and became the leader of a guerrilla troop during the heat of the fighting, which led him to emigrate when the cause was lost. While in England he came under the influence of Marx. He returned to Hungary in 1868 and became a deputy in the Independence Party.

606. Zeller, 529.

607. Zeller, 629.

What did these efforts before the parliament actually accomplish for Heinrich Meyer and the Baptists? Very little. It provided some pressure on the government, and particularly the VKM, to ensure that Meyer could carry out his activities under the provisions set out for him. But it did not provide redress for other grievances that were a problem for Baptists. They were not relieved of paying the church tax to their former received churches, which made it particularly difficult for the Baptists to pay their expected tithe to their new church. Their marriages were not recognized, and thus their children were illegitimate in the view of the state. This problem was explicitly highlighted by Irányi in the March 1879 debate:

And insofar as the Baptists also are bound in holy matrimony by pastors who are not from a legally received religion, their marriage covenants, just like those between Christians and Jews, are considered unlawful, and the children which come from these marriages are also considered illegitimate. Gentlemen, are Christians free to persecute other Christians because of their religion? Are we free to continue enduring a situation in which the marriages performed by those in this denomination according to their own principles should be branded as concubinage, and the children springing from these marriages should be considered illegitimate?⁶⁰⁸

Meyer also complained about Baptist parents being fined for refusing to have their infant children baptized by the clergy of their former churches.⁶⁰⁹ There was, as we shall see, some consideration by the VKM of recognizing the Baptists through ministerial ordinance, thus putting them in that middle class between received religions and merely tolerated religions. This could have provided a solution to the problems of Baptist families. However, Meyer's efforts came to naught.

It would appear that the cordial relationships that Meyer was cultivating with Irányi and with members of the government within the VKM gave him some hope that his quest for recognition would eventually bear fruit, even as the long efforts of his former pastor Johann Gerhard Oncken in Hamburg eventually secured freedom for the Baptists in that city.⁶¹⁰ In the Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Missionary Union in May of 1877, a report was read on the status of the mission to the Germans written by the Rev. Joseph Lehmann of Berlin. In it he relays the following from what Heinrich

608. Zeller, 630.

609. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 49.

610. Detzler, Wayne Alan. "Johann Gerhard Oncken's Long Road to Toleration." Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 36.2 (June 1993): 240.

Meyer reported to him: “In Hungary, new ground is being broken. There are hopes that religious liberty will soon become the law of the land.”⁶¹¹ This was the sum total of the report from Hungary passed along to the American Baptists. Evidently Meyer wished to communicate that the mission was growing and that the political environment was favorably disposed towards passing legislation on religious liberty. Perhaps this came from Irányi, or perhaps he was assured by high ranking officials in the VKM that greater religious freedom would be forthcoming.

However, the same rumors that swirled around the Baptists in Hamburg were spread among the political class in Budapest as well, rumors that raised the specter of the Münster Anabaptists in order to discredit the new denomination. Meyer reports that he went to visit Irányi at some point in 1877 and Irányi told him that rumors were spreading that Meyer baptized women who were “naked” as the rite was performed.⁶¹² This is similar to charges leveled in Hamburg that Oncken’s baptisms were immoral because women were baptized while only wearing a “white nightgown.”⁶¹³ Irányi reported that he did not raise these rumors in parliament in order to not turn the matter into a ridiculous affair. In order to promptly counter this damaging talk, Meyer quickly wrote a statement on how he performed baptisms and gave it both to Irányi and the VKM. According to Meyer’s diary, he made a similar effort to positively influence the members of parliament before the March 1879 debate on religious freedom. He went to visit Irányi and wrote: “Went to the House of Deputies and sat in on the session. I brought 450 copies of *Die Baptisten, wer sind sie und was sie glauben*⁶¹⁴ to share in the House.”⁶¹⁵ The tract was written by a German Baptist pastor and theologian, Moritz Geissler. Meyer no doubt hoped it would clarify misconceptions about the Baptists and demonstrate that they were an orthodox Protestant denomination with some distinctive ecclesiological beliefs.

611. Lehmann, Joseph. “Mission to the Germans.” Baptist Missionary Magazine LVII.7 (July 1877): 244.

612. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 50.

613. Detzler, 233.

614. The title of this German pamphlet translated is “The Baptists, who are they and what do they believe?”

615. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 18.

The veneer of religious liberty asserted by the government was buttressed by the freedom Meyer enjoyed in Budapest. This distinction between the toleration practiced in Budapest and the harassment experienced outside the capital was noted by Irányi in his March 1879 debate. Arguing that the Baptists were just like other citizens except for the persecution they experienced, Irányi explained, “not of course here in the capital, where they can hold their worship services in peace, but in the provinces, where mostly as a consequence of the priests incitement, the ignorant and mindless mobs not only hinder their gatherings, but actually assault them as well, and this happens in such a way that they do not receive the protection they are due from the local authorities. And what is truly sad gentlemen is that Protestant ministers take part in this as well, forgetting not only their religion’s fundamental principle of freedom of inquiry, but also that they were exposed to similar persecutions not so long ago.”⁶¹⁶ Two incidents from 1878 demonstrate well this difference between Budapest and the provinces. The first took place in May of 1878 in a German village in the Zips:

We went to Eisdorf to visit with the senior Mr. Gally. We had hardly entered the room when we saw the minister [in Eisdorf], as well as the minister from Menhardt, and the Notary was with them also, and they were walking back and forth on the street. Soon there was also a rowdy mob on the street. The landlord forbade us from holding the meeting in his place out of fear, someone had already broken the window, and so we tried to flee out the back, but in vain, as a bunch of stones flew our way. We then began to run away and hoped to escape, but a gang overtook us and threatened our lives. We reasoned with them kindly, and they put aside their murder weapons and let me go towards the fields. I had to spend the entire night outdoors, where I was exposed to a great thunderstorm, during which I fell and injured my knee and my pants split in two, although I had my underpants.⁶¹⁷

In this incident a mob was aroused against Meyer and his friends, and while Meyer narrowly escaped serious harm, it is clear that the ministers and the local official were willing to instigate a violent incident to impede Meyer’s evangelistic efforts. Perhaps Irányi had this incident in mind when describing the troubles Meyer encountered outside of Budapest, as all the particulars correspond to his description of the problems encountered.

Contrast this incident to what happened when Heinrich Meyer and some members of his congregation went into Pest on Saint István’s Day, the Hungarian national holiday

616. Zeller, 429–30.

617. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 14.

held on August 20th, in order to sing hymns and preach, knowing that the city would be full with visitors and people going out for a stroll. They had been out evangelizing for two hours when a man asked Meyer to go with him to the police headquarters. On the way the man explained that he would not have come if he had not been sent. Once there an official wrote up some paperwork and explained to Meyer that he would receive a summons. Meyer was able to freely leave, although he did not get back his hymnal. After a few days Meyer returned and spoke with a police official, who took out the official report and decided the matter in Meyer's favor. He told Meyer that they would not have come to him if he had registered in advance with the Interior Ministry before holding a public gathering of this nature. An inquiry was sent to the Ministry and after a long wait their answer came: "The Ministry did not have a response and I carried on with my work."⁶¹⁸ We do not know why the police officer was sent for Meyer, but the picture Meyer paints is one where neither the police nor the Interior Ministry wished to expend any effort on hindering the evangelistic efforts of the Baptists in the city.

A fascinating notice in PEIL from May, 1880, demonstrates that Heinrich Meyer encouraged his fellow evangelists to take their complaints to the government in Budapest when faced with harassment by local authorities in the provinces. The article is likely one of the earliest mentions of Mihály Kornya. "A Nazarene prophet named Mihály Kornya has made himself known in a wide circle, roaming the entire country, calling together the believers by night, reading the Bible to them, or preaching to them without a book."⁶¹⁹ Considering that Kornya began his itinerant ministry in the spring of 1878, it is noteworthy that two years later he is said to have become widely known for his constant travels and effective ministry. In this case he was far from home, having been invited by Meyer to evangelize the Magyar villages of Pest county close to Meyer's home in Budapest.⁶²⁰ The notice continues: "In Kiskunlacháza also he visited on several occasions, but after Kálmán K. Tóth got tired of his deceptions, he reported this to the authorities, and [Kornya] quickly departed lest he be sent packing, and then he lodged a complaint with the Pest County sheriff about being persecuted. The matter came before the Interior Minister, who issued a decision stating that nobody can be disturbed for his

618. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 54.

619. Különfélék [Notices]. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 23.20 (May 16 1880): 662.

620. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 85.

religious convictions, but if Kornya was fomenting against a legally received denomination, then that could be challenged.”⁶²¹ Here is a case of a Hungarian Reformed minister in the vicinity of Budapest turning to the local authorities to impede Kornya’s evangelistic ministry. When the matter was sent up to the Interior Minister, it seems that a pragmatic compromise was attempted, one which made provision for Kornya’s freedom of conscience and association, but also made provision for the local authorities to intervene if it was believed that Kornya was inciting some of the local population against their legally received church.

It is clear that this outcome did not satisfy Kálmán Könyves Tóth, for prior to this notice in PEIL he had a harsh editorial published in PEIL that March calling for the Reformed church superintendents to ask the state to intervene more forcefully to stop the itinerant evangelists. Perhaps this was a bit of political lobbying to influence not just the debate among the Reformed Church hierarchy, but also the Interior Ministry? His article has already been discussed in brief before, in which he called the Nazarenes a “spiritual phylloxera” that needed to be quarantined by the state. His article touched off a bit of a debate in PEIL about the proper response of the Reformed church to the sects and, to a lesser extent, about the identity of the new movements. I wish to return to these debates in the light of the parliamentary debates that had been taking place, and moreover, because it is clear from the discussions of the identity of the movements that the rise of the Baptist movement, with Meyer in the capital championing the Baptist cause before the political class, and Kornya in the provinces spearheading a rapidly expanding Magyar mission, was beginning to drive a new debate about the sects.

The editorial by Kálmán Könyves Tóth was titled “Is It Still Not Too Late?”, which he then answered emphatically in the affirmative, but only if a more aggressive stance was adopted by the churches. As implied by designating the sects as a “spiritual phylloxera”, Könyves Tóth stood with other Protestant thinkers in viewing the sects as some sort of disease preying upon the sick and weakened body of Protestantism. The metaphor implied the remedy Könyves Tóth desired. As discussed previously, he proposed that the government should instruct the local authorities that it was their obligation to arrest the sectarian missionaries and to send them back to their place of residence, in effect establishing a quarantine against their proselytization in communities not yet infected by their activities. He defended this call for governmental intervention as reasonable: “This is not dictatorial pressure nor an overwrought demand, and yet it would

621. Különfélék [Notices], 662.

really help.”⁶²² In order to get the government to act, he wanted the Reformed Church hierarchy to present a united front demanding their assistance: “It would be easiest if the Superintendents would publicly disseminate a memorandum [requesting these steps] to the competent governmental authorities.”⁶²³ What is interesting about this call for intervention by the state are the terms in which Könyves Tóth justifies state oppression.

Könyves Tóth painted a picture of the sects in terms reminiscent of the Münster Rebellion of the radical Anabaptists, but he updated this old charge to include new fears, arguing that the social effects of the unrestrained advance of the sects would practically lead to communism. He wished to argue that the sects were more dangerous to the state than to the churches.

We must wake up the sleeping state, because it can honestly be said that this destructive sect, which on the basis of its principles hates every sober social institution and wants to overthrow them, will do more damage to the state than to the church. Unfortunately the leading men of the government do not realize this, because they still are just nibbling at the roots. We respect freedom of religion like no one else, we respect everyone’s faith and convictions, but such a sect which holds religious beliefs which stand in total opposition to a sound mind and social order, which in the final analysis works towards the most extreme socialism, such a sect which works against the laws of the state, if not actively, then at least passively, would not be tolerated even in America.⁶²⁴

The thrust of this argument is clear. Könyves Tóth claimed that like the Münster radicals, the Hungarian sects would, unrestrained by the power of the state, act as a corrosive influence on the existing social order. This could pave the way for that threat which now captured the popular imagination - socialist revolution. He goes so far as to argue that the Hungarian sects would not be tolerated even in America. This was of course utterly ridiculous, for Irányi had made a specific point in his parliamentary debates of noting that there were millions of Baptists in America and Great Britain who enjoyed religious liberty. Of course Könyves Tóth was speaking primarily about the Nazarenes, mistakenly presenting Kornya as a Nazarene, rather than a Baptist, evangelist. Even so, America was home to all variety of unusual Christian movements, and no knowledgeable person would believe that the Nazarenes would test that tolerance. Later when the distinction between the Baptists and the Nazarenes was more readily recognized, the Baptists were still charged with being the heirs of Münster. Lajos Eröss, a Reformed minister, wrote in an

622. Könyves Tóth, 336.

623. Könyves Tóth, 336.

624. Könyves Tóth, 335–36.

1897 anti-Baptist tract that the Baptists “not only in the religious sphere, but also in the political sphere in a certain sense always possess a revolutionary character.”⁶²⁵

This charge of socialist subversion had been leveled against the Nazarenes before, going back to the Bach period when they first came to prominence.⁶²⁶ Bojan Aleksov, in his study of the impact of the Serbian Nazarenes on the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian society during this period, commented that the “Nazarenes in Hungary were stigmatized from the onset for being communists and anarchists. The representatives of established churches, which were the most inimical to and most endangered by the appearance of the Nazarenes, usually had no evidence whatsoever for their accusations and described any arguments raised by them as only paying a lip service to authorities while actually undermining them and associating with communists.”⁶²⁷ Dániel Irányi even mocked these arguments in a parliamentary debate in which he defended his “idealism” with regards to religious liberty. “Or am I a believer in socialism or communism? Do I wish for the overthrow of society and its rebuilding on a new foundation? Or perhaps I have taken up the people’s republic as part of my program? You know, gentlemen, that all of this is nonsense.”⁶²⁸

Gyula Garzó would make a similar argument in his polemic against Mihály Kornya in 1882, focusing on how the “Nazarenes” made an idol out of the letter of the Bible. Most people, he said, thought this was the weakness of the sects, but Garzó disagreed.

But I say - *this is their strength!* I also used to think the whole thing was an anachronism which carried within itself the seeds of its own destruction. But I don’t say this any more, since I have experienced it being taught to others. It is true that to our view it is an anachronism, *but it is not in the view of the lower classes of society, who in their understanding have been left centuries behind our present time.* Therefore the principles of this blind faith, the place from where they set out, are dangerous, and even more dangerous are *the methods they employ*, which clearly demonstrate that they truly are the apostles of *evangelical communism*, who take advantage of their manipulations which deceive the

625. Eröss, 19.

626. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 72–73.

627. Aleksov, 118–19.

628. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Tizennegyedik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 11]. Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda-Résvény-Társaság, 1884. 166.

people.”⁶²⁹

Garzó argued that the preaching of the peasant apostle Kornya to other peasants was revolutionary in character and that by it he desired to “overthrow” the existing Protestant churches and the hierarchy of more enlightened men which governed those under their care. Similarly, Könyves Tóth, by repeating this claim that the sects were a slippery slope which lead to socialism, was making a plea for the state to exercise its power to restrain the sects for its own self-preservation.

Könyves Tóth recognized that some would argue that he saw the sects through “very dark glasses”, and so he suggested that he was not proposing anything too “oppressive”, which he agreed would be counter-productive. “I am not saying that we should start a crusade against these lunatics, I believe all of them are searching for martyrdom and look at danger with a smile.”⁶³⁰ In his mind his solution was much more restrained, and yet effective nevertheless. As noted previously, he wanted to impede their growth by taking away the freedom of movement of their evangelists. This would have meant a severe curtailment of the “toleration” extended to the sects with regards to freedom of conscience and of association by the government, and a clear repudiation of acting in the spirit of 1848. The government had assured Heinrich Meyer that while the Baptists were merely tolerated, and not recognized, he was free to hold private meetings so long as he followed the relevant policies put in place by the government. Könyves Tóth wished to move the government from the delicate balance they were attempting to maintain to a more repressive stance.

The most interesting turn in the article is Könyves Tóth’s attempt to portray the threat from the Nazarenes and the Baptists as a unitary one.

We would not minimize the danger so much if we all understood that the Nazarenes are working now with money and direct support from the Baptists. This argument is not really evident nor provable, but it can hardly suffer doubt. But this much is already certain, that they want to fuse into their bosom this idiocy, and therefore the result could be that this sweet poison could deceive more and more. Watch out, don’t fall asleep!⁶³¹

This is an unusual take on the oft debated question of whether the Nazarenes and the

629. Garzó, “A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes],” 433.

630. Könyves Tóth, 336.

631. Könyves Tóth, 336–37.

Baptists were two distinct groups or just one. A more typical view was expressed by the Reformed minister Lajos Törő, who responded to Könyves Tóth's article with a brief history of the Nazarenes in Hungary and with regard to this question concluded: "it is a fact that the German Baptist teachings and the Hungarian Nazarene principles of faith are entirely the same, consequently the differences between them are nominal rather than dogmatic. Therefore I cannot accept the view that the Baptists and Nazarenes are two different sects, I view them as entirely the same."⁶³² In other words, because Törő was unable to discern the theological differences between the Nazarenes and the Baptists (best exemplified by their very different attitudes towards the relationship between the Christian and the state, as pointed out by Irányi in the parliamentary debates), he decided that they were essentially the same type of movement with nominal differences in historical origin and leadership. This conclusion is more about rhetorical strategy than theological precision. It was a conclusion widely shared and a rhetorical strategy frequently employed. Könyves Tóth argued for something well beyond this. By claiming that the two groups were in the process of fusing together, he desired to convince others that the threat from the sects would only increase. However, as Könyves Tóth admitted, he had no concrete proof of his assertion. And in fact what was "certain" in his mind was simply untrue. No evidence of a partnership ever emerged between the two movements, and the only interchange between them was the occasional Baptist or Nazarene who left one group to join the other.

This view of a partnership between the Baptists and the Nazarenes eventually found its way into the parliamentary debates. In 1885 Irányi accused his fellow deputy Mihály Zsilinszky of purposefully confusing the Baptists with the Nazarenes. A deputy from the governing Liberal Party, and a respected Lutheran teacher and historian, Zsilinszky would eventually serve as the VKM State Secretary. It is a measure of how often Irányi came to the defense of the Baptists that he could argue as he did concerning the previous days debates: "I say that he purposefully conflated the two together because this is not the first time that I have explained the faith of the Baptists in this chamber while the honorable deputy was present, and it is not possible that he did not hear my comments in opposition to the Minister."⁶³³ In order to more forcefully disprove the

632. Törő, 958.

633. Az 1884 évi szeptember hó 27-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Harmadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 27th of September, 1884. Volume 3]. Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda-Résvény-Társaság, 1885. 200.

accusations of Zsilinszky, Irányi called upon Meyer to visit him that evening and to respond to the charges. Irányi was thus able to present to his audience the next day an accurate representation of the relationship between the Baptists and the Nazarenes when he went to explain that “it is not permissible to confuse the Baptists with the Nazarenes because the Baptists themselves for the most part struggle against the Nazarenes, who in many places seek to tempt their believers to cross over to them.”⁶³⁴ To this defense of the Baptists by Irányi, Zsilinszky had a ready retort. He argued that Meyer was the very reason he believed the two groups to be the same!

Because this Meyer enters into villages that are comprised purely of Nazarene inhabitants, he consults with them, and they frequently speak of him as their prospective leader. I can assure the honorable deputy that I know this from Nazarenes just as trustworthy as the deputy believes Meyer to be. These people told me that seeing how they were a minority, they were joining the Baptists because from a religious point of view there was hardly a difference in principles.⁶³⁵

This of course only proves that conversions between the Baptists and Nazarenes was not a one way street, and that Meyer was willing to preach to Nazarenes if they were open to his message. Irányi could insist on the differences between the Nazarenes and the Baptists, but many of those opposed to his efforts in behalf of religious liberty continued to deny any differences between the two in order to paint the sects as a danger to the state. This worked very much to the disadvantage of the Baptists, as will be seen.

The call for state power to be employed against the sectarian evangelists by Könyves Tóth elicited an immediate response from Pál Kun, and a delayed response from Törő. Kun’s objection to this call bears citing again.

In the name of freedom of conscience I protest against state intervention in such a manner as Kálmán Könyves Tóth recommends, and I would not like to see my own Protestant denomination, which is a propagator and keeper of broadmindedness, become the bailiff of the state in opposition to a sect which holds to religious principles inconsistent with the common sense of the Protestant person.⁶³⁶

634. Az 1884 évi szeptember hó 27-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Harmadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 27th of September, 1884. Volume 3], 200.

635. Az 1884 évi szeptember hó 27-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Harmadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 27th of September, 1884. Volume 3], 202.

636. Kun, 464.

According to Kun, the Nazarenes had as much right to exist as “they are capable of struggling to achieve in the great battle of life.”⁶³⁷ His different approach to the problem under discussion can be seen in his rejection of the analogy employed by Könyves Tóth of the sects as “spiritual phylloxera” as inappropriate, since the subject under discussion was not “a physical phenomenon, but a psychological divergence.”⁶³⁸ An analogy frames the question, and while the Nazarenes were often called the “Reformed sickness”, Kun seems to suggest that such analogies ask the wrong question and get the wrong answer.

Whether the Nazarenes grow at the expense of the Roman Catholic, Protestant, or who knows whichever church is not the question, it will come in any case at the expense of that denomination which, on the one hand, is neglectful of the care of its believers, and, on the other hand, which is made out of a pile of rigid dogmatism that is incomprehensible abracadabra to the common person and which is seen as antiquated to the educated class and in conflict with their rational precepts.⁶³⁹

If the success of the Nazarenes was a symptom of anything, it was symptomatic of the alienation of the people from the churches. And in fact, the Nazarenes, which began as a German and Magyar movement, were by this time making enormous inroads among the Serbs of southern Hungary for exactly the reasons Kun elaborated.⁶⁴⁰

While there was a wide range of attitudes towards the sects among the Protestant community, the exchange between Könyves Tóth and Kun illustrates two divergent approaches to the challenge to the historical churches which the growth of the sects embodied. Those calling for the use of state power to restrain the evangelistic activities of the sects saw the sects as a serious problem confronting the churches, one that the churches could not confront without state assistance. In contrast to this, those who remained steadfast in their adherence to freedom of conscience and religion, particularly those within the evangelical renewal within Protestantism, viewed the growth of the sects as a symptom of problems within the churches themselves; employing state power against the sects was not only wrong in principle, but also the wrong solution. The churches needed inner renewal to right what was wrong.

637. Kun, 463.

638. Kun, 463.

639. Kun, 463–64.

640. Aleksov, 39–46, 80–85.

Könyves Tóth began his article discussing the debates occurring within the pages of church periodicals about “Where is the problem?”⁶⁴¹ The Protestant churches certainly understood that they were in a weakened state and declining. Könyves Tóth went on to criticize a hostile press for misguidedly harping on these problems: “They are mistaken who want to place every problem on the neck of the pastors, just as are those who want to put the blame on the laity.”⁶⁴² For Könyves Tóth, the pastors were struggling in a difficult environment to improve the situation of the people and the church. The sects represented a problem that was a serious hindrance to this work and needed to be dealt with in conjunction with the state.

Contrast this with the diagnosis offered by Kun. Speaking of Könyves Tóth’s recommendation that the Church Superintendents ought to send a memorandum to the government regarding the sects, he concluded that “certainly there is no sense in this.”⁶⁴³ What then can be done? “There is only one way: ministers should be true pastors to the people, not just in the church buildings, but in every area of society... Today most ministers imagine it is enough to fulfill their office if they regularly preach on Sundays and if they perform their work like some bureaucrat and after that they do not concern themselves with the congregation. And it is like this even in the populous churches in the Alföld where there are five to six, or even eight to ten thousand souls assigned to the care of one minister, which even if he has an assistant minister is ridiculous; so it can easily happen that the ‘spiritual phylloxera’ can spread in every direction, and tomorrow there will be Nazarenes where today we don’t even dream about them.”⁶⁴⁴ Kun was rather biting in his criticism of the large Reformed parishes in Debrecen and Hódmezővásárhely with two pastors and thousands of parishioners, which reminded him rather of the “Roman hierarchy than Protestant institutions.”⁶⁴⁵ Kun advocated a greater number of more modest church buildings and smaller parishes of one to two thousand people, each with its own minister, where the Protestant life of faith could flourish, because the minister would have the ability to be in close contact with the people, where “the minister

641. Könyves Tóth, 335.

642. Könyves Tóth, 335.

643. Kun, 465.

644. Kun, 465.

645. Kun, 465.

would not just be a preacher in a pulpit, but a father to the people.”⁶⁴⁶ The argument was that if the Protestant churches would nourish the spiritual life of their people through more intensive application of *cura pastoralis*, the renewal of the church would lessen the appeal of the sectarian evangelists.

Another interesting parliamentary exchange between Irányi and VKM Minister Trefort took place in November 1880, in which Trefort introduced what would become a common theme in explaining his opposition to a general law on religious liberty, and in which the church political stalemate was in evidence. The exchange also shows that early on in his ministry Heinrich Meyer sought state recognition for the Baptists. The issue, according to Trefort, between him and Irányi with regard to religious freedom was not about principles, but on methodology, what would be the best way to introduce greater religious freedom into Hungary. Irányi wanted a general law introducing full religious freedom. Trefort was opposed to this approach.

I confess that I am not a friend of passing a general law on religious freedom, because its passage might lead to a situation in which not just the existing churches, but perhaps also in some ways the Hungarian state might be put in danger. If you like, you can call this a medieval point of view, but I treat this question, as I do every question, from the point of view of the Hungarian state. The Hungarian state is not capable of withstanding the kinds of shocks through which many other states could be guided. But I don't want to discuss the question here, because it would perhaps come off in a bad light... For those who are in agreement with me and are concerned about this issue, they understand very well what I mean when I say that Hungary still cannot endure the introduction of a general law on religious freedom without endangering Hungarian statehood.⁶⁴⁷

This explanation earned Trefort a good deal of jeers from the opposition and brought forth a rebuke from Irányi, who reminded Trefort that it was both Eötvös and Deák, the leading Magyar political figures who worked out the Compromise with the Habsburg Emperor, who put the issue in play in Parliament. In opposing a general law on religious freedom, Trefort sought to soften this position by stating that the VKM was happy to entertain specific requests for recognition by denominations as long as the application was accompanied by their articles of faith and their beliefs and practices were compatible with the existing legal order.

This was contradicted by Irányi, who after describing further instances of persecution suffered by the Baptists, disputed Trefort's purported openness to requests for

646. Kun, 465.

647. Zeller, 887.

recognition by individual denominations.

I call to witness the president and secretary of the Application Committee, if the other members of parliament do not remember, that indeed the Baptists came before the parliament a few years ago with a request for recognition, after which the Committee was not able to reach a decision on the application for two years, and then finally the members of the committee presented their report in which they rejected the application of the petitioners. Again I call to witness all those who read the application, and I especially call to witness the members of the Application Committee, to tell us if there was anything in the application which was in opposition to Christian principles, was there in it even the smallest point which clashed with their duties as citizens? Yet even so at the request of the Minister they rejected their application. So don't tell us Minister, after what happened before, that petitioners can show up during office hours and submit their application, and that you will support their request.⁶⁴⁸

Since this debate took place in November 1880, and the first petition of the Baptists for recognition was dragged out for a two year period, the latest that this application was filed was in early 1878, and likely well before that. Probably it was filed in late 1876 or early 1877 after Meyer had gone to Irányi to request help following his experiences of persecution in Transylvania and in northern Hungary. The rejection served to demonstrate that what kept the government from moving forward with a general law on religious liberty in the spirit of 1848 also kept them from actually going through with the promise to recognize a new denomination applying for government recognition, and that was the fear of further stirring up sectarian strife and provoking a collapse of the government and perhaps of the new political order which had returned a measure of Hungarian sovereignty.

In 1881 Heinrich Meyer experienced a few severe instances of persecution that garnered some attention for his cause and appears to have prompted renewed promises from the government with regards to the possibility of recognition for the Baptists. What set these incidents apart from previous instances of persecution was that they took place in the immediate vicinity of the capital city, Budapest, rather than in a remote region of the country. Both villages were almost entirely German and Catholic in their composition, not too far from Buda on the western side of the Danube. The first village mentioned by Meyer was called Promontor by its German population, so named because of its position jutting out on a bend in the Danube, but magyarized in 1886 to Budafok. A little below Buda, Budafok was actually incorporated into Budapest as part of the XII district in 1950. The other village was Budaörs, which lies just to the west of Buda.

648. Zeller, 900–01.

Meyer relates how he had visited Promontor on a few occasions while working as a colporteur, and had grown rather fond of the village.⁶⁴⁹ The thought grew in him that with some assistance from younger believers, he could begin an outreach to the youth of the village. His first attempt to hold a gathering took place on January 19th, 1881.⁶⁵⁰ He sent the appropriate notification to the local authorities and had rented a venue to hold his meeting. But when he arrived, the local authorities sought him out to express their strong displeasure with his visit, and at the same time the landlord of the hall Meyer had rented backed out of the deal under pressure. So Meyer was forced to leave with around two hundred disappointed people left with no choice but to return to their homes.⁶⁵¹ But before he left he had a colleague rent a different venue two weeks in advance. He then wrote to the Chief Magistrate of the district to explain his difficulties with the local officials and his desire to try again. This letter proved effective. When he returned to Promontor on February 9th, 1881, he had the protection he needed, for “upon my written complaint the Chief Magistrate send a commissioner and four cops, and under their protection the first public meeting attended by around 200 persons was held on the 9th of February.”⁶⁵² Meyer later related that the local officials came to meet with him again, but seeing the police protection provided by the Chief Magistrate they thought better of trying to prevent the meeting and left.⁶⁵³

That same month a worse experience awaited Meyer in Budaörs. Having learned from his difficulties in Promontor, Meyer again wrote in advance to the Chief Magistrate to share his plans. This turned out to be a wise move. As he related in his report to *Der Wahrheitszeuge*, “the minister preached a sermon in the morning that greatly inflamed the people and an angry crowd gathered together. Based upon my report, the Chief Magistrate send two policemen and furthermore told the local magistrate that he was responsible for

649. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 59.

650. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 20.

651. Meyer, “Budapest,” 220.

652. Meyer, “Budapest,” 220.

653. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 60.

my safety, as the magistrate himself said to me when he showed up with an attendant.”⁶⁵⁴ Meyer knew this because the landlord had come to him pleading to accept the money back, even double the rent, to which the magistrate added his own plea to return peace to the village by desisting from his plan. But Meyer insisted on going forward. The room he rented was full of young adults. Meyer quickly lost control of the crowd, and while he was protected, the youth rocked back and forth on the benches until they broke. At this point the sheriff asked Meyer if he should clear the room, and Meyer answered yes. He also escorted Meyer out of the village because a threatening crowd made his departure problematic.⁶⁵⁵

It was during his next visit to Budaörs, which he deliberately planned with short notice in order not to give ample warning to the village priest, that Meyer experienced a new level of persecution. The service itself went well and without incident, but as soon as he stepped outside with his companions, they were greeted with a flurry of stones. This was unfortunate, for Budaörs was a village that was, as Meyer described it, “rich in stones.”⁶⁵⁶ As it was related to the readers of *Der Wahrheitszeuge*, this attack by the angry mob continued “for the entire length of the village, for about twenty minutes, until at the end of the village we were able to call upon a soldier for protection.”⁶⁵⁷ Meyer remarked later that the soldier interposed himself between Meyer’s company and the crowd with a drawn sword to hold them off.⁶⁵⁸ As a result of this stoning Meyer required eight weeks of bed rest to recover.⁶⁵⁹

At the same time Meyer was also struggling with his throat, which hindered his ability to preach. His doctor attributed the problem to the physical stresses induced by his frequent travels to different localities with varying climates and told Meyer to stay put. Meyer had to give up his ministry in Promontor and Budaörs for a time, as well as his

654. Meyer, “Budapest,” 220.

655. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 61.

656. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 61.

657. Meyer, “Budapest,” 220.

658. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 61.

659. Meyer, “Budapest,” 220.

other trips to visit the brethren.⁶⁶⁰ As noted previously, these issues were a major factor in the ordination of Kornya and Tóth so that they could perform baptisms. In fact the discouragements of the difficult work were such that when he travelled to Königsberg that summer to the conference of the Prussian Union of Baptists, as he later wrote, “I went in the hope that I could find someone to whom I could give over my work, or at least find some help.”⁶⁶¹ This did not happen, and instead Meyer wrote to Brother Braun in Hamburg about spending some time at the seminary, which he did in 1882.

The importance of these instances of persecution was not their severity, for Meyer and other Baptists would experience worse. Rather they were an unwelcome sign that the religious toleration experienced by Meyer in the capital, and frequently alluded to by some in the government for their own purposes, ended at the city’s edge. The government would point to the freedom of activity Meyer enjoyed in Budapest to bolster their argument that sufficient religious liberty existed in Hungary, as if Budapest was the norm. The fact that in two villages just outside Budapest Meyer needed police protection in order to preach or to depart proved that this was not the case.

On February 22nd, 1882, Meyer went to visit Daniel Irányi, who shared hopeful news. Meyer noted in his diary: “Visited with Irányi, who shared with me that perhaps we might achieve recognition.”⁶⁶² In the light of this opportunity, Meyer moved quickly. On Monday, February 27th, Meyer devoted time to putting together the application. “That evening I put together a petition to present to the Prime Minister.”⁶⁶³ On March 3rd, Meyer again visited with Irányi, who related that he “got a commitment from Trefort.”⁶⁶⁴ The nature of the promise was not further explained. Was it a promise for a fair hearing, or for a successful outcome? A few days later Meyer went to call on Trefort at his office, but he was not there. But on the next day, March 9th, Meyer did manage to meet with

660. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 62.

661. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 62.

662. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 21.

663. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 21.

664. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer’s Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 22.

Trefort. “We went to the House of Deputies, where we were welcomed by the VKM Minister. He promised to look at our petition and confession of faith. Any confession which does not violate state law will be recognized.”⁶⁶⁵ This no doubt appeared to be very promising to Meyer, because if the standard was that the confession of faith not contravene the law, the Baptists (unlike the Nazarenes) would meet the standard. This was likely the promise Trefort also gave to Irányi.

The application for recognition was submitted in the beginning of March, and, as Meyer shared with the readers of Der Wahrheitszeuge, the need for recognition in the current religious environment had only increased. After recounting a violent incident in Derecske, where a crowd threw stones during a baptismal service led by Kornya, Meyer commented: “It seems that the enmity [we face] has greatly increased recently, especially on the part of the Reformed clergy. This situation is such that it would be very desirable if our petition for equality with the other lawfully recognized confessions, which we turned in at the beginning of March, would be granted.”⁶⁶⁶ The locus of concern for Meyer had shifted from the opposition to his work among the German minority to the rising enmity from the Reformed clergy for a couple of reasons.

The first had to do with the increasing success of the Magyar mission, and particularly the name Mihály Kornya was making for himself as a dynamic evangelist, which aroused greater antagonism from the clergy, the local authorities, and some of the people in the predominantly Reformed towns and villages where he and his associates were active. An example of this was the incident Meyer described in Derecske:

Just now I received a report from our beloved brother Kornya that he baptized fourteen people on April 27th in Derecske, in the vicinity of Oradea. Unfortunately the people this time, in contrast to the exemplary peacefulness with which they formerly observed the proceedings, as when I first performed baptisms there, behaved very unruly. Some even threw stones during the performance of the holy rite. To the amazement of the brethren Kornya came out without any wounds, but several others were bleeding from the head. Just after this the Chief Magistrate encountered one of the bleeding sisters, so this incident will be dealt with by the court.⁶⁶⁷

Similar incidents of persecution were described by Irányi in a parliamentary debate in

665. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 22.

666. Meyer, Heinrich. “Ungarn.” Der Wahrheitszeuge 4.11 (June 1 1882): 110.

667. Meyer, “Ungarn,” 110.

December of 1882. These reports were given to Irányi by Meyer, which Irányi then recounted in the parliament. It is worth reviewing a few of the stories reported.

One incident concerned András Lisztes and his wife Katalin, who went on a trip from their home in Berettyóújfalu to visit her parents in Fülöpszállás. On the way back home they stopped to visit some brethren in Törökszentmiklós. Here they were stopped by the police, taken to city hall, interrogated by the sheriff, and sentenced to be taken by police escort back to their home village as vagrants. Since András was sick at the time, he requested medical attention. His request was denied. Irányi summarized: “Thus they went from village to village until they finally arrived in Berettyóújfalu, where they were taken like vagrants to city hall, and the chief clerk sentenced András Lisztes to fortyeight hours in prison.”⁶⁶⁸

The next incident described by Irányi concerned Mihály Lisztes. Irányi was not sure if the two were brothers, which they were, but he made a point of noting that Mihály had served honorably as a sergeant in the army, and that after his service he sought to become a colporteur for the British and Foreign Bible Society. Knowing that he needed an identity card to pursue this work, he went to the local authorities to get one. He got the appropriate certificate and went before the sheriff to get his signature. At that point the sheriff began to heap insults and abuse upon Lisztes, and taking the certificate “he wrote on it that the Bible colportage was just a pretense to spread stupid communist ideas.”⁶⁶⁹

Another incident detailed the persecution of Mihály Puskás, a Baptist in Szada. He “was taken by two policemen as a common criminal to the townhall where the authorities forbade him from holding a worship service in his house and threatened him that if they found more than five people gathered at his place, they would put him in fetters.”⁶⁷⁰

Interestingly, Irányi describes an incident at a baptism led by Kornya outside of Derecske that he dates as having taken place on May 13th, 1882, a few short weeks after

668. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Nyolczadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 8]. Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda-Résvény-Társaság, 1883. 229.

669. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Nyolczadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 8], 229.

670. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Nyolczadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 8], 229.

the incident described by Meyer. At the riverside a large crowd had gathered, including “an old woman who had gathered in town a lot of stones so that she could throw them at Mihály Kornya. András P. Nagy, wanting to prevent this, was hit in the head by a large stone, and the cut covered his face in blood. The injured party turned to the district court and told them what happened in order to resolve the matter. On that same day a newly admitted Baptist woman was bashed on the head with a piece of iron by a servant girl. Finally, a woman ... was stabbed with a pitchfork and to this day is incapable of work and she still has not been awarded damages for this act.”⁶⁷¹ The growth of the Baptist movement among the Magyar peasantry, visibly proclaimed at these baptismal services, was clearly provoking violent reactions from some people. Meyer’s comments in Der Wahrheitszeuge were an expression of his concern that some of the Reformed clergy were trying to impede the work of the Baptist evangelists by stirring up crowds to oppose them, just as the Catholic priests had done in the German villages in which he had evangelized.

Finally, Irányi recounted a clear instance of a Reformed minister using the power of the state to persecute Baptists in the case of a Baptist named Szücs, who wished to raise his children in his new faith. After he had refused to have his children baptized and pay the customary fee, the “minister sent two policemen for the children and forcibly baptized them. Szücs and his wife, who was lying in the childrens’ bed, were summoned to the townhall and fined five forints.”⁶⁷² This was clearly in violation of the ministerial ordinance Trefort issued in 1881 in the case of the Serb Nazarene who had his deceased child forcibly taken from him and buried according to the Orthodox rites, an abuse for which he was subsequently charged the traditional fee. Trefort had ruled that the former members of a recognized confession could not be forced to participate in and pay for rites in which they no longer wished to participate. The fact that in this case the local authorities actually participated in the illegal act at the behest of the Reformed minister was particularly egregious.

The other reason Meyer was likely concerned at the growing enmity of the Reformed clergy was the campaign in the press to sensationalize the growth of the sects

671. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Nyolczadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 8], 229.

672. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Nyolczadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 8], 229–30.

and to push for the use of force against their spread, not just in the secular political organs, but also in the religious press. Such a campaign clearly complicated his efforts to achieve recognition for the Baptists in Hungary. And in fact, the beginning of 1882 saw another flurry of letters appearing in PEIL regarding the evangelistic activity of Kornya and how to respond to the “Nazarene” threat. Concern over Kornya reached such a crescendo that PEIL published a four part article in March and April of 1882 by Gyula Garzó, Reformed minister in Gyoma, detailing his “battle” against Kornya, in the hope that his success in winning back some of the converts Kornya had made would be a model for others. Interestingly, some Reformed clergy thought the negative press coverage was overblown and would incite an overreaction to actual events on the ground. This was the attitude of two letters which appeared in PEIL in late January 1882 in response to an anonymous article in Debrecen, a political newspaper, concerning the growth of the “Nazarenes” in Földes, an article which was then picked up by the religious press, including PEIL. Both letters sought to correct the impression that Kornya was on his way to converting much of the village and cautioned against calls for stronger measures.

The first letter was from the assistant minister in Földes, Lajos Varga, who described how Kornya brought his message to Földes via a family connection in the neighboring town of Berettyóújfalu. Varga then described the efforts made by the senior minister and himself to reach out to the Baptist families, but with a few exceptions they concluded that “there’s no use in speaking to deaf ears.”⁶⁷³ Even so, they found that the Baptist families wanted to live in peace in their community. “Otherwise they stated that they did not wish to pick a fight with the authorities, they would pay the church tax, they would send their children to school, they would fulfill their responsibilities.”⁶⁷⁴ In light of this, Varga concluded that while the converts were “fanaticized” in terms of their religious beliefs, “we are not afraid that around 25 - 30 families count themselves among Mr. Kornya’s believers.”⁶⁷⁵ They were still a minority and the ministry of the Reformed Church was active in the village with the support of the people. The accounts in the press were “fiction” according to Varga, and therefore “the use of force - which usually appears

673. Varga, Lajos. “A földesi nazareneokról. I. [About the Nazarenes in Földes, Pt. 1].” A letter from Lajos Varga, the Reformed Assistant Minister in Földes. Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 25.5 (Jan. 29 1882): 148.

674. Varga, 148.

675. Varga, 148–49.

advisable to others - is something we don't even want to think about. In the field of religious life the use of force has indeed often created the most bitter fruit."⁶⁷⁶ In his view faithful pastoral ministry would be enough to halt the spread of the Baptists and perhaps win back some of those lost.

The second letter critical of press coverage came from the Debrecen Reformed theologian Lajos Zóltai. The substance of his remarks, in which he defends Kornya's revival of ancient Christian practices and the Baptist criticisms concerning the lack of spiritual vitality in the Reformed churches, has been presented previously. Zóltai also argued that the approach of Varga and the senior minister, Gábor Bakoss, which was to eschew harsh measures and to focus on intensifying pastoral ministry within the parish and its school, was the correct approach. He noted: "In truth this is where we must make our endeavors, both to the lower classes and to the upper classes, so that in a short while we would no longer hear the Baptists accusations."⁶⁷⁷ In his view an effective inner mission was the best strategy to combat the spread of the Baptists.

It appeared that Gyula Garzó, the Reformed minister in Gyoma, also shared this view, but in reality his position was more confrontational. In the final installment of his article, Garzó summarized his advice, "we must expend our strength mainly in the area of inner mission, so that through our efforts in this field we would be the ones to raise the victor's flag and not the false brethren."⁶⁷⁸ Secondly, he advised a literature mission to counteract the Baptists use of tracts to spread their message. But these conclusions pass over what Garzó did in the immediate aftermath of his face to face confrontation with Kornya. The penultimate installment concluded with Garzó telling Kornya that he was a sick person who belonged rather in a mental institution, not out and about preaching, and that he should return to his appointed vocation of working the earth as a peasant. To this Kornya responded that the laws governing Gyoma were no different than those prevailing in Nagyszalonta, where he was from, and that he intended to preach again the next day in another house. The final part picks up with Garzó reflecting upon how the previous evening unfolded, and he concluded that he was dealing with either "madness or evil", and he inclined towards the latter. So his next step was clear. "Therefore I went to the

676. Varga, 149.

677. Zóltai, 150.

678. Garzó, "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]," 434.

magistrate's office, and the false brother was kicked out of town."⁶⁷⁹ Garzó actually complained that afterwards Kornya kept his visits secret and that he was unable to meet with him again. It is evident from Garzó's harsh rhetoric and actions that he was in favor of making use of state power to clear the field of Baptist evangelists first before applying oneself to inner mission.⁶⁸⁰

In between the two letters in January concerning events in Földes and Garzó's narrative of events in Gyoma which appeared in March and April, a letter appeared in PEIL in February from Bálint Illyés, the Reformed minister in Kisújszállás, concerning Kornya's evangelistic outreach in his town. As with the January letters, this letter was in response to a brief notice in PEIL that had appeared noting Kornya's activity in the town. The goal of Illyés was to dispel the notion that the Nazarene's were able to successfully implant themselves in the town, and he hoped that they never would. Illyés said the trouble began when an apparently independent Bible colporteur named Jakab Roth came to town and spent time with a pious old widow and shared his "Nazarene" faith with her. When the widow responded with interest, then "the bookseller, who was undoubtedly a secret Nazarene himself and one of their wandering apostles, promised that he would bring to visit with her their prophet, Kornya."⁶⁸¹ A secret meeting was arranged for Christmas time, with close friends invited to attend. From this time on the widow was at the center of a circle of seekers that was the focus of Kornya's evangelistic efforts. Once the minister became aware of the situation, he went to the local authorities and received a

679. Garzó, "A nazarenizmussal vívott gyomai harc [The Struggle in Gyoma Against the Nazarenes]," 427.

680. This was confirmed by an incident Daniel Irányi shared in a parliamentary debate in January of 1884 that had taken place the previous year. While the instigator is not named in the narrative, Irányi noted shortly after this story how shameful it was that the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, incited persecution. "On October 24th Heinrich Meyer applied to the constable in Gyoma for permission to preach in a private house, but after he was refused permission for this, on the next day he went out of the town with five people he wished to baptize in the Körös River. But before he could perform the baptisms, two policemen with weapons appeared and escorted Meyer and his companions back into town, where the constable fined Meyer 100 forints and his translator, Eiler, 50 forints, showing the pastor a letter asking him to take action against them." Az 1881 évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Tizennegyedik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 11], 165. Meyer identified Garzó as the person responsible for prodding the authorities to crack down on them. "In Gyoma wurden auf Klage des reformierten Pfarrers Br. Eiler und ich wegen Versammlung halten schon mehrere Male widerrechtlich zu hohen Geldstrafen ... verurteilt." Meyer, Heinrich. "Verfolgungen in Ungarn." Der Wahrheitszeuge 6.4 (Feb. 15 1884): 37.

681. Illyés, Bálint. "Nyílt levél 'a nazarénusok Kisújszálláson' hirre vonatkozólag [An Open Letter Concerning the News About 'The Nazarenes in Kisújszállás']." Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 25.6 (Feb. 5 1882): 182.

promise from the mayor that they would expel Kornya the next time he appeared. He then turned his attention to the widow and the circle around her, and convinced them that they had been deceived. Thus the Baptist work in Kisújszállás was seemingly extinguished. In fact Illyés was not able to consolidate the gains described in his letter, and Kornya would eventually establish a Baptist presence in Kisújszállás before moving on to other fields.⁶⁸² The conclusion Illyés reached was harsh.

Let me therefore take the liberty of drawing my esteemed colleagues' attention to my advice. If a Bible colporteur arrives who does not have a letter of employment from the mission society and proof of permission from one of the Bishop's offices, then do not tolerate his presence in your communities. Moreover, if one of the false prophets arrives, bring it to the attention of the authorities, and if he does not have a residence permit, have him deported as a vagabond back to where he came from.⁶⁸³

Illyés clearly added his voice to the chorus calling for forceful measures to stop the Baptist evangelists. And indeed the preponderance of voices sided with those who wished to see force employed by the state to stop the spread of the sects.

Meyer was correct to be concerned about the increasing enmity towards the Baptist mission, because it contributed to the paralysis of the government as it was buffeted by competing claims. In March of 1883, a year after Meyer had submitted the request for recognition following the encouraging news from Irányi, he reported to the readers of *Der Wahrheitszeuge* that the application had been denied. The reasons he enumerated are instructive, as well as his assessment of the impact of the decision.

Our petition for legal recognition, for which we submitted our confession at the request of the Minister, was rejected. False reports from the county and local authorities submitted to the Ministry and the influence of the churches contributed to this. Also the Minister took offense at the fact that our colporteurs and the brothers who conduct the meetings in our stations, all of whom he considers to be leaders and superintendents of the congregations, are uneducated men. And finally we were suspected of the possibility of uniting ourselves with the Nazarenes (who some consider to downright dangerous to the state because of their refusal to bear arms). Through his humorously delivered talk directed against us in the House of Deputies the Minister has certainly done nothing to stave off the bloody attacks of the mobs against the Baptists, nor the illegal and unjust practices of the local authorities in dealing with these incidents. The Minister certainly condemned the mistreatment of the Baptists, but he found it to entirely understandable - for even the Catholic priests would be treated this way by the Protestants if they were to

682. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 179.

683. Illyés, 183.

produce Baptist converts.⁶⁸⁴

Meyer placed primary blame for the failure to achieve recognition to opposition from local and county officials, who, Meyer argued, provided the Ministry with false reports about the activity of the Baptists in their jurisdictions. This stiff opposition from the local authorities was matched by that of the churches, who frequently pressed all levels of government for firmer measures to be employed in halting the activities of the sectarian evangelists. No doubt some false reports had their origin in rumors spread by the clergy to stoke opposition to the Baptists.

The second issue noted by Meyer would be raised frequently in the parliamentary back and forth between VKM Minister Trefort and Irányi concerning the Baptists, and it goes to the heart of the illiberal church-state entanglements then prevailing in Hungary. This issue was the objection concerning the Baptists' lack of an organized and educated clergy.

A helpful way to see why this was problematic for the VKM is to note how Law XLIII of 1895, 'On the Free Exercise of Religion', regulated the process of how a new denomination could move from the status of being merely 'tolerated' by the state to becoming a lawfully 'recognized' religion. This was laid out in the second chapter, 'On Religious Denominations To Be Lawfully Recognized in the Future'. The process was basically that in evidence under VKM Minister Trefort. Noteworthy are the discretionary powers the VKM preserved over recognized religions.

They were under the administrative tutelage of the municipal authorities, to whom they had to submit the minutes of all church meetings and whose permission they had to obtain to acquire property. The civil authorities approved the appointments of their clergy and church officials "if their moral conduct and attitude as citizens of the state did not give rise to objections." If the conduct of the clergy was "inimical to the state", the *kultusz* minister could demand their removal from office. The law on the "Free Exercise of Religion" in fact gave statutory recognition to the wide discretionary powers already exercised by the municipalities and the *kultusz* minister in connection with all non-received religious denominations.⁶⁸⁵

The primary reason for the civil authorities to monitor the appointment of clergy and church leaders was to prevent anti-state activities by religious leaders of the national minorities. The state viewed the provisions as a necessary defensive measure.

684. Meyer, Heinrich. "Verfolgungen in Ungarn." *Der Wahrheitszeuge* 5.5 (Mar. 1 1883): 52.

685. Péter, "Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)," 117.

Perhaps this is why ten years after this law was passed, when the Magyar Baptists finally achieved state recognition in 1905, they were willing to live with these stipulations. The non-recognized Baptists under Heinrich Meyer, which included all the German congregations, the bulk of the Romanian and Slavic Baptist congregations, as well as some Magyars still loyal to Meyer, found the state intrusion into their internal governance unacceptable. When the Baptist World Alliance intervened to mediate the dispute, they were shocked at what recognition entailed, which “was found to involve most serious evils.”⁶⁸⁶ While the commissioners sympathized greatly with Magyar Baptist complaints about the autocratic role Meyer had played in the Baptist work in Hungary, and suggested several improvements, they “at the same time condemned the State recognition as inconsistent with Baptist principles and called for it to be renounced.”⁶⁸⁷ This was not only because the state could interfere with the appointment of pastors and elders, or that the ‘unrecognized’ Baptists were placed in great peril because of an “administrative test” that was established to determine what was a true Baptist church (in order to escape further troubles the ‘unrecognized’ Baptists were forced to be formally joined to the Hungarian Baptist Union, although that is where the cooperation ended), but also because the statute mandated that “powers be placed in the hands of an individual that were wholly incompatible with the freedom and equality of the brotherhood.”⁶⁸⁸ In short, the Magyar Baptists’ agreement with the VKM replaced Heinrich Meyer as the *de facto* bishop of the Baptists in Hungary with one of their own choosing. However, once having entered into an agreement with the state, the “Hungarian brethren found themselves entangled in such relations with the State that their property and liberties were at its mercy.”⁶⁸⁹ They were still attempting to revise the statutes which structured their relationship with the Hungarian state when its collapse following World War I rendered the issue moot.

The process of civil oversight demanded by the VKM did not mesh well with the congregational structure of the Baptists and their practice of recognizing and calling into ministry people from within the congregation who give evidence of spiritual giftedness and a calling from God to serve. The VKM simply assumed a hierarchical church

686. Rushbrooke, 155.

687. Rushbrooke, 156.

688. Rushbrooke, 156.

689. Rushbrooke, 156.

government and a formal structure which required potential clergy to be trained and vetted for suitability. While Heinrich Meyer considered himself to be the pastor of all the Baptists in Hungary (hence the criticism that he thought himself the *de facto* bishop of the Baptists in Hungary), Trefort saw the multitude of colporteurs, evangelists, and brothers leading worship in the “stations” as *de facto* church leaders, most of whom were peasants and artisans with little education. Not only did the lowly social origins of those serving in leadership roles in the Baptist churches offend the class sensibilities of Trefort, he also recognized that it made effective civil oversight problematic.

In a January 1884 parliamentary debate Trefort implicitly made this point when he defended his decision not to extend recognition to the Baptists. He turned down their application because “the Baptists do not meet the standard ... they do not have a church structure. I honor the peasant and the artisan, if they are in their own sphere, but I cannot honor them as a priest or bishop, because they have no calling there. I reiterate that right now the Baptists do not meet the standard necessary to come before the parliament with a bill which will elevate them to the same level as the received churches and religions.”⁶⁹⁰ This argument reflected the common belief that the Baptists did not care about knowledge or an educated clergy, and it was a frequent theme of anti-Baptist polemic. The Reformed minister Lajos Eröss in his anti-Baptist tract complained: “Even today it is enough for them if someone just knows how to speak...”⁶⁹¹ Similarly, Herman Stern voiced his support for this line of thought in his tract *Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing*.

The congregation’s servants, their spiritual caretakers should, just as the VKM Minister stated, “at least be educated people.” It is my conviction that the Minister wisely desires this standard... Because the worship service is not a comedy, which is what they make it to be, when such a person occupies the pulpit who without even the most basic level of education speaks in such a higgledy-piggledy way that his audience bursts out laughing.⁶⁹²

Irányi criticized this attitude by appealing to the social background of the apostles and early Christians.

If the honorable Minister thinks this way, then if he had lived during that time and if he had been the senior civil servant in the Roman Empire, he would not have granted recognition to the original Christians either, because they did not have any

690. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Tizennegyedik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 11], 168.

691. Eröss, 22–23.

692. Stern, 10.

priests who finished seminary, nor any bishops or presbyterial structure, or unified church government...⁶⁹³

This criticism had some validity, as Trefort set an arbitrary standard that did appear to be established so as to exclude any new religious movement from achieving recognition.

These concerns lead into the final concern noted by Meyer, the false charge often leveled against the Baptists that they would incorporate the Nazarenes into their fold, along with their pacifist ideas that were considered dangerous to the state. This then would have presented the government with the unenviable task of withdrawing recognition from the Baptists and dealing with the negative fallout. The difficulty for Meyer and the Baptists was that this was a charge that could not be disproven, and so the Baptists endured mistrust because of some shared doctrinal distinctives and practices with the more radical Nazarenes.

Meyer's most biting comments were reserved for the deleterious impact the decision would have on the Baptist mission. In his view it was an open invitation for increased persecution from mobs and the local authorities. Meyer was particularly troubled by the remarks Trefort made when announcing his decision in parliament, which appeared to him to be double speak that did little to restrain the worst impulses of those opposed to the Baptists. Events would prove Meyer correct.

Before turning to this, it is interesting to note that two months after this update from Meyer in Der Wahrheitszeuge had appeared, a more positive notice appeared in the Baptist Missionary Magazine concerning a circular from the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior. It appears to be a decision reached in parallel with the VKM concerning the status of the Baptists, and it represents a compromise to mediate between the desire of the Baptists for recognition and the lawfully received denominations' desire for more restrictive measures to be employed against the sects.

The following is the portion of the circular of the Minister of the Interior which refers to the Baptists in Hungary: "Thus far the religious community called Baptists was unknown in Hungary. An official acknowledgment of this party could be secured only through legislation by the Diet. The Executive is not in a position to give an official acknowledgment to a new and unknown religious party. The Baptists cannot, therefore, be allowed to organize themselves as a religious body: they must be dealt with as private companies. Preachers, as such, can act only in connection with accredited churches: the official character of Baptist preachers cannot, therefore, be acknowledged. But such persons are entitled to hold private meetings. If they desire to do so, they must give notice

693. Az 1884 évi szeptember hó 27-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Harmadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 27th of September, 1884. Volume 3], 126.

beforehand to the local authorities, and strictly conform to existing police regulations referring to public meetings.” With the free ideas of our own country in mind, this document sounds more like a restriction than an extension of the privilege of public worship; but it amounts to the latter in fact, for the only thing which is refused is recognition of the Baptists as a state church, and their preachers as state preachers, - a thing which has never been asked. Except the clause requiring previous notice to the police, the circular grants to our brethren in Hungary the same privileges of public worship as our churches enjoy in this country.⁶⁹⁴

The commentary is more or less true in its main assertion that apart from the need for advance notice to local authorities, the circular grants permission for the Baptists to hold public worship services.⁶⁹⁵ But it is misleading in the context around this assertion. First, the circular does not grant a new and previously unknown privilege; it merely reaffirms the existing status quo of the Baptists as a ‘tolerated’ religion. Second, Meyer was not seeking to have the Baptists achieve the status of ‘received’ religion on a par with the historic Christian churches, the import of the remark about “state preachers” in the editorial. This mistake is understandable given the Interior Ministry’s comment about the need for legislation in order for the Baptists to become an acknowledged religious party. He was, however, seeking to have the Baptists elevated to the somewhat ill-defined middle ground of a ‘recognized’ religion by way of ministerial *rendelet*, or ordinance, from the VKM Minister, as the Jewish religion had achieved shortly after the Compromise. This did not grant full reciprocity with the received religions, but it offered more protections from the persecutions the Baptists often faced, particularly from local officials, as well as certain privileges not accorded to merely ‘tolerated’ religions.⁶⁹⁶ Due to these misunderstandings, the editorial fails to capture how little was really achieved by this ministerial circular.

Meyer’s remarks in Der Wahrheitszeuge about the decision not to recognize the Baptists giving comfort to their persecutors appear prescient, as 1883 saw what came to

694. “Baptists in Hungary.” Anonymous editorial. Baptist Missionary Magazine LXIII.5 (May 1883): 116.

695. The problem not addressed in this assertion was that the police could refuse permission for the Baptists to hold a worship service for some reason or another. In short, the right to hold a worship service with the proper notification was not guaranteed. The practical result was that Baptists on occasion had to make appeals up the bureaucratic ladder in order to deal with recalcitrant local authorities.

696. This was particularly true in the area of laws governing family life. Recognition granted the religious body the right to maintain its own birth and marriage registers, thus obtaining state recognition for the marriages and for the children resulting from those marriages, with all that this implied. For the Baptists it also would have meant that their members would no longer owe the church tax to their former churches.

be known among the Hungarian Baptists as the Promontor martyrdom. Prior to this Meyer had noted that Baptist brethren in Promontor continued to suffer harassment and vandalism to their property,⁶⁹⁷ and Daniel Irányi had mentioned an incident in parliament which, due to the unwillingness of the local and county authorities to respond appropriately, had been brought to the attention of the Interior Ministry.⁶⁹⁸ What made the Promontor martyrdom infamous was that it was an extended violent riot in which Meyer and his companions were repeatedly attacked with the acquiescence of the local authorities. The incident took place on February 2nd, 1883, which was a Catholic holiday. Meyer had given notice prior to his arrival that he intended to hold a service in the village on that day. As he arrived with his wife and some companions, they observed a threatening crowd forming. The priest had incited the inhabitants of the village, and Meyer and his party tried to hurry to the safety of the meeting house. What follows is Meyer's narrative as reported in Der Wahrheitszeuge:

We were still twenty to thirty steps away from the meeting house when a mob of women and young fellows blocked the way. We tried very hard to mollify them and asked them to let us enter the house, but it was all for naught. The brethren came over in order to help us into the house, but they were beaten back by our adversaries, and we were forced away from the house by the blows from sticks and fists. After a few minutes we were beaten bloody and our clothes were ripped. The way we were being pushed under the continual beatings went past the townhall and we pushed our way into it hoping to find protection and security there, but the Notary, the only official who allowed himself to be seen, did not allow us any rest or protection inside, but with harsh words pushed us back outside amidst the increasingly large and angry mob.⁶⁹⁹

Meyer went on to recount how it took them fortyfive minutes of struggling through the most cruel gauntlet to make their way through the village until they found refuge in the train station. In his later recollection of the riot, Meyer observed that he frequently cried out to the crowd as they struggled to make their way to safety: "Dear people, what will become of you, will you become murderers?"⁷⁰⁰ The rioters were relentless in their brutality: "with fists, sticks, and brooms they beat and flogged us. If one brigade became

697. Meyer, "Verfolgungen in Ungarn," 52.

698. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirtetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Nyolczadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 8], 230.

699. Meyer, "Verfolgungen in Ungarn," 37.

700. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 63.

tired, another took over ... one after the other we were sent to the ground, and I thought that is where we would die.”⁷⁰¹ Once Meyer and his party found refuge in the train station, “the mob returned to the meeting house and destroyed everything they found, and carried off what was not secured.”⁷⁰²

As soon as Meyer arrived in Buda, he went to the Minister’s office, but it was closed.⁷⁰³ From there he went over to Pest to the Pest County Hall, since Promontor was under the jurisdiction of Pest County, arriving around six o’clock in the evening. The office was closed for business, but the sheriff received Meyer and his wife.⁷⁰⁴ As Meyer described it, “truly he was very upset when he saw us. One could clearly see that he was ashamed that something like this could take place in the immediate vicinity of the capital. He asked me to write a letter of complaint as soon as possible and bring it to him right away.”⁷⁰⁵ Meyer asked if he could go home to recover first, as he didn’t have the strength to compose a letter that evening. The sheriff assured him: “I will be here, just bring it to me.”⁷⁰⁶ Meyer did as he promised, and also reported the incident to Irányi and other parties.

The repercussions of the Promontor martyrdom were varied, and took some time to unfold. First, the physical impact of the riot upon Meyer and his companions was profound. Meyer and his wife were laid up in bed for a few weeks. While Meyer escaped from the beatings without any permanent physical damage, his wife was not so fortunate.

701. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 63.

702. Meyer, “Verfolgungen in Ungarn,” 37.

703. Meyer does not specify if he went to find VKM Minister Trefort, or if he went to the office for the Interior Minister. Meyer was certainly more familiar with Trefort, but the incident in any case would have been turned over by Trefort to the Interior Ministry to handle the complete dereliction of duty by the local authorities in not quickly ending the riot and providing protection to Meyer and his companions.

704. Sheriff here translates the office of *alispán*, which, as noted previously, was the administrative head of a county. This very important office had both law enforcement and administrative functions.

705. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 63.

706. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 63.

According to Meyer she lost her hearing in her right ear, which she never regained.⁷⁰⁷ As for the rioters, the matter was turned over to the public prosecutor, but because the rioters had separated Meyer's party from the local believers, there were insufficient witnesses to prosecute more than a handful of the perpetrators. As Meyer noted, most of the actual perpetrators of the violence "got off cheaply."⁷⁰⁸ A few people were jailed and others were fined for their roles. But even the good work of the prosecutors was overturned by the Catholic supporters of the rioters with the complicity of the judiciary. Thus Irányi complained in a parliamentary debate in January, 1885, in which he brought up the Promontor riot: "The King's Bench, however, and - I'm sorry to say - afterwards the Supreme Court reversed the punishments and because of this it is now said that it is permissible to thrash a member of a sect within an inch of his life."⁷⁰⁹ While the public fate of the rioters was hardly a deterrent, Meyer later heard that behind the scenes it was a different story for the priest and mayor. They were "threatened that if this kind of thing happened again, it would prove to be very expensive amusement for them."⁷¹⁰ The sheriff could make life uncomfortable for the priest, but the support given to Catholic priests by the Church hierarchy when they ran afoul of the civil authorities was no doubt a source of comfort to the priest. For the mayor, it was a different matter. The sheriff could exercise real discipline upon his inferiors in local government. In the final analysis, given the lack of serious public consequences for the Promontor riot, the contention of both Meyer and Irányi, that the mixed signals given by VKM Minister Trefort when he rejected the Baptists' application for recognition would only encourage further persecution, was proven correct.

Both Meyer and Irányi sought to leverage this incident to persuade the government to change their stance regarding the Baptists, but to no avail. For the first time, an effort to bring outside influences to bear upon the situation was made, through the agency of the Evangelical Alliance. The Evangelical Alliance at that time was a

707. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 63.

708. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 64.

709. Az 1884 évi szeptember hó 27-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Harmadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 27th of September, 1884. Volume 3], 125.

710. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 64.

primarily British institution, although evangelicals from North America and continental Europe also were represented. At the height of its influence during the Victorian period, it was especially concerned with religious liberty and the persecution of religious minorities in Europe. The connection between Heinrich Meyer and the Evangelical Alliance was made by the British and Foreign Bible Society depository in Vienna, Edward Millard, who was informed by Meyer of the riot in Promontor.⁷¹¹ In the Historical Collection of the Hungarian Baptist Church Archives a letter is preserved from General John Field, Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, to Heinrich Meyer in response to a letter Meyer had previously written describing the persecutions he and other Baptists experienced. General Field promised to publish Meyer's letter in the paper of the Evangelical Alliance, Evangelical Christendom, and other London papers. The letter went on to request that Meyer share with the Alliance how they could best help him, offering to write a letter to VKM Minister Trefort or to Prime Minister Tisza. The Evangelical Alliance wished to shed the light of public scrutiny on the persecution of the Baptists in Hungary in order to prod the Hungarian government to offer greater protection to them. General Field wrote: "Please do me the favor of putting together a compilation of the worst instances of intolerance and persecution which have taken place in the last few years," including in this compilation the names of those persecuted, as well as the specific place and locality where the incident took place.⁷¹² Meyer recounted that around this time Millard made arrangements for a delegation of the Evangelical Alliance to visit with Meyer in Budapest. The delegation was to first stop in Vienna to seek an audience with the Emperor about this and other incidents of religious persecution, but since the Emperor was in Budapest at that time, they came to Budapest to carry out their intentions. The delegation also asked that Meyer organize a meeting on their behalf and to invite the Protestant clergy to attend, but unfortunately the Protestant clergy were not interested in lending support to the Baptists, as "only two ministers came."⁷¹³ Meyer travelled to London in 1884 to visit with the leadership of the Evangelical Alliance and other

711. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 64.

712. Field, John. Letter from General John Field, Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, to Heinrich Meyer. Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, 1884. 1. Typewritten transcription.

713. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 64.

prominent Protestant leaders, including Charles Spurgeon.⁷¹⁴

Meyer informed Irányi about the involvement of the Evangelical Alliance and sought his counsel. Irányi shared his recommendations, and as a result a formal letter regarding the persecutions of the Baptists from the Evangelical Alliance was delivered to the Emperor by Edward Millard. A similar letter was supposed to have been delivered to the Hungarian government by Rev. Moody of the Scottish Mission in Budapest, but for some reason Moody did not follow through on the matter.⁷¹⁵ The involvement of the Evangelical Alliance was brought up by Irányi in parliament to demonstrate his contention that the unwillingness of the government to confront the religious persecution taking place in Hungary was a consequence of its own conflicting message before the parliament. He also mentioned it to prove to his fellow deputies that the resulting persecutions of religious minorities was now drawing negative attention to Hungary from some in the West.

These persecutions have resulted in the involvement of the Evangelical Alliance, which has its headquarters in London, and it has submitted petitions to his Majesty, as well as to the Prime Minister and the VKM Minister, requesting that they would seek to prevent further persecutions against the Baptists. Has it come to this for Hungarians who are so proud of freedom, that foreigners come to defend the religious freedom of our own citizens, just like the governments of the European states do on behalf of the Christians in the Turkish Empire! I am embarrassed, truly I am embarrassed, not only as a Hungarian, but also as a member of parliament, which already back in 1869 declared in one voice the need to introduce religious freedom and civil marriage. It is time, gentlemen, that we put an end to this situation, it is not enough to declare oneself a liberal, one must also deserve the name. It is not enough to proclaim the principles of 1848, freedom, equality, and brotherhood, one must also bring them into existence.⁷¹⁶

Irányi's words were no doubt biting to the members of the governing Liberal Party, but not enough to change the dynamic at work.

With the increased scrutiny on the persecution of the Baptists in Hungary and the status of religious freedom there by Evangelicals in the West, more attention was given to the parliamentary debates between Irányi and VKM Minister Trefort. An interesting

714. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 64–65.

715. Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 64.

716. Az 1884 évi szeptember hó 27-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Harmadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 27th of September, 1884. Volume 3], 127.

example of this was published in The Baptist Missionary Magazine. In contrast to the more positive editorial that had appeared in 1883 regarding religious freedom in Hungary, a rather critical editorial appeared in 1885 regarding the situation in Hungary. It well captures the debate and the stalemate regarding religious liberty.

The readers of the Magazine are familiar with the persecutions and violence which our Baptist brethren in Hungary, particularly in the neighborhood of Buda-Pest, have suffered. They were so severe that Mr. Meyer, the missionary of the Union, brought the matter to the attention of the Council of the Evangelical Alliance; and that body memorialized the king of Hungary on the subject. Mr. Irányi, a member of the Diet, lately brought a resolution before the House of Representatives, instructing the Minister of Public Worship and Education to prepare a law as to religious liberty. The resolution was opposed by the Minister, August Trefort, who, while professing to favor entire freedom in religious matters, claimed, first, that in regard to religious liberty Hungary would compare favorably with other countries; second, that, if liberty were granted, objectionable sects might take advantage of it to enter the country; third, that the Baptists are not qualified to form a church, because of their humble social standing; fourth, that they had not been persecuted; and finally, and strangest of all, he opposed the resolution because he did not “wish that any force shall be exercised over the consciences of men.” This remarkably inconsistent and inconsequent argument will not relieve our brethren from their sufferings, nor free the Hungarian government from the odium which falls upon those who persecute on religious grounds. Apparently the matter ended in this unsatisfactory manner; and the distressed brethren in Austria and Hungary should have our sympathy, and earnest prayers that the Lord would be pleased to deliver them out of their bondage.⁷¹⁷

Some of these points have been analyzed in detail already, and with regards to the Baptists in particular, the argument from Trefort remained that they enjoyed sufficient religious liberty to form active congregations and that they were not ready for recognition because they did not have an organized and educated clergy. The editorial reflected well the stalemate that forced Trefort to make arguments about religious liberty in Hungary that were poorly received by his domestic critics and by observers in the West.

The second point in the editorial deserves further scrutiny, because it picks up an argument that Trefort had hinted at previously, but that now was becoming well developed in the back and forth with Irányi. The editorial phrases the argument in terms of its consequences, that undesirable sects would enter Hungary should religious freedom be expanded the way Irányi desires, but this misses the point Trefort was making. This argument from Trefort received its fullest expression in an 1884 debate. And while the specific examples cited by Trefort seem odd and even disingenuous, the basic point he made gets to the heart of the stalemate.

717. “Baptists in Hungary.” Anonymous editorial. Baptist Missionary Magazine LXV.5 (May 1885): 114.

But the question is not about making sure the religious freedom of the individual, but what the honorable deputy wants is that everyone should have the right to start a religious organization or church. This is something the Hungarian laws do not presently permit, and I at least will never recommend that legislation be passed that would guarantee this right. This kind of freedom would lead to the dissolution of the Hungarian state. Then most definitely the Nihilists from Russia and the socialists from Germany would come and preach their beliefs on the street corners, desiring to form on the basis of this law their own religious societies. Hungarian society and the Hungarian state, where enough centrifugal elements exist already, would not survive this experiment.⁷¹⁸

The reference to secular radicals entering Hungary from abroad to form religious societies seems an odd bit of hyperbole, but apart from this the central point seems understandable enough. The government was aware that any action that might inflame religious tensions would buffet their hold over the state, and that in any case even if they wished to do so, their ability to push through radical reform was severely constrained by the Crown and the Catholic hierarchy. Thus their primary concern was to maintain stability while professing allegiance to the principles of 1848. This was the true reason why no progress was made on issues of religious liberty during this time.

The international attention from Evangelicals in the West regarding the religious persecution of the Baptists in Hungary was naturally focused primarily on Heinrich Meyer, since he was the point of contact with the international evangelical community, but at the same time there were also serious incidents which were directed at evangelists among the Magyar mission. In the same 1884 debate in which he mentioned the Promontor martyrdom, Dániel Irányi also mentioned another violent incident in the village of Dömsöd in Pest County, approximately forty kilometers south of Budapest. This incident involved János Lajos, one of the original Magyar converts, who had been invited by Meyer to minister to the Magyar population of Pest County. The incident took place at the house of Dávid Solti, a British and Foreign Bible Society colporteur who was from Dömsöd.⁷¹⁹ According to Irányi's report, on October 25, 1883, a group of Baptists were quietly holding a worship service at Solti's house when "a band of armed people attacked the house, breaking down the gate and the door, and they proceeded to beat the wife of Solti, who was absent at the time, as well as her seventy year old mother and also

718. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Tizennegyedik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 11], 167.

719. Mészáros, Kálmán. "Felfedező úton a nagy úttörők nyomában [On the Voyage of Discovery in the Great Pioneers Footsteps]." Theologiai Szemle 36 <new series>.4 (1993): 232.

János Lajos, they then destroyed the furniture, and finally they picked up their bloodied victims and dumped them in the yard.”⁷²⁰ Meyer also described this incident in *Der Wahrheitszeuge* alongside the story of his own beating in Promontor. He recounted that the mob repeatedly lifted the seventy year old woman like a “ball” and then threw her back down to the ground. Lajos was so badly beaten that he required the help of others to “get up from the pool of blood and make it back to his house.”⁷²¹ Irányi made a point of mentioning that when the victims of this attack went to the magistrate to complain, they were rudely dismissed. Finally, according to friends of Lajos, the wounds he received at the hands of this mob resulted in permanent damage to his health.⁷²²

Mihály Kornya also experienced much persecution during his evangelistic tours, and many stories about his travails were remembered and written down. One story took place in Tulka, not too far from Nagyszalonta, sometime during the 1890’s. Kornya’s evangelistic efforts in Tulka had not been very successful, but he persisted in visiting the village. The mayor of the village tired of this and on one occasion had Kornya locked up in a very cold cell with no place to sit or lie down, hoping that a good freezing would sour Kornya on preaching in his village. Realizing that he would definitely freeze if he did nothing, Kornya discovered a large stone in the cell and spent the evening lifting and rotating the stone while singing hymns. The physical exertion kept him warm. The next morning the ill-tempered mayor expected that he had caused real harm to Kornya. Instead he was humiliated when a healthy and rejoicing Kornya greeted him and continued preaching as he departed the village. The people of the village marveled at this and could not help but feel sympathy for Kornya. As a result Kornya’s ministry in Tulka began to experience success and he made several converts.⁷²³

Another story passed on was memorable for the humor Kornya displayed when persecuted for his preaching. In the town of Berettyóújfalu Kornya was thrown in prison one time and spent the evening getting to know the other men in the jail. He discovered

720. Az 1881évi szeptember hó 24-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Tizennegyedik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 24th of September, 1881. Volume 11], 165.

721. Meyer, “Verfolgungen in Ungarn,” 37.

722. Mészáros, “Felfedező úton a nagy úttörők nyomában [On the Voyage of Discovery in the Great Pioneers Footsteps],” 232.

723. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 123.

that among the prisoners were Calvinists, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Greek Orthodox men. He was the only Baptist. This caused Kornya to remark to his cell mates: “How odd this magistrate is, he wants to prohibit the religious practice of the only group that is not represented in this prison.” Upon his release from jail, he went back to the magistrate and said to him: “Sir, it was a good thing that you sent me to jail, because among the many prisoners only the Baptists were not in there. At least now you can add Baptists to the list.” The magistrate chuckled at this and shook hands with Kornya.⁷²⁴

Perhaps the most frequently mentioned story about how Kornya dealt with persecution by the local authorities is a subversive little tale recounted by the early Magyar Baptist leader Attila Csopják in his work on the history of the Baptist mission in Hungary. As Csopják explained, once Kornya’s name spread he “had to suffer a lot”, which only increased his fervor and enabled him “to shrewdly outmaneuver the persecutions of the ministers and the local authorities.”⁷²⁵ One time in an unnamed village the local authorities knew that Kornya intended to come and preach, and so they dispatched two policemen to the edge of the village to apprehend Kornya and bring him to the townhall so that they could deal with him. Kornya was made aware of this danger by friends, but he still wished to keep his promise to come and preach there. So he set out walking to the village and headed straight towards the two policemen, and when he saw them he went up to them and asked them a question. “Excuse me sirs, has that man who wants to preach in this village arrived yet?” To this question the police responded indignantly: “Of course he hasn’t come yet! That’s why we’re here, to prevent him from coming in.” Kornya simply replied: “But I would really like to hear him.” To which the policemen retorted: “Well you’re not going to hear him, you’re hurrying for nothing.” As Kornya casually walked past the two policemen he said: “Well I’d like to try anyway,” and he went on into the village to the appointed house and preached his sermon, and then departed by another route. The two policemen, on the other hand, waited in vain to ambush Kornya at the edge of the village.⁷²⁶ The tale is subversive in that it portrays the attempts of the local authorities to stand in the way of the Baptist mission as ineffectual,

724. Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 130–31.

725. Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 15.

726. Csopják, Képek a magyarországi baptista misszió történetéből [Pictures from the History of the Hungarian Baptist Mission], 15.

if not foolish at times. Kornya, in contrast to this, is portrayed as zealous, brave, and clever in the face of opposition.

As has been frequently noted, it was often the village clergyman that prompted the local authorities to persecute Baptist evangelists. This remained a problem throughout this period. However, with the emergence of the evangelical renewal in the late 1880's a different, more conciliatory voice was heard among the clergy of the Reformed Church, one that counseled against the harsh tactics repeatedly requested of the state by many Protestant ministers, bishops, and even entire church districts. One center of this revival movement was located in the southern part of the Great Plain. A key figure was the Reformed minister in Nagybecskerek, József Szalay, who edited in cooperation with other pastors a periodical called Szabad Egyház (Free Church).⁷²⁷ One article penned by Szalay in 1891, written in response to the arguments he heard in the Békésbánát Church District ministers conference about the reason for the spread of the sects, sought to root the problem in the poor spiritual condition and practices prevailing in the Reformed Church. This article expresses well the different approach taken by the exponents of the evangelical renewal. He enumerated three reasons for the spread of the sects. First, the sects spread because the Reformed schools and churches had failed in their mission to raise up the children of their parishioners in the faith. "In most places our ministers moralize, but regarding the truths at the heart of Christianity - the new birth, conversion, sanctification - they either say nothing or next to nothing."⁷²⁸ In a previous article Szalay had made the same charge, rooting the problem in the character of the Reformed clergy. Szalay cited the words of Jesus to Nicodemus about being born again and then lamented: "And so I ask, do we have many converted, born again preachers? ... How many are there who went through the same transformation as the Apostle Paul?"⁷²⁹ Szalay argued that this left the preaching about sin, salvation and conversion to the Baptists and Nazarenes. Christian praxis was also left to them, such that when a Reformed believer experienced conversion and began to live a Christian life, "then he no longer feels himself to be

727. Kool, 143.

728. Szalay, József. "A nazarénismus és baptismus terjedése okai [The Reasons for the Spread of the Nazarenes and the Baptists]." Szabad Egyház 8.12–13 (June 16 1891): 65.

729. Szalay, József. "Egyházunk romlása fő kútfeje [The Main Source of the Deterioration of our Church]." Szabad Egyház 7.3 (Feb. 1 1890): 17.

Reformed, but a Nazarene or Baptist.”⁷³⁰ The second reason he gave was that the people have nothing to hold onto in the churches, because the ministers live like lords, hardly showing any more religious life than a typical nobleman. The third reason was that the Reformed laity was not encouraged to be active in the faith. This contrasted greatly with the lay activity among the sects. “The Nazarenes and Baptists give work to their believers, and if not a lot, at the very least they invite two or three people every Sunday to God’s house.”⁷³¹ Thus Szalay argued, appealing to the example of Protestantism in England, that evangelical renewal was “the best remedy and medicine against the sects.”⁷³² Any other strategy was, in his view, in vain.

If this was the case, then how did the proponents of the evangelical renewal view the requests of their fellow clergy that the state crack down on the sects? In short they found it an ineffective and hypocritical path to pursue. This outlook was well articulated in a Szabad Egyház article by the Reformed minister Mihály Révész. The occasion of his article was a previous article in Szabad Egyház in which Gyula Dávid, following a rather conservative confessional line, harshly criticized the Baptists and Nazarenes as sectarians and heretics.⁷³³ Révész responded with a theological critique of Dávid’s viewpoint, and then concluded with a call to “embrace with love” the Baptists and Nazarenes as brothers in Christ.⁷³⁴ In making this plea he criticized the desire of most Protestants to turn to the government to deal with the rise of the sects.

It’s true that a small Baptist denomination is now in our homeland, but if I understand things correctly, for the most part their members did not come out of our denomination. If in the last several years our church has left behind unclaimed property and whoever wants it grabs some of it, that’s how it goes. But the Baptists are not the reason for this, rather something else is, and that reason is us ourselves. We think that it is sufficient that our forefathers struggled, gave their money and their blood, their sacrifices are enough, the same with their faith...

730. Szalay, “A nazarénismus és baptismus terjedése okai [The Reasons for the Spread of the Nazarenes and the Baptists],” 65.

731. Szalay, “A nazarénismus és baptismus terjedése okai [The Reasons for the Spread of the Nazarenes and the Baptists],” 66.

732. Szalay, “A nazarénismus és baptismus terjedése okai [The Reasons for the Spread of the Nazarenes and the Baptists],” 66.

733. Szigeti, “A magyarországi szabadegyházi közösségek keletkezése és a protestáns egyházak [The Beginnings of the Hungarian Free Church Congregations and the Protestant Churches],” 75.

734. Révész, Mihály. “Kereszttség az Irás szerint [Baptism According to the Scriptures].” Szabad Egyház 7.16 (Aug. 16 1890): 132.

Today we only care about the laws of our country and the ministerial ordinances. We just want to rest on the laurels of the past, and if someone disturbs our quiet slumber we moan and cry and appeal to the government not to abandon us. We ask the government to erect a line of defense across which the clergy cannot easily lead our sheep; and while on the one hand we loudly proclaim that we are the champions of freedom of conscience, on the other hand we cry at the door of the Ministry that in the interest of our freedom of conscience would they please send out the police to forcefully suppress the freedom of conscience of the Baptists and Nazarenes. This is not a healthy state of affairs. Others may have their problems, but the biggest problem is in our own church.⁷³⁵

As a proponent of the evangelical renewal within the Reformed Church Révész adopted an attitude of evangelical ecumenism that was critical of a rigid confessionalism which looked with disdain upon the Baptists or Nazarenes as heretics, and this same attitude caused him to be appalled at the hypocrisy of those Protestants who against the very principles they espoused wished to have the power of the state at their disposal to persecute the sects. For those within the renewal movement the only effective defense of their Church was to revive the old puritan fervor, to understand that “truly the gospel alone is the only worthy weapon” to protect the sheep in their fold.⁷³⁶

The emergence of the evangelical renewal as a stronger voice within the historic Protestant churches was a positive development for the Baptists in their struggle for religious freedom, however muted it was in its practical ramifications. However, Heinrich Meyer appears to have undergone his own development in thinking and outlook regarding church political issues as it became apparent that the government was at an impasse over these issues due to the larger political struggles in Hungary, one that took on a more critical view of the relationship between the Baptist churches and the state. What is interesting is that as the political conflict in Hungary began to escalate in the early 1890's following the resignation of Prime Minister Tisza over issues at the heart of the dualist compromise, and in response to this governmental crisis some in leadership of the governing Liberal Party at that time (particularly the successor to VKM Minister Trefort, Count Albin Csáky) saw a welcome distraction in advancing church political reform to resolve the perennial Protestant versus Catholic sectarian strife over *elkeresztelés* (the baptizing away of Protestant infants by Roman Catholic priests), Meyer was moving in the opposite direction with regard to the question of recognition. This period gave rise to the so-called Hungarian *Kulturkampf*, culminating in the legislation of 1894 and 1895

735. Révész, Mihály, 131.

736. Révész, Mihály, 131.

which introduced civil marriage, the “reception” of the Jewish religion, and the law on the “free exercise of religion” under which the Magyar Baptists finally achieved recognition in 1905.⁷³⁷ One has to wonder why Meyer did not revive his push for recognition following this legislation.

The answer to this question comes in a letter written at the very end of the period we are examining, dated December 7th, 1893, addressed to VKM Minister Csáky, composed in the midst of the *Kulturkampf*, a letter that reveals Meyer’s change in thought. The letter opens with Meyer lamenting that Csáky’s proposed legislation for church political reform suffered such dismemberment in the parliament’s public education committee, particularly those parts addressing the free exercise of religion of most benefit to the sects, that it effectively nullified the good he was hoping to achieve. Meyer then continues:

What happens with those who from a religious point of view refuse to apply for state recognition? And there are many small groups of pious Christians who are not able, or will not be able to form a religious body suitable to meet the state’s requirements... It is still not proved that it is the state’s responsibility to ‘receive’ religious bodies, still less that it is beneficial or proper for Christian societies to apply for state recognition. Concerning their aims, their conditions of existence and their tasks Christian “religious societies” and “states” are fundamentally such opposite things that combining the two in partnership together would not be good for either of the parties. It would be best if they remained separated. “What God has joined together let no man put asunder.” And what “God has separated man should not be tempted to combine as one.” If despite this the state follows the principles of recognition, even so it is still not necessary to suppress those who as a result of their religious convictions refuse to apply for state recognition and deprive them of their right to freely practice their religion.⁷³⁸

It is clear by this exposition that Heinrich Meyer is not just defending the Anabaptistic Nazarenes, who wished to remain completely separate from the state, but that he himself had come to believe that pursuing recognition from the state represented such an entanglement of the state in the affairs of the church that it violated what he believed was God’s plan for two separate, and yet mutually supportive institutions with different purposes and functions. What he wanted from the state was not recognition, but freedom from the discriminatory statutes and ministerial ordinances that restricted the free religious practice of Baptist converts and kept them bound by state-enforced obligations to their former religious denominations. Perhaps this change in outlook was a result of his

737. Péter, “Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900),” 100–01.

738. Meyer, Heinrich. Letter to Count Albin Csáky, Minister of Religion and Public Education. Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, 1893. 1–2.

reflection upon the barriers imposed by the government to recognition. Meyer's comment on the inability of many Christians to form a body that would meet the government's standards for recognition is suggestive of this possibility. If the government's standard required adopting ecclesiological structures and standards for pastoral ministry that were in conflict with the confessional principles of the Christian society, then theological integrity would prevent the society from seeking to gain recognition from the state. Meyer based his initial drive to seek recognition as a means of providing the Baptist mission with legal protection to carry out its ministry without harassment from the received religious denominations and their friends among the local authorities. It seems likely that over time Meyer began to believe the terms required by the state to enter into a formal relationship with them and gain this protection were too high. Instead what was needed was a general statute on religious freedom to completely free individual Baptist believers from entanglements that bound them to their former religions and guaranteed them the right to practice their new faith without penalty.

Meyer had two specific problems that he addressed to Csáky which embodied the state sanctioned religious discrimination that bound Baptist believers unfairly to their former denominations. The first issue was the church tax. Meyer complained: "It is not fair that those who left a legally recognized denomination and did not join a similar one should pay the church tax of the church they left."⁷³⁹ Meyer discounted the assertion that most people who would leave a received church would do so simply to avoid the church tax and other such economic obligations. Rather most do so to join a church not supported by the state, and so they are doubly burdened with obligations to their new faith community and to their former church. This was not the first time Meyer raised this issue with VKM Minister Csáky. In a November 1891 entry in his diary, Meyer noted:

I visited the Ministry of Religion from mid-morning until 1 o'clock. I was received by both the Minister and the State Secretary and while there I spoke of how I did not want to tolerate unjust burdens. The Minister recognized that it was oppressive, and for those affected it could be unpleasant to pay the church tax to a church to which one did not belong - and that in this respect an adjustment in the law is necessary.⁷⁴⁰

Nearly two years later Meyer was still complaining about the same problem, and it would take yet more time before the issue was resolved in the legislation of 1895. Yet it is

739. Meyer, Letter to Count Albin Csáky, Minister of Religion and Public Education, 2.

740. Meyer, Részletek Meyer Henrik naplójegyzeteiből 1872. márc. 7 - 1893. szept. 18. [Selections from Heinrich Meyer's Diary, March 7, 1872 - September 18, 1893], 60.

noteworthy that Csáky was sympathetic to the complaint and did introduce legislation to address the problem. The second issue was the required religious instruction students received in the state schools. Meyer argued: “It is commendable that the state strives for every student to take part in religious instruction, but this should take place without any oppression.”⁷⁴¹ But it was oppressive that the state forced parents to submit to having their children taught the religious principles of their former religion, and not the religious convictions of the parents new faith, simply because the state recognizes the former, but merely tolerates the latter. These were practical matters of real discrimination that Meyer wished to see rectified by statute law granting true freedom of religion. In short, Meyer had come to believe that the Baptists should be able to enjoy religious freedom and equality with other denominations without having to enter into a formal partnership with the state.

What conclusions can be drawn from this narrative of strife and striving? Over a period of nearly twenty years, Heinrich Meyer struggled with issues of religious liberty and persecution as he sought to firmly implant the Baptist message in Hungary. The first concern was with religious persecution by local clergy and their allies in the local government. Towards the end of the period under examination he was wrestling more with the inequities of the church-state system as it had developed since 1868 and fought for removing the legal burdens placed upon Baptist converts that tied them to their former religions, and for equal rights in such common matters as religious instruction in the schools. In all of this Meyer desired that which was proclaimed as a guiding principle in 1867 as the program of 1848 was taken up again following the Compromise, and that was a “free church in a free state.” For years he fought for government recognition of the Baptists, but he made no progress. Why was this so? The answer can be found in an interesting parliamentary exchange between Dániel Irányi and Mihály Zsilinszky in January of 1885 in which Zsilinszky pondered over why Irányi was not successful in his efforts to pass legislation establishing religious liberty. The exchange started with Zsilinsky remarking that Irányi had been at his quest for ten years, and Irányi shot back that it had been fifteen years. Zsilinsky continued:

So then fifteen years, and as he painfully noted, always without success. In truth it does seem strange that legislation submitted in the Hungarian parliament and accompanied by such ornate speeches is rejected year after year. What is the reason for this? I do not believe, as some members of parliament assert, that the majority of members of parliament and in the government do not have the necessary understanding of the idea of religious liberty. We must look for the

741. Meyer, Letter to Count Albin Csáky, Minister of Religion and Public Education, 3.

reason in some other circumstances. For there are truths that are as clear as day, which are not necessary to explain, for which it is enough to point to them for us to understand them, and the authority of which can only be cast into doubt by darkness. There are principles for which everybody has an equal right, just as we have a right to the air we breathe, principles which we cannot deny without doing damage to our hearts and our being. Such is the idea of religious liberty. And yet how is it that the majority of parliament and I myself, a person who is a true believer in religious liberty, still from year to year find ourselves in such a place where we feel obliged to speak against the legislative proposal of the honored member of parliament? In my view the reason for this lies in the fact that the gentleman has not chosen the right time.⁷⁴²

Zsilinsky clarified his thought by suggesting that the legislation was inappropriately introduced year after year during the budgetary debates. But this was a figleaf. For since the state collected the church taxes and apportioned subsidies to the received churches for the support of clergy salaries or to support church schools as was deemed necessary,⁷⁴³ and moreover since Irányi sided with the anticlericals who advocated for the secularization of the vast Catholic church properties as part of his program of religious and educational reform,⁷⁴⁴ the budgetary debates were an appropriate forum for his proposed legislation. The larger context of his support for civil marriage and religious freedom was well understood. Thus Zsilinsky was simply stating the obvious truth of the matter, that the larger political context was not favorable to passing Irányi's legislation because the resulting sectarian strife between Protestants and Catholics would destabilize the current government and its relations with the Crown.

Moreover, while the leaders of the received Protestant churches wished to have their grievances against the Roman Catholic Church redressed by the government, they were less than enthusiastic about some of the implications of Irányi's program of religious freedom because they were worried that their losses to the emerging sects would weaken them further financially. In an 1886 article in PEIL entitled "Are the Nazarenes Spreading and What Sort of Medicine Can We Employ Against This Epidemic?", Ferenc Márk closed his argument with a broadside against Irányi:

In the past few days we have been reading about the public education budget negotiations during the current year's parliamentary session, and how Dániel Irányi has submitted yet again legislation calling for the introduction of general

742. Az 1884 évi szeptember hó 27-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója. Harmadik kötet. [Journal of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament Convened on the 27th of September, 1884. Volume 3], 161–62.

743. Péter, "Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)," 110.

744. Péter, "Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)," 91.

religious liberty. Now if somehow Irányi's idealistic principles would be realized in our homeland, then we Protestants, who can barely sustain ourselves from the pennies of the people, should boldly close our seminaries and turn them into training institutes for parliamentary deputies! Because we would see people leave the Protestant churches, which after the Jewish religion have the most expensive church taxes in our country, for that denomination which Minister Trefort appropriately calls the "non-paying denomination". But their members in our dear Hungarian homeland would no doubt be quite numerous.⁷⁴⁵

The Protestant churches always pleaded poverty compared to the well-funded endowments possessed by the other received religions, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, and argued that their long struggles against the Roman Catholic Church and the Habsburg dynasty contributed to that imbalance in resources. The religious game in Hungary was one of fighting to maintain privileges and potentially gain at the expense of other players, with the state as the referee handing out victories or losses. The Protestants above all wished to gain against their more powerful rival, the Catholic Church, they did not wish to see the state allow new players in the game, players that in their view would gain more at their expense than at the expense of their competitors.

In fact, the majority of Protestant ministers and those in the church hierarchy were willing to appeal to both local authorities and the central government to intervene against the sects in order to hinder their emergence as *de facto* players in the game. Of course the incident at Promontor demonstrated that the Catholic clergy could also be quite aggressive against the sects as well. The numerous articles penned against the sects and the emergence of tracts directed towards the masses that were highly critical of the sects demonstrate a desire among many Protestant churchmen to mobilize both elite and popular opinion against the sects. Of course the same old arguments employed against the Anabaptists were used against the Nazarenes and Baptists, comparing them to the Münster radicals, though now augmented with more contemporary references to socialism and communism. Yet it is interesting how some of the same arguments employed by the Reformed Church against the Roman Catholic Church were reworked to be employed against the sects.

In particular, I am referring to the nationalistic argument portraying the Reformed faith as the "Magyar" religion. Of course the irony here is that they employed this argument from a very different position. Against the Roman Catholic Church and the Habsburg dynasty they were the persecuted minority defending their faith and the Hungarian people, but now they were the persecutors calling people to be loyal to the

745. Márk, 262.

faith of their Magyar forefathers. For example, Lajos Eröss closed his anti-Baptist tract with such an appeal: “Truly I tell you that the Baptist faith is not the religion of your fathers. They smuggled it in among us from Germany. And if this situation isn’t already bad enough in itself, it would be even worse if in our Hungarian homeland it would most easily find itself at home among the most sober sons of Calvinism.”⁷⁴⁶ Eröss had previously criticized Meyer in his pamphlet not only for his comfortable living circumstances, but also as a foreigner who after decades of living in Hungary still “until this day ... cannot show his regard for our people by at least learning to speak Hungarian.”⁷⁴⁷ Heinrich Meyer’s perceived German chauvinism became an issue among the emerging Magyar Baptist leaders in the years after 1893. The Baptist’s Reformed critics were all too happy to use such perceptions of German chauvinism to denigrate the Baptists as a foreign implant, in order to contrast this to the perception of the Reformed confession as the “Magyar religion” and a repository of patriotism.

More important is how the issues of German chauvinism and Magyar nationalism played out in the development of Meyer’s thought regarding church and state and the eventual impact on Baptist unity in Hungary. This is important because it answers in part the previously discussed question of why Meyer did not again pursue recognition when the church political reform legislation of 1894 to 1895 opened up the possibility of that for which Meyer had so long fought to achieve. I suggest that theological reflection and new convictions concerning the separation of church and state alone do not explain his change in heart. Heinrich Meyer arrived in Budapest in the year it became one, united city out of three. In 1873 Buda was still predominantly German-speaking, Catholic, and loyal to the Habsburgs, while Pest was more Magyar, nationalistic, and the dynamic commercial heart of the capital. But twenty years later Budapest was not the same city. The German population had “allowed themselves to be merged with, and eventually absorbed by, the Magyar majority: they became part of a linguistic, cultural and even political Hungarianness.”⁷⁴⁸ The problem for Heinrich Meyer was that he let this cultural movement pass him by and leave him behind. I contend that an unspoken part of Meyer’s development in thought regarding potential Baptist entanglement with the state through achieving recognition was the awareness that his status as an outsider, not only politically

746. Eröss, 24.

747. Eröss, 17.

748. Lukacs, 71.

as a German citizen, but linguistically and culturally as a proud German, was incompatible with being the titular head of the Hungarian Baptist denomination in formal relationship with the Hungarian state. This would not be an impediment to the indigenous Magyar leaders who would come to the fore among the Baptists.

Even during this period the Magyar Baptists began to struggle on their own initiative with the inequities in their legal status as members of a merely tolerated religious group. A notice in an October 1887 issue of PEIL spoke both to a fundamental fear of the historic Protestant churches and also to how the Magyar Baptists were beginning to take initiative in facing legally sanctioned religious discrimination. The notice describes how that after the appeal of János Szűcs and his compatriots in Kisszentmiklós to the VKM Minister, requesting to be freed from paying church taxes to their former church, was denied, they then decided to pursue what PEIL deemed a “strange” strategy. Refusing to give up, they “appealed against the VKM Minister’s decision to his colleague the Interior Minister.”⁷⁴⁹ The Interior Minister, however, simply forwarded the appeal back to Trefort, who “for a second time rejected the request of the Baptists who do not wish to pay.”⁷⁵⁰ As noted the culmination of this struggle would come with the church political reform legislation in 1894 to 1895, which gave Meyer the core of what he now wished to achieve. The introduction of civil marriage put Baptist marriages and families on an equal legal footing, and freedom of worship freed Baptist converts from their obligations to their former churches. And yet while Meyer had by this time thought better of his desire for state recognition for the Baptists, the desire was not gone. Rather it was taken up by the emerging Magyar leaders, and when the goal was achieved in 1905, it fractured the Baptist movement in the country. That is the significance of Meyer’s evolution of thought on church state matters in a complex and evolving Hungarian political culture.

With regard to the persecution of the Baptists, the first and obvious point to make is that the persecution faced by Heinrich Meyer and the Baptists in the twenty years following Meyer’s arrival in 1873 was not the same as that faced by Johann Rottmayer during the period from 1846 to 1866. It was episodic and unsystematic, driven by local conditions and personalities. In short, it was not the policy of the Hungarian government to persecute the Baptists. This was most certainly not the reality for Johann Rottmayer

749. “A baptisták nyugtalanzkodása [The Agitation of the Baptists].” Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 30.44 (Oct. 30 1887): 1406.

750. “A baptisták nyugtalanzkodása [The Agitation of the Baptists],” 1406.

during his time in Budapest. The second point is that Heinrich Meyer was not the only target of polemic and persecution. Indeed, it was the success of the indigenous Magyar Baptist evangelists, those men later called the “peasant prophets”,⁷⁵¹ that enabled the Baptist message to expand beyond the mission to the German diaspora which consumed Heinrich Meyer, and which consequently attracted so much negative attention. In particular Mihály Kornya became a target not only of ministers and local authorities in the towns and villages where he evangelized, but of a polemical campaign in the press and in tracts. It was Kornya who was singled out as a sectarian prophet who “has made himself known in a wide circle, roaming the entire country.”⁷⁵² He became so well known that he was a topic of discussion among the public. Kirner relates one story of Kornya boarding a train to go to a more distant town to preach, when he overheard some people talking about the “thievish Kornya” going from village to village to preach, and that on a few occasions he was actually branded on the back so that the police could recognize him. Kornya tired of this talk and so he approached the people and said:

Now people, look here. I will take off my jacket, after that my vest, and then I will take off my shirt from the midst of my back, and get a good look at the stamp branded on the middle of my back, because I am that Kornya that you are talking about.⁷⁵³

The people were rather surprised and apologetic. Kornya took the opportunity to preach to them on Acts 9:16, the Damascus Road incident in which Jesus, speaking of Paul, explains to Ananais, “for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake.” In the end Kornya won new friends. But while Kornya was frequently the pioneering evangelist, he had many colleagues who assisted him with the new stations, men willing to step into the fray. Lajos Varga noted this in his description of the Baptist mission to Földes, observing that not only did “Mr. Kornya from this time on gladly visit this core group more and more. As the Christmas season drew near we began to get news that first one, then another of their prophets would wander over to us every week to hold a worship service.”⁷⁵⁴ Without minimizing the difficult labors and sufferings endured by Heinrich

751. Kornél, Győri. “A baptista parasztprofétákról [About the Baptist Peasant Prophets].” *Theologiai Szemle* 10 <new series>.5–6 (1967): 154–57.

752. Különfélék [Notices], 662.

753. Kirner, *Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances]*, 108.

754. Varga, 148.

Meyer, it is fair to recognize that most of the growth of the Baptist movement came from the Magyar mission in the 1880's and beyond, and that a good deal of the opposition to the Baptists was directed towards the Magyar evangelists.

Perhaps the final observation to make with regards to the efforts made by Heinrich Meyer for recognition of the Baptist confession is that the struggles for religious freedom and equality in the face of persecution and polemics during this formative period of the Baptist movement foreshadowed both the achievements and the conflicts to come. The relationships that Heinrich Meyer cultivated with leaders in politics and religious life were a positive development for the movement as it sought to firmly establish itself in Hungary. A pattern of engagement with those able to provide support or redress of grievances was established that was followed by the emerging generation of Magyar Baptist leaders. And yet the cultural and linguistic alienation of Meyer from the increasing Magyarization of national life in Hungary, particularly in the midst of a period marked by Magyar national pride and a desire for control over their own national destiny, coupled with what I previously described as his missionary paternalism, set the stage for the future fragmentation and divisions within the movement.

Chapter 6

Concluding Thoughts on the Establishment of a Lasting Baptist Presence in Hungary

1. A Lasting Presence

The period from the ordination of Mihály Kornya and Mihály Tóth as deacons in 1881 until 1893 when the two seminarians, Udvarnoki and Balogh, came home was one in which the Baptist movement became firmly implanted in the Hungarian landscape. This was so in two senses. One way this was so was in the breadth the movement achieved through the evangelical revival experienced by the Magyar mission under the leadership of Mihály Kornya and other Magyar evangelists. The other way was the sense of permanence and presence associated with the opening of the first Baptist church building in the capital, the Wesselényi Street Baptist Church, to serve as the headquarters of the movement and the base for Heinrich Meyer's ministry. In many ways this was the formative period for the Baptist movement in Hungary, whereas the following two decades were taken up with issues of leadership and identity. I wish to briefly discuss these two themes as a way of presenting why the Baptist movement in Hungary successfully implanted itself in Hungary when it did.

2. The Importance of the Wesselényi Street Baptist Church

The Wesselényi Street Baptist Church was not the first Baptist church building for the Hungarian Baptist mission, but its opening was a symbolic achievement for the movement. For the first several years Meyer was content to rent quarters for holding worship services. However, as the congregation in Budapest grew, and as the rent for their meeting space grew even more, this solution became less viable.¹ This was the impetus to seek a permanent home for the congregation.

In a report published in March 1883 in *Der Wahrheitszeuge*, Meyer shared about the first Baptist church building in Hungary, which was located in the epicenter of the Magyar mission, Nagyszalonta.

Other than five places which we rent, we have with the Lord's help purchased our own meeting place in Szalonta, which cost around 2600 ₰. I was there at the end of November to open it. There is room for 250 people on narrow benches without backrests. At the opening it proved to be too small since over 100 brethren were there close together and many

¹ Meyer, *Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919* [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 65–66.

friends. Although great efforts have already been made, this modest house is still not fully paid for, and we would gladly accept further gifts from friends of the mission in Hungary.²

From the description offered by Meyer it is apparent that the church building was basically a simply furnished large meeting room. Even so the congregation was still seeking to pay off the building and Meyer made a point of soliciting financial support from German Baptists to help pay off the outstanding debt. This announcement provided Meyer with the opportunity to discuss the financial hardship visited upon the poor members of the Budapest congregation by the ever rising rent for their meeting place. Because of this difficult situation, Meyer made a second announcement in his report.

We have therefore decided to begin collecting funds to build our own building, so that with this property we could render greater service not only to the capital city with its 400,000 inhabitants, but also to the entire country. We hope that the Lord will make not only us, but also our brothers in other lands willing to richly give, so that in the not to distant future we could begin construction of the building.³

Two points are important to note in this statement. First, Meyer believed that a church building for the Budapest congregation was important not only for the local congregation and its outreach to the populous capital city, but also it was useful for the mission to the whole of Hungary. This announcement served notice that the construction of a church building for the Budapest congregation would be a top priority for Meyer. When Meyer later recounted how the Wesselényi Street Church came to be built, it was clear that much of his attention was directed towards this effort.⁴ Secondly, it was clear that Meyer realized that the Baptist mission in Hungary was too poor to enable him to realize his cherished plan for a permanent home for the Baptists in the capital city. Thus he asked for support from the brethren outside of Hungary to give richly towards the project.

In subsequent reports Meyer continued to speak about the problem of rising rent and the need for a permanent home for the Baptists in Budapest. More importantly, he developed further his apologetic for the importance of the goal for the whole of Hungary.

More and more we have also come to the conviction that it is our duty to begin to carry out our plan as soon as possible in trust in the Lord. The

² Meyer, "Verfolgungen in Ungarn," 53.

³ Meyer, "Verfolgungen in Ungarn," 53.

⁴ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 65–69.

mission in the capital is of the utmost importance for the mission in the whole land; only here do we enjoy the fullest tolerance, and even police protection, if necessary, for our services. Our success in gaining a foothold in so many places throughout the land is due primarily to the freedom which we enjoy in the capital and also to the position and attention which we enjoy here. Also the congregation in Budapest will be in the future, even far more than is already the case, the principal source of funding for the mission in the whole land and even beyond its borders. However, in order for our mission in the capital to continue to prosper and to be a blessing for the whole land, we must soon have an adequate place to proclaim the Gospel.⁵

Meyer argued that the congregation in Budapest was of strategic importance for the broader mission to Hungary. First, the freedom enjoyed by the Baptists in Budapest was unique. This freedom allowed the congregation to achieve a certain prominence that Meyer asserted was responsible for the progress of the Baptist mission in so many different places in Hungary. While there was a certain apologetic value to a successful Baptist presence in the capital, and while the relationships Meyer cultivated in the capital with influential political figures was very important in combatting the persecution faced by Baptist evangelists and congregations outside of the city, it was somewhat hyperbolic to insist that the Baptist presence in Budapest was an essential part of the success enjoyed by the Magyar mission outside of Budapest. His second point was that the Budapest congregation was the greatest source of giving for the mission fund that supported evangelists throughout Hungary, and thus a permanent home for the congregation would allow them to direct greater resources to the Baptist mission that would benefit all of Hungary. It is true that the Budapest congregation, while poor, was less poor than those outside of the capital, and thus gave more to the mission fund. But it is also true that much of the funding for Baptist evangelists and colporteurs came from abroad. In some ways these arguments reveal more about Meyer's mindset than they do about the status of the Baptist mission in Hungary. He continued to believe in the central importance of his own work for the progress of the Baptist mission in all of Hungary.

In July of 1884 Meyer was able to report that they had purchased a piece of property that "lies indeed just outside the center of the city, but in many respects it is very conveniently located."⁶ This parcel was on Wesselényi Street, on the corner with what

⁵ Meyer, Heinrich. "Erfolge und Opferwilligkeit in Ungarn." *Der Wahrheitszeuge* 6.5 (Mar. 1 1884): 47.

⁶ Meyer, "Die Baptistengemeinde in Budapest," 151.

was then Dohány Street, or Tobacco Street, and is now Hársfa Street. The plot was just a block outside the Erzsébet körút, a section of the Nagykörút, or Grand Boulevard, that was the outer ring road separating the *Belváros*, the center of Budapest, from the outlying districts that were rapidly developing. The need to purchase a piece of property was driven by the fact that land prices were rising rapidly. Meyer estimated that between 1883 when they first began to look, and when they finally found something suitable in 1884, prices had risen by twenty to thirty percent. The parcel was eleven thousand Gulden, which Meyer characterized as being “relatively cheap” for the location. He calculated that a suitable parcel in the *Belváros* would have been thirty to sixty thousand Gulden.⁷ Even so, the land was not fully paid for at the time of purchase, even with the contribution by Meyer from his own personal savings, and thus building could not begin until the transaction was completed and sufficient funds were on hand to enable construction. As Meyer observed, the situation was such that “we must still hope for help from outside.”⁸

In order to persuade his readers of the importance of his project, he developed further his argument concerning the strategic importance of the Hungarian mission. He wrote, “Apparently the time has come for Hungary to be won for God, the Lord Himself has begun this mission.”⁹ In this work God had entrusted the Baptists with a task to carry out that had implications beyond Hungary.

There is indeed enough to do everywhere, however only a few mission fields may be as important as the hopeful mission in Hungary. From Hungary must be conquered the great lands that lay in the vicinity and especially those to the southeast, so that they might be filled with the Gospel. We have people from almost all of the nations around here in our congregation already.¹⁰

This was a profound argument for the missiological centrality of the Hungarian mission for reaching the Balkans. Meyer proclaimed that his church would play a role in reaching the region for the gospel. He pleaded, “help us soon, so that we can build a house in

⁷ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 66.

⁸ Meyer, “Die Baptistengemeinde in Budapest,” 151.

⁹ Meyer, “Die Baptistengemeinde in Budapest,” 151.

¹⁰ Meyer, “Die Baptistengemeinde in Budapest,” 151.

which the gospel will be proclaimed in the many languages of this great city.”¹¹ What is so interesting about this plea is how later conflicts between Meyer and the Magyar members of the congregation over the language question belie this promise.

During the period from 1884 until construction began in 1886, Meyer described his efforts to raise money for the building fund.

I used every minute and every opportunity to visit churches wherever I went abroad... Frequently when I was preaching, during the sermon I would divert my focus and draw attention to the chapel construction on all my foreign trips.¹²

In 1884 he traveled to Hamburg to join in the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Baptist movement in Germany and spoke of his plans for building the church. A man by the name of Braun encouraged Meyer to seek out Woyka in Scotland because he was from Hungary. Later that year he went to London and spoke at several churches. While there he met with leaders of the Evangelical Alliance and also paid a visit to Spurgeon. Meyer believed that the language barrier prevented greater success during this trip. “If I had known how to speak English, I would have been able to raise a lot of money.”¹³ He did take a two day side trip to Scotland to visit Woyka, but dismissed the excursion as a failure.¹⁴ In 1885 he returned to Germany again to raise funds in Königsberg. Apparently he also considered taking a trip to America to raise funds from the German Baptist congregations there. According to a notice in a July 1884 issue of *Der Sendbote*, Meyer was listed among four German Baptists from Eastern Europe planning to raise funds from the churches in America. This after the General Missionary Committee of the German Baptists in America had asked all potential collectors from Europe to clear trips with them in advance in order to stem the flow, particularly from the German Baptist pastors of Eastern Europe, of such fundraising trips that were beginning to exhaust the hospitality

¹¹ Meyer, “Die Baptistengemeinde in Budapest,” 151.

¹² Meyer, *Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919]*, 67.

¹³ Meyer, *Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919]*, 67.

¹⁴ Meyer, *Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919]*, 67.

and resources of the German Baptist churches in America.¹⁵ Since Meyer never mentioned a trip to America in his later recollections, it is probable that his planned trip never took place.

Construction began in the fall of 1886, and was completed in the summer of 1887. The opening celebration and first baptisms in the new church building took place on August 20, 1887, and so many people attended that Meyer was afraid that “the choir loft would simply collapse.”¹⁶ Meyer was particularly pleased that so many friends, including a “Reformed bishop”, attended the opening celebration.¹⁷ The bishop was Gábor Papp, who was introduced to Meyer by Irányi and had defended Meyer in parliamentary debates.¹⁸ The opening of the church building was noted in PEIL as well, and was taken as a sign that the Baptists were “growing and strengthening markedly.”¹⁹

The opening of the Wesselényi Street church building was a triumph for Heinrich Meyer. A physical presence that was built by, and belonged to, the Baptists in Budapest not only gave them space to hold numerous events, both to strengthen the believers and to evangelize unbelievers, but it also signified that this new Christian community was not a transitory phenomenon. The solidity of the building spoke to the steadfastness and durability of the Baptist movement. The question then is if the building did in fact become the multilingual platform for missionary outreach to the many nationalities of Hungary that Meyer had expressed as his goal during the fundraising period.

The answer is that Meyer did not live up to his rhetoric and the language question between Meyer’s German oriented mission and the Magyar converts who wished to hear the gospel proclaimed in their own language became a source of conflict which eventually dragged the church building into the struggle between the two sides. Meyer later explained his change of heart on this matter. “During the time of the planning of the

¹⁵ Woyke, Frank. Heritage and Ministry of the North American Baptist Conference. Oakbrook Terrace, IL: North American Baptist Conference, 1979. 181.

¹⁶ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 69.

¹⁷ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 69.

¹⁸ Mészáros, “Meyer Henrik munkássága kora egyházi és társadalmi viszonyainak tükrében [Heinrich Meyer’s Work in the Mirror of the Period’s Church and Social Conditions],” 119.

¹⁹ “A baptisták köréből [From the Sphere of the Baptists].” Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 30.39 (Sept. 30 1887): 1246.

chapel I thought we would preach the word in three or four languages, but when the laying of the foundation stone took place I saw in this a great danger. In the cornerstone I saw a charter being established in which the church rising up would be a German church with German members.”²⁰ This change of heart placed Meyer squarely athwart the cultural transformation which was changing Budapest, the linguistic Magyarization of the city. And he stood in opposition to it in the most culturally impolitic way, by insisting upon the primacy of the German language in the flagship church of the Hungarian Baptist movement. The cultural dynamic in Budapest was parallel to the political dynamic of the Hungarian state moving away from the political hegemony of the Habsburg dynasty, which was the ascendancy of the Magyar language as the primary and privileged language of Hungarian society.²¹ In this process most of the German speaking population of the city assimilated into cultural Magyardom. Meyer was certainly aware of creeping Magyarization. He explained that since 1879 he had allowed Hungarian language services to be held at different times and in different rooms. “After a while I realized that almost everyone took part in the Hungarian worship service, which was from two to four. Since our [evening] service began at five o’clock, everyone was understandably tired ... In the bilingual Sunday School the German language was gradually repressed.”²² When Meyer and some of his German helpers sought to counter this trend, they were met with angry resistance. Meyer recounted how one sister opposed him and argued, “Brother Meyer does not want that the Hungarians should get saved as well.”²³

This issue was eventually brought to the attention of Meyer’s colleagues in Hamburg at some point in the early 1890’s through correspondence between disgruntled Magyar Baptists in Budapest and the two Magyar seminarians studying in Hamburg. At one point during this time, Meyer received a letter from brother Fetzner in Hamburg in which various issues were raised in relation to the support Meyer received from the General Missionary Committee of the German Baptists in America, including the language question.

²⁰ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 72.

²¹ Lukacs, 126–27.

²² Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 72.

²³ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 72.

The letter instructed me to allow services in the church to be conducted in Hungarian, and not simply to have German services translated into Hungarian. Even if these sermons were not on the same level as my sermons, the Hungarians had a right to hear the gospel in their mother tongue. I answered their letter. When I was in Hamburg, I even asked various people about the letter. For my part it was terrible to know that I am a German person and I have my pulpit, and even though I don't know how to speak Hungarian, German people encouraged me to turn over my pulpit to the Hungarians.²⁴

Meyer clearly was not happy with the cultural dynamic that was quickly rendering his German outlook anachronistic and leaving him isolated linguistically and socially from the main currents of Hungarian society. He wrote that because of these problems he had decided to find a separate facility to rent for the Hungarian brethren to begin their own congregation when the return of the seminarians rendered his plan moot.

The sad result of this dispute and of the growing split between the rising generation of indigenous Magyar Baptist leaders and Heinrich Meyer was that when the movement formally split following the recognition of the Baptists under Magyar leadership in 1905, the Wesselényi Street church became an object of contention during the attempted mediation of a peace commission of the Baptist World Alliance. In a personal letter from Meyer to J.H. Rushbrooke, the representative of the Baptist World Alliance following the arbitration award, Meyer wrote "I should like to remark that I not yet could find out, why the property if the First Buda Pesth Church has become an object of the arbitration. Is there attached to it any wrong against God or man?"²⁵ With only one recognized Baptist denomination in Hungary, the Wesselényi Street church complex was subject to the control of the recognized party, a reality that greatly troubled Meyer in his letter to Rushbrooke. It is evident from the context of the letter that the recognized Baptists wished to have some use of this facility, for apart from its historical significance, it was also the best building owned by Baptists in the region. The argument Meyer sought to counter was that because the common building fund to which all Hungarian Baptists contributed supported the construction of the church, and because Meyer directed a great deal of foreign support towards this cause to the detriment of needs elsewhere, it was only proper that the facility be shared by both parties. In other words, the Wesselényi Street

²⁴ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 73.

²⁵ Meyer, Heinrich. Letter to Rev. J.H. Rushbrooke. Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, 1908. 9.

church needed to be shared with the ethnic Hungarians on an equal basis, with Magyar worship services. Meyer's response was that the Wesselényi Street congregation gave sacrificially both to the Baptist mission in Hungary, which benefited the Magyar mission, and towards the cost of their church building. He then presented a detailed breakdown of the origins of the funds used to pay for the chapel, two thirds of which came from the local congregation.²⁶ In his view the church building belonged to the local congregation alone, which meant that the church would remain a German language church. In the end Meyer prevailed, and the Wesselényi Street church remained a predominantly German language congregation until well after the two parties finally reconciled in 1920.

The Wesselényi Street church represented different things to different parties. To Heinrich Meyer and many outside observers, it was a sign of the strength of the Baptist movement in Hungary, that it had established itself permanently in the country. To many disheartened Magyar Baptists and to some external Magyar critics of Heinrich Meyer and the Baptist mission he lead, it was a symbol of German chauvinism. Some in the secular press wrote that the goal of Meyer and his congregation was to engage in the germanization of its Magyar converts because German language courses were offered in the church.²⁷ If the physical complex was an achievement for Heinrich Meyer, his congregation, and perhaps for the Hungarian Baptist movement overall, it must also be recognized that the congregation mirrored both the strengths and the weaknesses of its founder, and thus they and the church building they inhabited fell short of the lofty goals Meyer first envisioned when he began planning its construction.

3. The Rapid Growth of the Magyar Mission From 1881 to 1893

The true guarantor of a sustained Baptist presence in Hungary was the rapid expansion of the Baptist mission among the Magyar population of Hungary, fueled by indigenous Magyar evangelists, and lead by the tireless efforts of Mihály Kornya. The turning point was the year 1881, when Heinrich Meyer ordained Kornya and Tóth as elders because he could not manage any longer the demands of the growing work on his own. Bertalan Kirner, the Hungarian Baptist scholar who researched intensively Kornya's career as a missionary, expressed it this way: "Until this time Meyer baptized those who Kornya had prepared beforehand, but now from 1881 onwards Kornya assumed, or rather

²⁶ Meyer, Letter to Rev. J.H. Rushbrooke, 11–13.

²⁷ Szebeni, "Meyer Henrik emlékére [In Memory of Heinrich Meyer]," 290.

he was required to assume the full range of apostolic activities. Already Meyer was not able to keep up with Kornya, who had begun to work such a large radius that nobody could catch up with him.”²⁸ If Meyer was still the titular leader of the Hungarian Baptist movement, Kornya and his compatriots had become the engine driving the movement forward.

Kirner documented as much as possible every baptismal service Kornya performed and the places he visited, and a review of his reconstruction tells an incredible story. When compared with the statistics Meyer reported to the annual yearbook of the German Baptists from 1878 until 1893, it tells of the profound impact the Magyar mission was having upon the work Meyer had started in 1873. According to Kirner’s reconstruction, Kornya performed 141 baptismal services from 1881 to 1893, and by my count these baptismal services were held in at least thirty different places.²⁹ Kornya certainly visited more than thirty different communities to spread the Baptist message. Kirner listed slightly over one hundred places in which Kornya had preached by 1893, although this list is incomplete.³⁰ Most of these places were in the Alföld, centered in Bihar County, a large county in which Nagyszalonta fell, with Nagyvárads as the county seat, and stretched into parts of the surrounding counties (Hajdu, Békés, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, and Arad counties), although he also visited many towns in Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun County at the invitation of Heinrich Meyer, who wished to reach out to the Magyar population around Budapest and stretching down to the south, and he also visited Kolozsvár in Transylvania at the invitation of Johann Rottmayer.

The pattern that emerges is that the ordination of Kornya had an immediate impact on the growth of the movement, and that this growth only accelerated in the final few years from 1890 to 1893. If one looks at the statistics reported by Meyer for the Hungarian movement for 1880, the last year before Kornya began a full-orbed missionary ministry, the movement had 195 members, 41 baptisms, and twelve stations attached to

²⁸ Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 88.

²⁹ Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 88–91, 93–94, 100–04, 113–17.

³⁰ Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 120.

the Budapest church.³¹ These figures only represented an incremental increase over the statistics reported for 1879.³² However, for 1881 the statistics show a marked advance, even though Kornya was not ordained until June, once Meyer had begun to recover from his health issues.³³ In total Kornya performed four baptismal services in 1881 in different regions of Bihar county, two in June in two villages south of Nagyszalonta, Feketetót and Árpád, one in July in Derecske to the north of Berettyóújfalu on the border with Hajdu county, and one in September in Árpád again.³⁴ By the end of 1881 Meyer reported that membership had risen from 195 to 259, the number of baptisms performed more than doubled from 41 to 111, and the number of stations had doubled from 12 to 24.³⁵ Much of this growth should be ascribed to the missionary endeavors of Kornya. After five years Kornya had performed 29 baptismal services, with ten services in 1885 alone.³⁶ Among these was a baptismal service in Földes in Hajdu county, and baptisms Gyoma and Doboz in Békés county. In 1885 the membership had grown to 652 and the number of stations to 42.³⁷ After ten years the number of baptismal services performed by Kornya had risen to 86, with 57 performed in the five years from 1886 to 1890, and 15 in 1890 alone.³⁸ One of the baptismal services was in Karcag in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county. According to the figures Meyer provided, the number of members at the end of 1890 had climbed to

³¹ Statistik 1880 der vereinigten Gemeinden getaufter Christen. Hamburg: Baptistische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1880. 14–15.

³² Statistik 1879 der vereinigten Gemeinden getaufter Christen. Hamburg: Baptistische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1879. 14–15.

³³ Meyer, Meyer Henrik önéletrajza 1842–1919 [Autobiography of Heinrich Meyer: 1842–1919], 62.

³⁴ Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 89.

³⁵ Statistik 1881 der vereinigten Gemeinden getaufter Christen. Hamburg: Baptistische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1881. 16–17.

³⁶ Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 94.

³⁷ Statistik 1885 der vereinigten Gemeinden getaufter Christen. Hamburg: J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1885. 16–17.

³⁸ Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 100–04.

1340, with 207 baptisms performed.³⁹ Data for the number of stations was not given for that year. For 1889 the number of stations listed was 60.⁴⁰ In 1891 that number had climbed to 95 stations.⁴¹ The number of stations in 1890 thus was likely in the middle of this range, in the upper seventies. From 1891 to 1893 Kornya performed 55 baptismal services, nearly the number he performed in the previous five year period.⁴² This increase in activity for Kornya was reflected in the statistics reported by Meyer. In 1891 Meyer reported 1674 members and 380 baptisms performed.⁴³ For 1892 the number of members had climbed to 2088 with 488 baptisms for the year and 100 stations attached to the Budapest church.⁴⁴ Oddly enough, for 1893 the German Baptist yearbook notes that Heinrich Meyer did not furnish the usual statistics, except for one, the number of baptisms performed, which was an amazing 999 baptisms.⁴⁵ I would put a conservative estimate at the number of members at the end of 1893 at over 2800 given the usual rates of attrition over against the number of baptisms. Over against the 259 members at the end of 1881, this represents growth of over 1000%.

It is likely that minimal statistics were provided because the situation in the movement was turning a bit chaotic towards the end of 1893 and on into 1894 over leadership issues. Part of the problem was that the Magyar mission was growing so rapidly that some reorganization was needed. From 1881 until 1893 all baptisms were performed either by Heinrich Meyer or by Mihály Kornya. Prior to the arrival of Udvarnoki and Balogh back from Hamburg, a mission conference lead by Meyer in consultation with Kornya and Tóth was held in Nagyvárad in which it was decided to

³⁹ Statistik 1890 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland. Hamburg: J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1890. 7.

⁴⁰ Statistik 1891 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland. Hamburg: J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1891. 16.

⁴¹ Statistik 1891 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland, 16.

⁴² Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 113–17.

⁴³ Statistik 1891 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland, 7.

⁴⁴ Statistik 1892 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland. Hamburg: J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1892. 16–17.

⁴⁵ Statistik 1893 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland. Hamburg: J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1893. 16.

divide the Hungarian mission field into three parts, with Meyer, Kornya and Tóth taking the lead in their respective areas.⁴⁶ Heinrich Meyer would remain in Budapest and be responsible for the region around Budapest, the Dunántul (Hungary west of the Danube), the area between the Danube and the Tisza, northern Hungary, and parts of southern Hungary. Kornya would turn over to Mihály Tóth leadership for the region around Nagyszalonta in Bihar county, to which would be added Békés, Csongrád, Arad, Temes, and Krassószörény counties. These were areas to the west and south of Nagyszalonta. Kornya would base himself in Nagyvárad (later he would move to Bihardiószeg) and develop further the work in the northern part of Bihar, Hajdú, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, Szabolcs, Szatmár and Szilágy counties, plus all of Transylvania. It was also decided that the two seminarians should partner with Kornya and Tóth to gain further practical ministry experience, with Udvarnoki assigned to Tóth and Balogh to Kornya.⁴⁷ The plan foundered, however, because the two seminarians, and Udvarnoki in particular, thought that they should begin their own, new works, in order to advance the gospel, and also because Magyar Baptists in Meyer's territory were chafing under his leadership and wished to assert their autonomy from him with Udvarnoki at the helm, since he was from Szada, a bit to the east of Budapest.⁴⁸ They soon achieved this goal, and it was Udvarnoki working with Attila Csopják who established the first autonomous Magyar Baptist congregation in Budapest, before Meyer was able to help establish one to resolve the language issue in the Wesselényi Street fellowship.

The statistics reported for 1894 reflect what eventually transpired, and also point to how the Magyar mission was now the dominant part of the Baptist movement. Up until 1894 there were only two Hungarian churches in the Austro-Hungarian Union which reported statistics to the German Baptist yearbook, Meyer's Budapest congregation and the Kesmark congregation, which achieved autonomy from the Budapest congregation in 1888. In the 1894 yearbook, the Budapest congregation went from the 1892 figure of 2088 members and 100 stations down to 184 members and only five stations at year end, with six new successor churches, which were actually regional associations, that had split

⁴⁶ Kovács, Géza, "A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)]," 68.

⁴⁷ Gerzsenyi, László. Az evangélium kényszerében: Udvarnoki András élete [Compelled By the Gospel: The Life of András Udvarnoki]. Budapest: Baptista Kiadó, 1995. 27.

⁴⁸ Gerzsenyi, Az evangélium kényszerében: Udvarnoki András élete [Compelled By the Gospel: The Life of András Udvarnoki], 27–31.

off from the Budapest church.⁴⁹ Three of the six were more German-oriented missions and two of these were associations in which Meyer was either the leader or the co-leader. The smallest of these was the Temesvár church, with only two stations and 41 members who were transferred from the Budapest congregation when it was organized under the leadership of Max Kuss, a close associate of Meyer. Next in size was the Feketehegy-Neusatz-Brzovopolje association with 13 stations and 82 members at the time of transfer. Julius Peter and Meyer were both listed as leaders. Neusatz of course is the German name for Novi Sad, and this association gathered together the German mission stations Meyer had pioneered in the region. Finally there was the Tolna and Baranya Counties association, two counties on the west bank of the Danube in southern Hungary that had a sizeable ethnic German population. Pécs was the county seat of Baranya county, where Johann Woyka had first attempted to spread the Baptist message back in 1846. This association had been founded with 120 members and seven stations with Heinrich Meyer as the leader, assisted by Johann Gromen and Franz Potschka. If the Budapest congregation ended the year with 184 members after 32 baptisms, it is likely that it began the year with around 155 members spread among the Wesselényi Street congregation and the five stations. Among these five stations would be Budafok (Promontor), Budaörs, and Újpest. Add to that the 243 members that were removed to form the successor associations, and you have the German mission accounting for only 400 of the conservative estimate of 2800 members of the Budapest church at the end of 1893, or roughly 14% of the total membership over which Meyer presided.

By comparison the Magyar associations listed in the yearbook were larger with many more stations. Moreover, there was a cryptic note attached to the Budapest congregation statistics in the 1894 yearbook that mentioned a sizeable group of former members of the Budapest congregation that no longer belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Union. To understand the statistics reported for 1894, some background information is needed. In early March of 1894 a conference was called together to deal with the fall out of the rejection of the plan previously agreed to in the 1893 Nagyvárad conference. Heinrich Meyer presided, with several of his close German associates in attendance, including Peter, Kuss, and Meereis, the pastor in Kesmark. From the Magyar leadership there was Kornya, Tóth, Sámuel Seres, Lajos Bodoki and Lajos Balogh. Noticeably absent from this list was András Udvarnoki, András Szabó and Attila Csopják. Heinrich

⁴⁹ Statistik 1894 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland. Hamburg: J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1894. 20.

Meyer had received several declarations from congregations in the vicinity of Budapest announcing their withdrawal from the mother church and from under Meyer's leadership. Udvarnoki, Szabó and Csopják were not at the conference because they were leading the creation of an autonomous Magyar mission in the Budapest region. According to the minutes of the conference Meyer offered to resign from his position of leadership in the Union, but was dissuaded from doing so. Meyer wrote, "I did not receive freedom from my Lord to give up my position, and the brethren with one voice wished for me to stay."⁵⁰ The conference was not without conflict, however, as Balogh again declined to serve in a subordinate position under Kornya, stating that the churches that wished to call him into the ministry would not accept him not being in the central leadership group of the denomination. While this stance further advanced the alienation between Meyer and the two seminarians, Kornya graciously offered a compromise. The resulting division of territory explains what was reported to the yearbook about the restructured denomination in Hungary.⁵¹ Consistent with the decisions of the previous conference, Mihály Tóth took over the Nagyszalonta congregation and the sixty stations connected to it. The Nagyszalonta church began with 666 members, and ended the year with over 950 members.⁵² This was the largest of the Magyar missions. Next in size was Diószeg (an abbreviation for Bihardiószeg), a village to the north of Nagyvárad, where Mihály Kornya relocated to serve as his base for ministry. The association had 40 stations and was founded with 596 members, which grew to 865 members by the end of the year, slightly edging out Nagyszalonta in the number of baptisms recorded for the year at 310.⁵³ The third Magyar association was the Hajduböszörmény church with 24 stations and 380 people at the start of the year, which grew to 580 members at the end of the year.⁵⁴ Hajduböszörmény is a large town to the northeast of Debrecen, the leading city in the region, in the northern section of Hajdu county. This church was under the leadership of Lajos Balogh, one of the two seminarians, who was originally from Földes in southern

⁵⁰ Gerzsenyi, Az evangélium kényszerében: Udvarnoki András élete [Compelled By the Gospel: The Life of András Udvarnoki], 28.

⁵¹ Gerzsenyi, Az evangélium kényszerében: Udvarnoki András élete [Compelled By the Gospel: The Life of András Udvarnoki], 28.

⁵² Statistik 1894 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland, 20–21.

⁵³ Statistik 1894 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland, 20–21.

⁵⁴ Statistik 1894 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland, 20–21.

Hajdu county. Mihály Kornya ceded a portion of the rather large territory he was originally assigned to Balogh for the sake of making peace so that the rising leader could have his own autonomous ministry in a region in which he had his roots. He was likely responsible for Hajdu county, and perhaps Szabolcs county just to the north, while Kornya would focus his efforts on the large territory stretching to the east into Transylvania.

These three associations were predominantly Magyar in constitution and were carved out of an area in which heretofore Mihály Kornya had been responsible for providing leadership and performing all the baptisms. It should be noted that not all of the congregations established by Kornya's pioneering work were Magyar congregations, some were Romanian fellowships. Interestingly enough, Kornya knew some Romanian from his youth, and loved to preach in the Romanian villages. As Kirner noted, in certain sections of Bihar county the villages "were for the most part Romanian villages and frequently he had to arrange for translation, because at the beginning it was hard for him, but still success did not remain far from him."⁵⁵ Kirner asserted that Kornya baptized the first Romanian Baptist convert. In his later ministry Kornya was quite comfortable evangelizing in Romanian villages and he is thought to have baptized over 5000 Romanian converts, thus proving to be a seminal figure in Romanian Baptist history.⁵⁶ The contrast with Meyer, who tried and gave up on learning Hungarian, is noteworthy. While noting that a number of Romanian and Slavic converts were among those baptized by Kornya, still most of the Baptists in this area were Magyar converts, and adding up the number of members at the beginning of 1884 for these three churches we arrive at a figure of over 1600 members, or four times the total of the German mission churches.

And yet this does not include all of the Magyar converts, which brings us back to the cryptic note in the 1894 yearbook. In trying to explain why the number of members transferred to the successor churches does not quite add up to the number of members given the previous year for the Budapest church, a note briefly elaborates, "The 400 people withdrawn for the present do not belong to the Union."⁵⁷ The identity of these 400 former members who had withdrawn from the Budapest church and the Austro-

⁵⁵ Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 96–97.

⁵⁶ Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 171.

⁵⁷ Statistik 1894 des Bundes der Baptisten-Gemeinden in Deutschland, 20.

Hungarian Union is not hard to ascertain. They were the Magyar Baptists in the Budapest region chafing under Meyer's leadership, to which was soon added the majority of Magyar converts in Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun county extending south from Budapest when Sámuel Seres, who apparently had a change of heart after the March conference, decided to join with Udvarnoki and Csopják in the formation of a completely independent Magyar mission.⁵⁸ Seres was the primary Magyar missionary working the region, who was himself one of Kornya's converts from the time in the 1880's when Meyer called upon Kornya and János Lajos to evangelize among the Magyar population of Pest county.⁵⁹ Seres' defection to the independent Magyar mission was the catalyst for an angry circular letter from Meyer to the Magyar congregations of Pest county written in November of 1894, in which he defended his leadership and criticized Seres for seeking to usurp control over the Magyar congregations in collusion with Udvarnoki.⁶⁰ Meyer continued to press his case through various means, and one topic addressed at the first conference of the Magyar Baptist Union in 1895 was how to deal with visitors from the churches loyal to Meyer, because they were spreading dissension which had caused some church splits, particularly among the churches under Seres' leadership in the southern half of Pest county.⁶¹

The figure of 400 members was obviously an approximation, and likely erred on the side of underestimating the number of those who left. Gerzsenyi listed thirteen congregations that formed the nucleus of the independent Magyar mission: Tahitótfalu, Pócsmegyer, Szigetmonostor, Budapest, Erzsébetfalva, Szokolya, Váchartyán, Órszentmiklós, Szada, Veresegyház, Fót, Pécel and Rákoscsaba.⁶² For the first conference of the new Magyar mission in 1895, representatives from four other churches were

⁵⁸ Gerzsenyi, Az evangélium kényszerében: Udvarnoki András élete [Compelled By the Gospel: The Life of András Udvarnoki], 31.

⁵⁹ Kirner, Kornya Mihály krónikája: Néprajzi és egyháztörténeti emlékek [The Chronicles of Mihály Kornya: Ethnographic and Church Historical Remembrances], 85–88.

⁶⁰ Meyer, Heinrich. Circular Letter to the Baptist Churches of Pest County. Historical Collection. Hungarian Baptist Church Archives. Budapest, 1894. 1–5.

⁶¹ Gerzsenyi, Az evangélium kényszerében: Udvarnoki András élete [Compelled By the Gospel: The Life of András Udvarnoki], 31.

⁶² Gerzsenyi, Az evangélium kényszerében: Udvarnoki András élete [Compelled By the Gospel: The Life of András Udvarnoki], 22.

present: Ócsa, Bugyi, Kissentmiklós and Kisoroszi.⁶³ Even if one assumes that the figure of 400 departed members was roughly accurate, it was more than double the number of members Meyer reported for the German language Budapest congregation with its five stations for 1894. Thus the Magyar mission was the largest and most dynamic sector of the Baptist movement even in Budapest and the surrounding region.

The 1880's and 1890's were certainly a dynamic period of growth for the Baptist movement in Hungary, and the statistical overview just laid out demonstrates that the Magyar mission both in the Alföld and in Budapest and Pest county was the most dynamic part of the movement. Interestingly, this same period saw the rise of the evangelical renewal and of *Innere Mission* in the Hungarian Reformed Church through the work of the Scottish Mission to the Jews penetrating a rising generation of Reformed leaders.⁶⁴ Géza Kovács argued that the influence of the evangelical message of the Baptist mission during this period extended beyond the number of converts baptized and the number of congregations formed, "At the same time there were many people who came out, were awakened, and even came to faith in the new Baptist congregations who afterwards were not baptized, but went back and remained in their own churches. About this Imre Révész, the Reformed Bishop and church historian, wrote that the Baptist mission became a goad in the body of the Protestant churches sinking in rationalism, and served to breathe new life into them."⁶⁵ If true, this was accomplished primarily through the preaching of the peasant prophets of the Magyar mission, which aroused so much debate among the Protestant clergy and lay leaders, and provoked many to action.

4. Why did the Second Attempt to Establish a Lasting Baptist Presence in Hungary Succeed?

There are in my view three reasons why Heinrich Meyer was able to succeed where Johann Rottmayer apparently failed in establishing a lasting Baptist presence in Hungary. They have to do with the timing of his ministry, what he was able to build upon, and who he was able to reach with the Baptist message.

⁶³ Gerzsenyi, *Az evangélium kényszerében: Udvarnoki András élete [Compelled By the Gospel: The Life of András Udvarnoki]*, 31.

⁶⁴ Révész, Imre, 145–50.

⁶⁵ Kovács, Géza, "A baptista misszió kibontakozása Magyarországon (1873–1894) [The Development of the Baptist Mission in Hungary (1873–1894)]," 69.

The advantages of the timing of Meyer's missionary endeavors in Hungary compared to that of Rottmayer are obvious, the substantial change in the political environment in Hungary following the Compromise resulted in greater freedom of action not only for Heinrich Meyer, but also for the Scottish Mission, the British & Foreign Bible Society, and other religious groups. Dániel Irányi and others in the radical opposition to the ruling Liberal Party were right to criticize the illiberal hierarchy of denominations that had developed in Hungary after the Compromise, and which fell well short of the promise of a "free church in a free state" that was the catch phrase for church political reform during the first years under dualism. Yet at the same time, it was undeniable that with Hungary now exercising much greater control over its domestic affairs, and with the liberal ideas of 1848 providing the ideological framework and governing legitimacy of first the Deákists, and then the Liberal Party, there was a marked increase in the freedom of religion experienced by those outside of the historically received churches compared to that under Habsburg absolutism. Whereas Johann Rottmayer saw the fruits of his ministry in Pest baptized in the Danube under the cover of darkness as late as 1865, just over twenty years later Heinrich Meyer had a church building with a baptismal pool in which to conduct baptisms built on Wesselényi Street close to the center of Budapest.

The second reason Meyer succeeded is because despite his protestations to the contrary, he benefited from the work of those who preceded him in the field, and in particular from the efforts of Rottmayer and Antal Novák in their work as colporteurs. I have previously argued that Meyer benefited from the preparatory work of these two men, who planted seeds through the colporteur work that Meyer later harvested. More specifically, I argued that Rottmayer was correct to assert that Meyer built upon the work of Novák in the initiation of the Magyar mission. Rottmayer's defense of Novák's ministry bears repeating. "This man lit a fire under the Hungarians, and God in His great mercy blessed the witness of this brother, so that brother Meyer found some already believing souls."⁶⁶ Of course in his humility Rottmayer neglected to mention his own work, and his role in bringing Novák to faith. Rottmayer's friendship and example contributed to the role Novák played with the seekers in Nagyszalonta, which marks the beginning of the Magyar mission in Hungary. My examination of the origin of the Magyar mission only reinforced Rottmayer's assertion that Novák played the essential role in leading the seekers to a Baptist understanding of the faith and in connecting them

⁶⁶ Rottmayer, Johann, "Weiteres über Ungarn," 171.

to Meyer in Budapest, even playing host in his homebase in Gyula for the baptisms. No matter the impression Meyer later gave of his eager participation in the beginning of the Magyar mission, the reality was that he required much encouragement from Novák, from Edward Millard, the leader of the BFBS work in the Austro-Hungarian Empire based in Vienna, and finally from a personal visit from Mihály Kornya himself to expand his vision to include the Magyar population of Hungary. Without this step, Meyer would still be the father of the Baptist movement in Hungary, but it would have remained a smaller German-oriented mission confined to the periphery, not the dynamic movement that was recognized in the beginning of the twentieth century by the European Baptist Union as the fastest growing in Europe.⁶⁷

This leads me to the third reason why Meyer became the father of a sustained Baptist presence in Hungary. This was the fact that he was presented with an opportunity to expand the Baptist mission from one focused on reaching the German minority of Hungary to one that had an effective outreach to the majority Magyar population, and was eventually also reaching out to other minority populations in the multi-ethnic kingdom, such as the Romanian mission pioneered by Mihály Kornya. Thus the Baptist movement in Hungary had a broad-based evangelistic outreach to most of the major people groups within Hungarian society.

While Johann Rottmayer had an evident concern for the Magyar population of Hungary, and could speak halting Hungarian, during his time in Budapest, given the political constraints under which he operated, he was never able to effectively reach out beyond his own German language community to the Magyar population of the city. Rottmayer recognized his language limitations during his later ministry in Kolozsvár, and he frequently called upon Mihály Kornya to come assist him with outreach to the Magyar community.

Of course Heinrich Meyer could not even manage halting Hungarian, and yet other colleagues, such as Novák and various colporteurs who could speak Hungarian, were able to assist him as he began to baptize Magyar converts and lead them in organizing new Baptist congregations. In the final analysis, it was this successful implantation of the Baptist message and faith among the Magyars that assured the

⁶⁷ Mészáros, Kálmán. "Emlékezés Kornya Mihályra a nagy parasztapostol halálának 75. évfordulója alkalmából [A Remembrance of Mihály Kornya, the Great Peasant-Apostle, on the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of his Death]." *Theologiai Szemle* 35 <new series>.6 (1992): 344.

sustained presences of the Baptist movement in Hungary despite the great vicissitudes the future would bring.

Nederlandse Samenvatting

De Oorsprong van de Baptistenbeweging Onder de Hongaren: Een Geschiedenis van de Baptisten in het Koninkrijk Hongarije van 1846 tot 1893

Deze studie onderzoekt de oorsprong van de baptistenbeweging onder de Hongaren in het koninkrijk Hongarije, vanaf de eerste, uiteindelijk vergeefse poging om een baptistenzending te beginnen in Hongarije in 1846, en de verdere ontwikkeling van dit verhaal tot aan 1893. De einddatum van deze studie werd gekozen op basis van de gebruikelijke datering onder Hongaarse baptistische kerkhistorici, omdat het een tijdstip markeert waarin de zending stevige wortels geschoten had in het land en het op het punt stond een periode van conflict in te gaan tussen Heinrich Meyer, de Duitse zending die in 1873 de tweede, geslaagde poging een baptistische zending op te richten begonnen was, en een opkomende generatie van inheemse Magyaarse baptistische leiders. De hoofdvraag die ik zoek te beantwoorden is waarom de eerste poging van 1846 om een duurzame baptistenzending in het koninkrijk Hongarije op te richten faalde, terwijl de tweede poging, die begon in 1873, wel slaagde. Een verwante vraag is of er een natuurlijke verbinding is tussen de eerste en de tweede poging.

De eerste poging een baptistische aanwezigheid te krijgen in Hongarije begon toen drie etnische Duitsers, geboren in Hongarije en opgevoed als Rooms Katholieken, zich hadden bekeerd tot het baptistengeloof in Hamburg, Duitsland, door de bediening van de vader van de continentale baptisten, Johann Gerhard Oncken. Deze mannen werden door Oncken teruggestuurd naar Hongarije in 1846, op aanvraag van de zendingen die betrokken waren bij de Schotse Missie tot de joden, destijds actief in Budapest om te helpen met de distributie van Bijbels en literatuurevangelisatie. De voornaamste figuur binnen deze groep was Johann Rottmayer, die zelf afkomstig was uit Budapest en het langst actief bleef in de zending in Hongarije. Een deel van deze groep, geleid door Johann Woyka, trachtte een korte tijd om een bediening te starten in Woyka's thuisstad Pécs. De bediening werd voortgezet in Budapest tijdens de revolutie van 1848, maar publiekelijk werk werd stilgelegd nadat de Hongaarse onafhankelijkheidsoorlog in 1849 hard werd neergeslagen. Alleen Johann Rottmayer bleef in Hongarije en ging door met een teruggetrokken bediening in Budapest, totdat een persoonlijke financiële crisis in 1866 hem er bijna toe noopte te emigreren naar Amerika. In plaats daarvan werd hem een positie aangeboden binnen de *British and Foreign Bible Society* om een depot te openen in de hoofdstad van Transsylvanië, Kolozsvár, zodat er een begin kon worden gemaakt met de distributie van Bijbels in die regio. Zijn vertrek uit Budapest betekende ook het voorlopige einde van de bediening van baptisten in de stad. De eerste poging om een baptistische missie in Hongarije op te richten kwam hiermee tot een tevergeefs einde.

Toch betekende dit niet het einde van Johann Rottmayers bijdrage aan de baptistische missie in Hongarije. Eén hoofdstuk van deze studie is gewijd aan het onderzoeken van het werk van Rottmayer en zijn vriend Antal Novák (die zich bekeerd had door toedoen van Rottmayers bediening) als Bijbeldistributeurs. Door middel van een intensieve

bestudering van de primaire bronnen van de *British and Foreign Bible Society* en Hongaarse religieuze periodieken, zal ik het argument dat door andere Hongaarse baptistische historici eerst is aangedragen verder ontwikkelen, namelijk, dat het werk van deze twee mannen het zendingsveld voorbereid heeft op het werk van Heinrich Meyer. Daarmee bestaat er een natuurlijke verbinding tussen de eerste twee pogingen een baptistische zending op te richten in Hongarije.

Tenslotte zal ik het werk bestuderen van Heinrich Meyer, de vader van de Hongaarse Baptisten, die in het jaar 1873 in Budapest arriveerde om te werken voor de *British and Foreign Bible Society*, maar die al snel hun organisatie verliet om al zijn energie te steken in het baptistische zendingswerk. De vroege inspanningen van Meyer worden onderzocht en ik zal verder de sociale compositie en het interne gebeuren van de beweging verkennen. Voorts zal ik een kritische onderzoeking doen naar het keerpunt van de baptistische zending in Hongarije, het begin van de Magyaarse zending, welke al snel de Duits-georiënteerde zending van Heinrich Meyer overschaduwde. De oorsprong van de Magyaarse zending ligt in het werk van Antal Novák en zijn Bijbeldistributie in Nagyszalonta. Novák deelde zijn baptistengeloof met verscheidene van zijn contacten in Nagyszalonta, en op het moment dat deze mensen hun verlangen lieten blijken gedoopt te willen worden, werden ze door Novák in contact gebracht met Meyer in Budapest. Ik volg de bloei van de Magyaarse zending en specifiek zal ik het zendingswerk onderzoeken van iemand uit de eerste groep bekeerlingen, Mihály Kornya, die het beste voorbeeld werd van deze eerste generatie van inheemse Magyaarse baptistenleiders, ook wel bekend als de “boerenprofeten”. Gedurende zijn leven schijnt Kornya meer dan tienduizend mensen gedoopt te hebben. Ik besluit dit deel met een onderzoek naar de vervolging die de vroege baptisten moesten ondergaan en de vergeefse pogingen van Heinrich Meyer om staatserkenning te krijgen voor de baptisten, om op die manier bepaalde aspecten van deze discriminatie op te lossen.

Ik besluit mijn studie met een antwoord op de hoofdvraag die ik stelde, waarom de tweede poging een duurzame baptistenzending op te richten in Hongarije wel succes had, waar de eerste poging faalde. Ik draag drie redenen aan. Ten eerste, het radicaal andere politieke klimaat in post-Compromis Hongarije verschaftte voldoende godsdienstvrijheid voor de baptistische zending om te slagen. Ten tweede, ik betoog dat Heinrich Meyer bij machte was om op het werk te bouwen van zijn voorgangers die het veld voor hem bereid hadden; in het bijzonder wijs ik op het Bijbeldistributiewerk van Johann Rottmayer en Antal Novák. Tenslotte, Meyer werd geconfronteerd met de mogelijkheid om de baptistenzending uit te breiden, voorbij de focus op de Duitse minderheid in Hongarije, naar de inheemse Magyaarse bevolking. Het succes van de Magyaarse zendingsmissie onder het leiderschap van de boerenprofeten verzekerde dat de baptistische zending een sterke basis van ondersteuning zou hebben onder de dominante etnische groep in het Koninkrijk van Hongarije.

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