

Reformed primary school education in the 17th-18th century

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Summary

So far, the history of education has not really dealt with the training of masters, their career opportunities, the mapping of the official relationship between the pastor and the master, their salaries, etc. Visit minutes provide only partial answers to these questions. For example, we do not find any data in the contemporary protocols about what the training of the masters was like, but we know details from the already mentioned histories that there was no teacher training in the 17-18th century. The first attempt to set up teacher training took place in the second half of the 1780's.

Following the idea of the imperial education politician Johann Ignaz Felbiger, a package of proposals was born, which envisaged the increase of the efficiency of the educational process and the construction of the school infrastructure, from teacher training to the development of the teaching career. Obviously, due to the specifics of the protocols, we do not find any data on teacher training or the development of a teacher's career, but they do contain important data on the operation of the school supervision system set up to control school education. After 1786, we have more and more data on the number of children attending school, and even thanks to the more conscientious diocesan clerks, we also know the results of the examinations of the children before the diocesan committee of inquiry.

It is also partly due to this reform process that there was a demonstrable increase in the willingness to build schools in the 1780s. But the records also show that in many congregations the local population did not grasp the need for a school, and in spite of the parish's vow to build a school, it took up to two decades for the classroom to be completed.

The vast majority of school-related decisions in 17th-18th century visitation protocols deal with teacher salaries. It was already known in the literature that the master's salary was half that of the pastor. In general, the salary of a Transylvanian Reformed teacher was one haddock of wheat, one-third of a cart of wood. However, the literature did not examine the total income of a former teacher. In this connection, the statement of payment prepared in 1782 and 1788 on central instructions provides guidance. Eight dioceses have survived lists of

payments: in the dioceses of Küküllő, Maros, Udvarhely, Sepsi, Kézdi, Orba, Görgényi and of Erdővidék. There is only the Küküllő diocese alone the teacher salary report was not sent by. Comparing these yielded interesting results. The highest pastoral and teacher salaries were given by the congregations from the Erdővidék diocese, the lowest by those from Udvarhely.

The responsibilities of the teacher also emerge from the visitation minutes. As a result of the research, it can be pointed out that in the examined period the teacher had three responsibilities: liturgical service (singing leader, cantor duties), chimes and teaching. The order is not accidental, the minutes show beyond a shadow of a doubt that the most important task of the teacher was the liturgical service. During temple worship, he led the singing. If the pastor was obstructed (service, illness, etc.), he also had to perform the preaching service. In case he performed the latter task for a longer period of time, e.g. in the case of the branches, it is called levitical service. The Levite, who had become a teacher, was not allowed to pass the sacraments (baptism and the sacrament), nor was he allowed to go to the pulpit. By the second half of the 18th century, the Levitical assignment was already separated from the teaching profession.

With the exception of large, city congregations (city congregations hired chimes), the teacher had to ring the bell in the settlement. He therefore received his normal annual salary for the two services, supplemented by income from post-employment services. These include pre-funeral bells, singing, and other services for which the fee was not uniform.

Teaching was the teacher's most time-consuming task (and the one he got the least time for) for which he received a separate salary. The extra-fee, called the didactrum, was paid exclusively by parents with children, depending on the level of their education.

The majority of the teacher's working time was filled by the primary service and he could only devote the remaining time to teaching. This distribution of working time often caused problems within the congregation, and has led to recurring complaint on visits that the master did not teach. This reflects the "effectiveness" of education that led to the order of visits adopted in 1780, which urged and obliged bishops and diocesan authorities to pay more attention to the supervision and inspection of schools.

The living conditions of the teacher were mostly difficult. His salary, like that of the pastor, was received late in many cases, also in such a way that the visit had to threaten the prefecture of the congregation or the whole village with punishment. Although he had a service apartment, its maintenance was neglected by the congregation. His apartment was not much different from farmhouses: it was mostly a room-kitchen-pantry house, which in most cases (in the absence of a classroom, classis) was also used for teaching.

Although the comprehensive school reform ordinance, formulated in the second half of the 1780s and sent to the dioceses, provided for a detailed and certainly general curriculum that would have a beneficial effect on folk education, its implementation failed. Neither the launch of teacher training nor the strengthening and attractiveness of teaching careers has taken place. Teachers, as in previous practice, came from students who, for some reason, stopped their collage studies. The reasons include lack of money, lack of motivation or ability to study further, etc. may have been included.

In the second part of the thesis, I present my academic activities and scientific research results so far. My teaching activities cover universal church history, with hints on universal church history at the Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca for four years.

A significant part of my doctoral thesis was liturgical research. On the basis of the archival documents, the research revealed the liturgical reform that took place in the 1780s, one of the prominent representatives of which was Gergely Kiss of Backamadarasi. As a result of long research, the liturgical history of the Transylvanian Reformed Church was shed new light. I accurately reconstructed the events and active contributors of the liturgical reform, and also managed to find the draft liturgy compiled for 1786. The research on the liturgy has not been completed. In 2010, I published my research on the liturgical reform of the 1860s, in which I also traced the exact course of events and the theological aspects of the liturgical reform, relying on archival sources.

During my archival research, I noticed the 17–18th century Transylvanian heretical movements and the spread of the great European Protestant theological movements in Hungary. My first research of this kind was to map the theological thinking of Mihály Szathmárnémethi (2003). This was followed by a mapping of the spread of Enlightenment theology, which was gaining ground in the 18th century, during which I researched the background of the so-called Endemann debate. This was followed by an exploration of the teachings of three Transylvanian anti-predestination Reformed theologians.

As a student, I joined the department's source exploration research group, which I do to this day. As a result of this, several diocesan visitation and general synod reports were issued till today, which represented a real revolution in the study of church history. In this way, the daily life of the Reformed Church of Transylvania, the work of pastors and teachers, and how they performed their duties became known.

In 2008, I became interested in the first half of the 20th century history of the Transylvanian Reformed Church, including the internal mission that resulted in the renewal of church life. My research in this field was financed by the Domus Hungarica scholarship

program of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, through which I carried out basic research in Debrecen and in Romanian archives. In the course of my research, I dealt separately with the Reformed Women's Association, IKE (Christian Youth Association), the Marosvécs Association, the treatise literature, and the strategic writings that organize and determine the renewal of church life on a theoretical level. Further results of my research I use as a manuscript university note at the Institute of Protestant Theology in Cluj-Napoca for the presentation of the semester course for first year students at master's degree.