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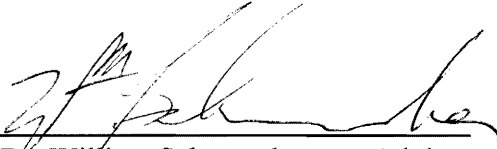
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THE PELIKAN MOVEMENT
AN IMMIGRANT STORY

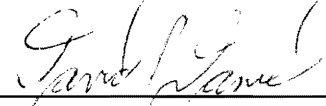
A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of History
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Richard Jeffrey Blythe
May 2009

Approved by


Dr. William Schumacher Advisor


Dr. Robert Rosin Reader


Dr. David P. Daniel Reader

I dedicate this work to my Mother, Virginia, who never gave up; and to my Father, Dale, who has never forgotten who is number one.

Kto je luterán? Luterán je pravoverný kresťan, ktorý v moci sily Božej neústupne stojí s Lutherom pri napísanom slove Božom vo všetkých otázkach, ktoré môžu zkrsnúť. Verného luterána možno poznať po tom, že kde ide o učenie, o vieru, o vyznanie, nepýta sa, čo o tom hovoria veľkí, učení ľudia a mocní sveta tohoto, ale prvá i posledná otázka jeho je: “Ako je napísané? Čo hovorí Boh?” Vernému luteránovi je heslom: “Mluv, Hospodine, nebo slyší služebník tvůj!”

Pravda, 15 August 1922, 174

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PREFACE

When the travel writer Hilaire Belloc began his pilgrimage to Rome, he began his journey at his home church. He reflected that “for one’s native place is the shell of one’s soul, and one’s church is the kernel of that nut.”¹ A religious immigrant traveling to a new land is greatly tempted to return to his home church to find the kernel of his soul. On the eve of the Pelikan Movement, the editor of *Svedok*, Jan Pelikan, published an article that posed a similar question; that is, is it not true that the Lutheran Church in Slovakia is the mother of the Slovak Lutherans in America, and are not they the daughters of this mother church? To which, the article answered, “by all means.”² Slovak Lutherans in America desired to return to Slovakia to find the kernel of their soul—their national and religious identity.

This story is the history a religious immigrant community, which had tried to continue their journey partly in the old country and partly in the new. In their attempt to return to the old country, their beginning did not lead them to the destination they had hoped. They found that the kernel of their soul was now as much in America as it was in Slovakia. They could not go home again—at least not completely. Rather than returning to their homeland and to their home church to begin a journey from a spiritual birthplace, they instead found that their home had changed (or they had changed), and their journey home merely reminded them that their true home was now in America. The unrealized hope of this religious immigrant community’s journey is the story of the Pelikan Movement.

At the turn of the last century, this immigrant community was in a pluralistic and competitive religious environment. In this American religious landscape, the community struggled to maintain its Slovak and Lutheran identities. As part of this effort to maintain this identity, the first two generations of the Pelikan³ family went as missionaries back home, attempting to express their understanding of what it meant to be Slovak and Lutheran. Like spiritual pilgrims, they returned to their spiritual home in Slovakia and to their church home with the hope to find, discover, or reanimate a confessional Lutheran expression of the Christian faith.

The conversion of the grandson, Jaroslav Jan Pelikan Jr., (1923-2006), is in one sense the end of this story of the Pelikan Movement. His grandfather was Jan Pelikan (1870-1930), who was the first of the Pelikan family to come to America and was one of the early presidents of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. He was also the first missionary from the Slovak Lutheran Synod. His father was Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr. (1898-1973), who was born in Slovakia but moved to America at an early age. Pelikan Sr. was also called to Slovakia as a missionary.

Pelikan, Jr., the famous church historian, taught most recently at Yale before his death in 2006. He began his career as a churchman and an historian in the SELC⁴ and in association with

¹ Hilaire Belloc, *The Path to Rome* (Sioux Falls, SD: NuVission Publications, 2007), 5.

² “Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu,” *Svedok* 13, no. 3 (February 1, 1919): 41.

³ In contemporary spelling, the Pelikan name is rarely spelled using its Slovak spelling. For this reason, whenever I refer to a member of the Pelikan family I use the anglicized spelling of the name.

⁴ SELC or Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church was the later name of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. The SELC eventually changed its name to the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (also SELC). Once it joined the Missouri Synod as a district, it became the SELC District. For the purposes of this dissertation, the church body will
(continued next page)

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS or Missouri Synod). Pelikan Jr. is reported to have had a motto, which guided his understanding of being an historian; it is a quote from Goethe's *Faust*: "What you received as your legacy from your fathers, you must possess to make it your own."⁵ Although he was close to his father and served with him for many years in Chicago,⁶ he did not follow the faith of his father or his grandfather. Rather he chose the faith of the church fathers.⁷ He resolved then the tension between his Lutheran and Slovak identity in a way that was unintended by his father and grandfather.

At least three generations have passed since the first Pelikan tried to shape the Lutheran Church in Slovakia in the 1920s. The Pelikan Movement is part of the legacy of the Missouri Synod and its witness of confessional Lutheranism to the world. This dissertation takes Pelikan, Jr.'s motto as a historical lens to understanding their journey and the journey of this immigrant community. Each generation of Pelikans went on a personal journey back to a place—real or spiritual—where they hoped to find the kernel of their soul. The result of each journey was as adventuresome as any that Belloc would embark upon. But the destination was never what the pilgrims imagined when they first began.

be referred to as the Slovak Lutheran Synod.

⁵ Hans Hillerbrand, "A Tribute to Jaroslav Pelikan," *Criterion: A Publication of the University of Chicago Divinity School*, Spring 2007, 10.

⁶ Pelikan, Jr. served with his father from 1946 until 1958. For a brief history of their time in ministry together at Trinity Slovak Lutheran Church in Chicago, see Scott J. Meyer, "Loss of Missouri Synod Churches in Chicagoland," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 80 (2007): 181–83. As an indication of their work together, Pelikan Jr. also preached and wrote a hymn for the celebration of his father's 25 years of ministry; see Program Služieb Božích, June 11, 1944, SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 200.16-05-12-09-10-02/10, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis

⁷ Pelikan, Jr. would probably disagree with this assertion. In an interview on National Public Radio, he specifically stated that, because of his adherence to the creeds, he held the same faith as his father and grandfather. The distinction here, then, is not that Pelikan, Jr. was outside of the faith, but that he no longer held tightly to the Lutheran confessions and the Lutheran traditions passed down to him from his father and grandfather. Pelikan would argue that the churches moved away from the traditions and the creeds. He remained steadfast. National Public Radio Podcast. "Need for Creeds," NPR Web Site, MP3 audio file, 53:27, <http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/pelikan/> (accessed April 10, 2009).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Working in this field of study would have been impossible, literally, without the help and guidance of Dr. David Daniel, whose insight into Slovak, European, and American religious Lutheran history was invaluable. His career and research created the foundation for this dissertation.

Dr. Robert Rosin provided not only the impetus and initial encouragement to pursue graduate studies, but also created within me the framework to think historically. I am not only grateful for his contributions to this dissertation but to my formation as a historian.

My Doktorvater, Dr. William Schumacher, enabled me to be adventurous in my topic, encouraged me to embrace the larger questions, and provided insights into American Christianity from a Lutheran perspective. I thank him for his guidance and steadfastness.

I would also like to thank the Concordia Historical Institute, whose staff was ever helpful and whose resources were the lion's share of my research. The Concordia Seminary—St. Louis library was always generous with its staff and resources. The Lutheran Theological Faculty in Bratislava, including Bishop Miloš Klátik and Bishop Emeritus Július Filo, were especially helpful in accessing key resources on that side of the Atlantic as well as providing personal insights into the topic. I would like to extend a very special thanks to the Lištiak family for guiding me through my own personal journey to Velká. Krista Whittenburg from the Department of Advanced Studies of Concordia Seminary deserves a special note of thanks for her efforts to edit and improve this dissertation.

It would be unwise and unfair not to give the deepest and widest declaration of appreciation to my wife, Amy, who with my two sons, Jacob and Benjamin, carried countless burdens and provided endless prodding to finish what we had begun.

ABSTRACT

Blythe, Richard J. "The Pelikan Movement: An Immigrant Story." Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2008. 306 pp.

The Pelikan Movement, led initially by Jan Pelikan, the grandfather of the Yale historian Jaroslav Pelikan, was a pivotal event in a Slovak Lutheran immigrant community that desired to provide a confessional Lutheran witness to their mother country. Shortly after the First World War, this immigrant community was resolute to return to Slovakia to share their confessional Lutheran understanding of the Christian faith, in the Hurban tradition, as well as their new church polity and practices that they adopted in America during the previous few decades. They were initially well received, but soon found that they were of a different spirit. After being rejected as partners in ministry with their former countrymen, they determined that the best way to ensure a confessional Lutheran witness was to start their own mission and create their own church against the desires of the indigenous Slovak Lutheran Church. The Slovak Lutheran Church received the missionaries as interlopers in a process of self-definition of a new European church that was shaking off years of domination under Hungarian rule. They were not understood as a confessional witness, but as divisive and sectarian. At the end of the movement, the immigrant community retreated from their mission, losing interest in a direct relationship with their mother church. Having failed to keep a strong connection to their home church and culture, they chose to embrace their new American reality and to assimilate into America as an American church. The Pelikan Movement marked the beginning of the end of one immigrant community's attempt to keep close ties with their home culture and spiritual home.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PELIKAN MOVMENT: A QUESTION OF IMMIGRANT IDENTITY

Every immigrant group has a tipping point. This tipping point is when they identify more with their new country, rather than living with the culture and ideas of the land from where they came. This study is of a group of Lutherans from Slovakia at the turn of the twentieth century, living for many years in both cultures and often even in both countries. On the one hand, they had great hopes for their situation in America. Like true American pioneers, they were building new churches, gathering together communities of like-minded believers, and creating a church culture that conformed to their ideal of a confessional Lutheran church. But on the other hand, they were always looking back to their homeland, their culture, and their history by reading about the events of their church back in the Kingdom of Hungary, writing and interpreting the events there to their fellow immigrants, and preserving their language and culture, as best they could, to retain their identity both as Slovaks and as Lutherans.

The tipping point for the Slovak Lutheran Synod began in 1918, when the Slovaks, who were for a long time under the rule of Magyars (Hungarians) in the Kingdom of Hungary, joined with the Czechs to form a new state, Czechoslovakia. As is often the case with a new enterprise, many applied themselves energetically to create this new nation. Joining in this spirit of hope, the Slovak Lutherans of the Slovak Lutheran Synod saw an opportunity in this new state. Having embraced America and having created a new confessional Lutheran church, they felt they were uniquely able to share with their compatriots in Slovakia how to be a free Lutheran church in a democratic state. They believed that life in America had taught them exactly the skills and attitudes necessary to survive, and even thrive, in this new state. Enticed by the promise of the

separation of church and state in newly formed Czechoslovakia, they embarked for the old country, where they hoped to create a confessional Lutheran church free of the interference of the state and the burdens of history. They could create a true Lutheran church out of shadows of the Hungarians, the Reformed, the Liberals and Modernists, flushed with the hope that God had called them to return to their country. The Slovak Lutheran Church, once freed from its most recent history, would return to its true roots as a confessional Lutheran Church, which was understood to have its genesis during the time of Luther. No longer watching events in Slovakia from afar, they eagerly engaged their homeland, sending their own pastors and missionaries to re-create the confessional Lutheran church in Slovakia. With this, the Pelikan Movement was born.

The Pelikan Movement was a critical event in a series of events that led to the direct engagement of an immigrant group returning to its home country. Problematically, this immigrant group was not fully aware of how it had changed. They were no longer just Slovaks or confessional Lutherans. They brought back to Slovakia their new American identity even though most were native Slovaks, culturally and ethnically. They were Lutherans, in their doctrine and piety. But they had also become, at least in part, Americans. They were determined to create a church similar to the one they had created in their new country. Unwittingly, they imbibed what it meant to be an American church body.

This dual identity led to conflicts with Lutherans in Slovakia. The members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod strained to create a church based on the clear teachings of the Lutheran faith, but they were never accepted by the church in Slovakia. Their enclave in eastern Slovakia gathered some early momentum, but the conflict with the Slovak Lutheran Church proved too difficult to overcome. The missionaries returned home, shaking the dust from their shoes as they left, never to return in force. They refocused on their ministry in America, no longer hoping to influence

their home culture and the new nation of Czechoslovakia. They were no longer in two cultures, stretched and torn between the aspirations of each culture. Rather they had passed the tipping point, becoming firmly transplanted in America. Each successive generation became less aware of its Slovak heritage. They became an American church.

They could not live in the cultural space of their old and new countries. Their failure to export their Americanized understanding of the confessional Lutheran faith and church polity forced them to choose between their cultural and religious identity. They had to decide whether they could maintain their Slovak culture as their primary identity or would see themselves first as confessional Lutherans, relinquishing their cultural heritage to embrace their new American home. They chose to emphasize their Lutheran heritage. The changes that resulted from the Pelikan Movement were not initially radical. But after the failure of the mission effort in Slovakia, the Slovak Lutheran Synod gradually lost contact with the Slovak Lutheran Church and relinquished their Slovak identity in favor of their confessional identity.

The legacy of the Pelikan Movement, then, is an example of an immigrant community making its transition from its original “ethnic” identity to a new cultural identity as Americans while seeking to preserve particular elements of their religious or confessional identity. The events surrounding the Pelikan Movement led to a reorientation of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. The historical and social difficulties that the Slovaks faced in the Kingdom of Hungary, the trends in European thought and the Western Mind, and the social and economic pressures on an increasingly impoverished region in Europe all played a role in how the Slovak Lutheran Synod was formed and lived out its calling in America and eventually in Slovakia through the Pelikan Movement. The theological identity, however, proved the most formational and resilient. The bond that held them together and inspired their work was their understanding of confessional Lutheranism.

In the broad sweep of history, the Pelikan Movement can be viewed as a minor ecclesiastical controversy resulting from the activities of a handful of Slovaks and centered in a few small villages surrounding Poprad in eastern Slovakia. In fact, although it has historically been called a movement, it may not deserve such a robust title. However, the significance of the Pelikan Movement is much greater than those few years at the turn of the last century. It was a manifestation of the tipping point of an immigrant culture as it transitioned from its home culture to its immigrant culture. Their collective identity became not their nationality but their confessional identity, their Lutheran faith.

CHAPTER TWO

SLOVAK LUTHERAN HISTORY AND IDENTITY

The conflict between a confessional Lutheran identity and a more broadly understood Lutheran identity, which is more open to the influence of national unity, Reformed theology, and modernist trends in thought, is fundamental to understanding the events of the Pelikan Movement. For the Pelikan Movement, the diverging perspectives on the Lutheran faith between the two continents provides the movement's religious and theological conflict. The history of Slovak Lutherans diverged most radically in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when large numbers of immigrants came to America and forged a new path on this religious frontier, mainly independent of the religious and ecclesiological trends in Slovakia. Yet, the origins of Slovak Lutheranism, on both sides of the Atlantic, are imbedded in the earliest histories of the Reformation itself. Slovak Lutherans find a common starting point in the early expansion of Lutheranism in the sixteenth century. In particular, they all find their identity in the common roots of confessional Lutheranism, characterized by the adoption of the confessional compendium, the Book of Concord, as the document that normed their understanding of the Christian faith.

During the sixteenth century, nearly simultaneously with the much larger German Reformation, a mix of Slovak and German speaking peoples, living together in primarily the central and eastern part of Slovakia, embraced the Reformation. They quickly began to dominate the region and became the major religious group with the widest influence. In Eastern Slovakia especially, where the Pelikan Movement found its home in the 1920s, we can find the origin of

the Slovak Lutheran identity and the nexus of future tension between Lutheranism and Slovak national, ethnic identity as expressed in the Pelikan Movement.

Initially, the Augsburg Confession was accepted at some level of authority by nearly all Protestants in the region of Central Europe. This historical assertion was remembered well by the Lutherans of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, who in recalling their own history note that in the year 1557 two-thirds of the people in Hungary were Lutheran.¹ But the levels of and reasons for acceptance varied. For instance, the acceptance of the Augsburg Confession as a part of a *corpus doctrinae* for orthodox Lutherans in Central Europe—that is, the Formula and the Book of Concord—is primarily limited to the seventeenth-century adoption of the Book of Concord by the Slovaks and Germans living in what was then Upper Hungary.² In Central Europe, they are a significant example of a church, which received the Book of Concord during the Late Reformation and followed the pattern of accepting the unaltered Augsburg Confession as a confessional document. The use and reception of the Augsburg Confession in this region helps us understand how the Slovaks and Germans living in Upper Hungary were able to join forces with the adopters of the Book of Concord, whereas, in contrast, the Lutherans in Poland and the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia did not. In fact, contrary to the example of the Slovaks and Germans living in Upper Hungary, these fellow Central Europeans took a decidedly unionistic approach, joining with other Reformed movements, as different influences from different reformed traditions also impacted the developments of their confession. Noticeably, at this stage,

¹ [Jozef] Kuchárik, “Ev.-luteránska mučenícka cirkev medzi Slovákmi v Uhorsku,” *Svedok* 12, no. 3 (February 1, 1917): 36.

² For a thorough discussion of this event, see David P. Daniel, “Acceptance of the Formula of Concord in Slovakia,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 70 (1979): 260–77. The Slovaks were considered part of the Kingdom of Hungary, and the region where the majority of Slovaks lived was considered Upper Hungary. This area, which is now mainly within the modern state of Slovakia, will be generally referred to as Slovakia.

the unionism with wider Protestant movements provided a solution for a broader confessional understanding that could unite an ethnic group.

David Daniel's argument in his article on the reception of the Augsburg Confession in Southeast Central Europe makes a distinction that would drive the process toward or away from acceptance of the Book of Concord. This distinction describes two main view points of the Augsburg Confession.³ The first is that the Augsburg Confession represents a process for recognition from the Empire. In this view, competing confessions arose, which may or may not agree with the Augsburg Confession, but which were attempting to obtain a similar legal status. Of the three areas of Central Europe used here as examples, the lands in modern Poland and the Czech Republic would be in this first definition. They used and "received" the Augsburg Confession more as a starting point for finding their own confession. They usually ended up relying heavily on Reformation resources as well when finding their own confessional voice.⁴ The second, especially as the opinions in Germany hardened towards what constituted true Lutheranism and a viable *corpus doctrinae*, sees the *unaltered* Augsburg Confession as the key to conformity and recognition as a Lutheran. This latter view was, perhaps ironically, supported and promoted by the Hapsburgs as a tool in the Counter-Reformation to limit the ever expanding confessions penned by the different Protestant groups.⁵

The Czechs and the Poles often embraced the first viewpoint. The Hungarians, rather, embraced more directly the Reformed elements of the Reformation. This affinity for Reformed teaching would have an impact on the Slovak Lutherans, who were constantly influenced by the

³ David P. Daniel, "The Influence of the Augsburg Confession in South-East Central Europe," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (1980): 112.

⁴ Andrew Pettegree and Karin Maag, "The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe," in *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Karin Maag (Hants, England: Scholar Press, 1997), 10–11.

⁵ Daniel, "The Influence of the Augsburg Confession in South-East Central Europe," 112.

Hungarian Lutherans and their drift towards Reformed influences. In 1563, for example, at a Synod in Tarcal Hungary, the Hungarian Lutherans introduced some Reformed teachings, causing them to be highly influenced by Reformed thinking, even within the Lutheran church. The Slovaks, in contrast, refused to acquiesce.⁶ But the trend towards unionism, or at least syncretism, in Hungary was evident, and since Slovakia was within the Kingdom of Hungary the Lutheran churches in Slovakia were under pressure to assimilate with the events in Hungary proper. Even though the early Slovak confessions were designed to demonstrate that those Christians who confessed the Lutheran faith were indeed good Catholics, by the beginning of the seventeenth century the Slovak Lutherans began to rally around the unaltered Augsburg Confession. By limiting the valid confession to only the unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Slovaks limited as well the wider Reformation movements and any unionist tendencies in their region.

The result was that they were highly influenced by the Late Reformation in Germany and what was to become orthodox or confessional Lutheranism. But at the same time, because they lived in the Hungarian sphere of influence, their path was different than those dominated by German and Austrian influences. They sought to maintain their Lutheran identity and theology while also finding an expression that would allow them the free expression of that identity in their cultural and political context. To achieve this goal, they presented a number of confessional documents that compliment and do not deny their adherence to the Augsburg Confession.

The series of confessions spawned from the 1540s to the 1560s and in some ways they correlate to the German efforts for find concord in the Late Reformation. But because the confessions were often the result of political requests to explain the followers of the Lutheran

⁶ [Jozef] Kuchárik, "Ev.-luteránska mučenícka cirkev medzi Slovákmi v Uhorsku," *Svedok*, 1 February 1917, 36.

Reformation to the political and ecclesiastical authorities in the region, they have not only a theological thrust, but also a political and ecclesiastical purpose, which is the predominate reason for the confessions. Much in the spirit of the Augsburg Confession with which they were modeled, the three confessions—*Confessio Pentapolitana*, *Confessio Heptapolitana or Montana*, and *Confessio Scepusiana*—are relatively short and direct documents that explain key theological points to clearly trying to avoid unnecessary conflict while at the same time not compromising the faith.

These confessions, which are all formulas of concord or agreement, are designed to find a moderating position with the Roman Catholic Church while maintaining the Lutheran faith and theology. In short, “evangelicals of the AC in Slovakia by their three confessions documented that they are a believing people and want to live according to their own effort in a renewed church, and so to follow the apostolic church and its teachings.”⁷ Daniel makes the connection more explicit to the Augsburg Confession. He argues that all three confessions are “to show the conformity of their own theology with that defined in the Augsburg Confession recognized by the Habsburgs in the Empire.”⁸ But he also adds that they defended their faith in moderate, “almost conciliatory language.”⁹ Thus, like with the Czech Confession of 1575 and other confessions in the region and of that era, these confessions are intimately entwined with the genesis of the Lutheran movement and the theology of the Augsburg Confession, but have taken

⁷ Andrej Hajduk, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1517–1610,” in *Evanjelici v Dejinach Slovenskej Kultury*, ed. Pavel Uhorskai (Liptovský Mikuláš: Tranoscius, 2002), 19. My translation of “Evanjelici a. v. na Slovensku svojimi troma vyznaniami dokumentovali, že sú veriacimi ľuďmi a chcú žiť podľa svojho svedomia v obnovej cirkvi, a tak nasledovať apoštolskú cirkev a jej učenie.”

⁸ Daniel, “The Acceptance of the Formula of Conrod in Slovakia,” 263.

⁹ David Daniel, “Highlights of the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 42, no. 1 (1978): 28. Not all the language that these confessors used was moderate. Stöckel joined in the condemnations of Mathias Flacius, labeling him the Antichrist. See Ján Kvačala, *Dejiny Reformácie na Slovensku*, (Litp. Sv. Mikuláš: Tranoscius, 1935), 122.

on regional influences that make them unique expressions of their Reformation faith. And perhaps more importantly, and unlike the Czech Confession, these confessions worked similar to the impact of the Formula of Concord in Germany by uniting and preserving Lutheranism in these territories.

Confessio Pentapolitana in 1549

In 1548, King Ferdinand I had sent out a decree against the Anabaptists and the Sacramentarians (usually those who followed Zwingli's teachings), whom he saw as a threat. At that time in the region surrounding Spiš, which is in the eastern part of Slovakia, there were many "menacing" Anabaptists. In response to this concern and to distinguish its Lutheran teachings from the Anabaptists,¹⁰ leaders from five towns in this region wrote the *Confessio Pentapolitana*.¹¹ "In this way, they wanted to secure truly their own real religious (church) life in the spirit of the Lutheran Reformation."¹²

As the name suggests, it was the confession of five royal free cities (Bardejov, Prešov, Košice, Levoča, and Sabinov) in the region. *Pentapolitana* was written in 1549¹³ by Leonard Stöckel,¹⁴ who was a highly regarded student of Melanchthon and Luther. Jan Kvacala, in his history of the Reformation in Slovakia, suggests that Stöckel wrote the text in the spirit of

¹⁰ Tibor Fabiny, *A Short History of Lutheranism in Hungary* (Budapest: Mihály Tóth-Szöllös Press Department of the Lutheran Church in Hungary, 1997), 9. He points out that many of the less educated government officials labeled the Lutherans in the area also as "heretics."

¹¹ Hajduk, "Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1517–1610," 18.

¹² Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 1. My translation of "Tým si chceli zabezpečiť právo na svoj vlastný náboženský cirkevný život v duchu Lutherovej reformácie."

¹³ Although it was not published until 1613, when it was published in Latin. Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 1.

¹⁴ A first draft was written by Michael Radaschin, but it was rejected by the royal commissioners. See Fabiny, *A Short History of Lutheranism in Hungary*, 9.

Melanchthon.¹⁵ The text emphasized baptism and the Lord's Supper in contrast to the teachings of the Anabaptists and the Zwinglians.¹⁶ Previously, these two groups had been condemned and their expulsion was ordered at the Diet in 1548 in Bratislava (Pressburg). The Lutherans had joined the Catholics in support of this edict, only to become the targets of the edict at the hands of the Catholic hierarchy.¹⁷ The Catholics sought to use the language condemning these sects to include the Lutherans.

Much in the same way as the other formulas of concord, “the confession of the five eastern Slovak cities was formulated moderately.”¹⁸ Toth highlights the relationship to the Catholic teaching when he suggests that “these tenets were more conservative than their German Lutheran counterparts and accepted more from the Catholic teachings. In subsequent years, an independent Lutheran Church became established in Upper Hungary (present-day Slovakia) on the estates of the magnates supporting the Reformation.”¹⁹ Thus the formula was a moderating confession, designed to appeal to the catholic nature of the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia. “Despite the slight modification of the language used to express the doctrine of Free Will, [*Confessio Pentapolitana*] is truly a Lutheran confession and can be considered to be a theological abridgement of the Augsburg Confession.”²⁰ In this way, perhaps it is the most like the Augsburg

¹⁵ Kvačala, *Dejiny Reformácie na Slovensku*, 69. I searched through the Book of Concord and Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* to find a way to link the language of the text to these documents and could not find any link.

¹⁶ Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 1.

¹⁷ Daniel, “Highlights of the Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia,” 27.

¹⁸ Hajduk, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1517–1610,” 19. My translation of “Vyznanie viery piatich východoslovenských miest bolo formulované mierne.”

¹⁹ Istvan Gyorgy Toth, “Old and New Faith in Hungary, Turkish Hungary, and Transylvania,” *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004), 209.

²⁰ David Daniel, *The Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia, 1517–1618* (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1972), 214.

Confession in that it was Lutheran in doctrine, but trying to demonstrate that it still was Catholic as well.

Confessio Heptapolitana or Montana in 1558

This next confession, which goes by both titles *Heptapolitana* and *Montana*, was produced during a time when the Catholic Church was persecuting the Lutherans. It was based on the *Confessio Pentapolitana*,²¹ but it was also an abridgement of the views held in the *Augustana* and the Smaldcald Articles.²² In fact, it is very similar to *Pentapolitana*, only removing one article and adding another; namely, it removed the 19th article on Free Will and added an article on clergy vestments.²³ When the Lutherans from the seven free cities in central Slovakia (Kremnica, Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica, Ľubietová, Pukanec, Banská Bela, and Nová Baňa) tried to explain themselves they were rebuked. They then sought help from Emperor Ferdinand I. They were trying to convince him that their faith was not heretical but “identical to that of their German brethren in the Empire.”²⁴ But as Hajduk explains, “Ferdinand answered them crudely, saying that the AC belongs only to the Germans and not to Hungarians.”²⁵ The local bishop wrote up a series of articles, which were Roman Catholic in content, and asked that a number of priests approve them. They were not approved by the Lutherans. But in response Ulrich Cubicularius (Kammerknecht) wrote the *Heptapolitana* in 1559. This confession, however, did not bring peace. They had to repeatedly defend themselves in 1569, 1577, and 1580.²⁶ In the end,

²¹ Hajduk, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1517–1610,” 19–20.

²² Daniel, *The Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia*, 232.

²³ Kvačala, *Dejiny Reformácie na Slovensku*, 73. Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 5.

²⁴ Daniel, *The Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia*, 235.

²⁵ Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 5. My translation of “Ale Ferdinand im surovo odpovedal, že Augsburské vyznanie patrí len do Nemecka a nie do Uhorska.” See also, Tibor Fabiny, *A Short History of Lutheranism in Hungary*, 9.

²⁶ Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 5.

the King and Archbishop did not have the support of the local magistrates and were ineffective in thwarting the Reformation at that time.²⁷

Confessio Scepusiana in 1569

In this case, the political and ecclesiological situation and conflict was primarily over the use of the Lord's Supper in both kinds.²⁸ It was written by 24 towns around Spiš, Melanchthon's students Valentín Megander (Grossmann) and Cyriak Obsopaeus (Koch). Spiš was the region, in which Pelikan would begin his church and his movement. Megander studied with Melanchthon in Wittenburg and Obsopaeus also studied with Melanchthon as well as with Stöckel.²⁹

Completed and reportedly accepted by the local bishop in 1569, it was not an original work, but built on the work done in *Heptapolitana* and *Pentapolitana*.³⁰ Like the other texts, the goal of the formula was to show that “they were not heretics, but that they faithfully upheld the teachings of Holy Scripture.”³¹ Characteristically, the teaching of the church is more strongly formulated in this confession.³² But at the same time, while remaining Lutheran, it lacks the “polemical language” of its German counterparts.³³

Once the Book of Concord was available in 1580, the orthodox Lutheran corpus was championed by Georg Meltzer. He was in conflict with Thomas Froehlich, who had earlier been accused of being a Philipist. Eventually, the Book of Concord was accepted in 1610 at the Synod

²⁷ Daniel, *The Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia*, 236.

²⁸ Hajduk, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1517–1610,” 20.

²⁹ Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 12.

³⁰ Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 12.

³¹ Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 12. My translation of “nie sú nijakými bludármi, ale že sa verne pridržiavajú učenia Písma svätého.”

³² Hajduk, *Tri Vyznania Viery Na Slovensku V 16.storočí*, 12.

³³ Daniel, *The Lutheran Reformation in Slovakia*, 245.

of Žilina and 1614 at the Synod of Spišské Podhradie.³⁴ Thus, the issues that would end up dividing German Lutheranism were largely replayed in Slovakia. The resolution to the problems was also to follow the German pattern. In the end, the acceptance of the Book of Concord in Slovakia marks end of a single Protestant or unionistic confession for the Slovaks, but the beginning of a Lutheran understanding based on a *corpus doctrinae* that was to unite the orthodox Lutheran remnant. This acceptance of the entire Book of Concord marks the Slovaks as one of the early adopters of confessional Lutheranism. They were throughout the latter half of the sixteenth century increasingly aware of their Lutheran sensibilities, as evident from their own home-grown confessions, which culminated with the definitive alignment with orthodox Lutheranism. This alignment is in contrast to more unionistic approaches applied by others in the Central European region. They were truly one of the first non-German people groups to become confessional Lutherans.

After the acceptance of the Formula of Concord, and the evidential end of the Late Reformation period in Slovakia, the Slovak Lutherans were soon pressed upon by the full weight of the Counter-Reformation. Under the guidance of the Hapsburgs, whose peace accords with the Turks allowed them to refocus their attention on countering the Reformation, the seventeenth century was a time of recatholization of Slovakia. The influx of the Jesuits and many other orders, the rise of Catholic universities and secondary educational institutions, and the increase in religious fervor on all sides were products this effort.³⁵ By the mid-seventeenth century, through a series of rebellions and conflicts, the Protestants steadily lost ground, literally, as well

³⁴ David Daniel, "Bartfeld/Bardejov zur Zeit der Reformation," in *Die Reformation und ihre Wirkungsgeschichte in der Slowakei*, ed. Karl Schwarz and Peter Svorc, (Vienna/Wien: Evangelischer Presseverband, 1996), 48.

³⁵ Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 67–73. The Slovaks of the Slovak Lutheran Synod also remember this time and rehearsed its negative influences on Lutheranism in Slovakia with its readers. See [Jozef] Kuchárik, "Ev.-luteránska mučenícka cirkev medzi Slovákmi v Uhorsku,"

as the support of the local magnates, the vast majority of whom became Catholics. This persecution also included losing churches and being forbidden to build new ones. Because of the conflicts within and the threat of the Turks from without, “the seesaw between rebel and royal authority on their territory had not been conducive to good government,”³⁶ and the Slovak area was in tatters politically as well by the end of the seventeenth century.

By the eighteenth century, Hungary was considerably weaker from the conflicts, and it became increasingly difficult for them to resist Hapsburg absolutism. Under the Hapsburgs, the Counter-Reformation continued in full force. For example, from the highest levels of the state, the very devout Empress Maria Theresa continued the policies restricting the Protestants. They were limited in their worship, allowed only grammar schools, were forbidden to convert, and had to swear a Catholic oath to hold public office.³⁷ This religious persecution was impacted by the encroachment of Magyar and Austrian cultures on the Slovak peoples as well as the import of their respective languages.

The external challenges were many, including increasing conflict with the Catholic Church and Catholic dominated parliament.³⁸ An example was the law passed in 1715, which limited the Lutherans to worshipping only as a private person and not as a congregation.³⁹ This act was upheld in the *Resolutio Carolina* of 1731, which “upheld the restrictions imposed by Leopold I; it limited worship, allowed only Lutheran grammar schools, forbade conversion, and required the

Svedok, 1 February 1917, 36.

³⁶ Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 77.

³⁷ Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, 81.

³⁸ Peter Kónya, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1610–1791,” in *Evanjelici v Dejínach Slovenskej Kultúry*, ed. Pavel Uhorskai (Liptovský Mikuláš: Tranoscius, 2002), 48–49.

³⁹ Kónya, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1610–1791,” 50.

swearing of a Catholic oath upon entry into the public service.”⁴⁰ But there were also internal conflicts. For example, the Lutherans were divided among themselves as characterized by the Synod of Ružomberk, where a conflict arose with the Pietists. This rise in the pietistic movement was a result of Slovaks studying abroad and learning from such pietistic leaders as Philipp Jakob Spener.⁴¹ A significant amount of the pressure, at least from the Catholic Hapsburgs, was released with the Edict of Toleration (*Tolerančný Patent*) by Emperor Joseph II on October 25, 1781. At that time, the Lutherans were able once again to build churches, schools, parsonages and housing for teachers, if they had at least 100 families in a parish.⁴² Numerous other liberties were renewed, such as the ability for Lutherans to marry in a Lutheran church.⁴³ In short, it opened up a “new epoch” for the Lutheran Church.⁴⁴ Thus, both from inside and from outside the Lutherans were under tremendous pressure to not only remain united, but just to survive.

The Slovak Lutherans have had a complex experience that dates back to the very beginning of the Lutheran Reformation. Their theological points of reference are founded in the history of Lutheran orthodoxy and were forged in a crucible of centuries of persecution, primarily at the hands of the Catholics and the Counterreformation. Importantly, they were one of the few churches to embrace orthodox Lutheranism and one of its earliest adopters, as understood by the subscription to the whole Book of Concord, while also resisting Catholic persecution and unionistic tendencies with the Reformed, which were to overwhelm most other Lutheran confessions in the region. This heritage was fundamental to the self-perception of those participating in the Pelikan Movement. Having survived the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

⁴⁰ Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, 81.

⁴¹ Kónya, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1610–1791,” 49.

⁴² Kónya, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1610–1791,” 57.

⁴³ Kónya, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1610–1791,” 57.

as an orthodox Lutheran church, subscribing to the complete Book of Concord, the Slovak Lutherans would later face another significant influence; that is, their next big challenge proved to be the liberal trends in theological thinking in Europe. It is these two religious experiences—orthodoxy and liberalism—that formed the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’ Slovak Lutheran church and set the stage for the theological conflict at the heart of the Pelikan Movement.

⁴⁴ Kónya, “Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1610–1791,” 58, 61.

CHAPTER THREE

SLOVAKS AND THE MODERN PERIOD

During the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, Lutherans in Slovakia were confronted by new challenges. These challenges were nationalism, unionism, and liberalism. These three ideas are some of the major controlling concepts in the matrix of thought affecting the formation the Slovak Lutheran Synod. These trends in European thought were often perceived as contrary to the core of confessional Lutheranism. They challenged the theological identity of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and provided an impulse for action.

Confessionalization begets Nationalism

Nationalism is a concept that was foreign to the medieval mind. As Johnson notes in his study of Central European history “the Middle Ages were a period devoid of nationalism in the modern sense of the word.”¹ Rather, medieval national identity, if it can be called that, was more of a product of the relationships between the nobles and ruling classes that dominated the events of Medieval Europe. The Reformation marked a change in the European perceptions and could be seen not only as a change in religious orientation, causing the trifurcation of Europe into Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed spheres of influence (such as at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 where it was declared “*cuius regio, eius religio*,” which by making such a distinction between Lutheran and Catholic regions could be credited as beginning this process). This

¹ Lonnie R. Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 36.

accentuated the tie between confessional identity and territorial political identity. Moreover, the states used the churches as agents of social and “ideological” control. This process of confessionalization promoted the rise of the modern nation states and nationalism. Even though the extent and precise character of the connection between the Reformation and the rise of nationalism is debated, there is general agreement that they were intertwined. Thus, the century between the Peace of Augsburg and the Peace of Westphalia can be understood as the Age of Confessionalization.

Even in the early stages of the Reformation, Luther’s commitment to bringing the Gospel to the German people is an example of co-mingling theological and national foci. In reflecting on the beginning of the Reformation movement, Kolb notes that “the concerns addressed in the Augsburg Confession were concerns of all German society.”² It is during this time, as Schilling argues, that confessional identity became closely aligned with what was to become nations, either politically or more abstractly, as an ethnic group. As described above, many of the nations of Central Europe also aligned theological doctrine and national interests. For examples, as discussed earlier, the Czechs and the Slovaks each had different confessions designed to address their particular theological and political situations.

To amplify this societal change, Schilling offers this definition: “‘Confessionalizing’ means a fundamental sociological process of change which includes changes in the church and religion and in culture and mentality, as well as in state politics and society.”³ Thus, Schilling argues that during this time there was not only a fundamental change in religion and theology,

² Robert Kolb, *Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church, 1530–1580* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 35.

³ Heinz Schilling, “Confession and Political Identity in Europe at the Beginning of Modern Times Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Religion and Nationalism*, ed. John Coleman and Miklós Tomka (Maryknoll, New York:

but also in the public spheres of government and society. Modern nations were being born out of religious and confessional distinctions. Viewing the Reformation as more of a social and economic event than religious, noted commentator on nations and nationality, Gellner agrees and adds that “the stress of the Reformation on literacy and scripturalism, its onslaught on a monopolistic priesthood, its individualism and links with mobile populations, all make it kind of harbinger of social features and attitudes which ... produce the nationalist age.”⁴ Thus, some perceive the Reformation as a movement. For all of its theological ambitions, this movement was also a sociological force as well, aiding in the development of the modern European idea of a nation.

Unionism as a Reaction to Confessionalization and Nationalism

In relating to German society, the leaders of the Lutheran Reformation also established the possibility of state influence and even control over ecclesiastical affairs as the state was now free of church control.⁵ At the time of Luther, the subjection of the church to the princes provided the Reformation the support it needed to carry out its religious and theological agenda.⁶ But it also

Orbis Books, 1995), 5.

⁴ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 40–41.

⁵ Spitz explains, “The Reformation forced men to reconsider the concepts and relationships of church and state in radically new terms. This development meant more than merely another chapter in the old story of the struggle between the spiritual and temporal powers. The political circumstances had altered, for the Renaissance state had burst the bonds of the feudal system. The secular state, freed from any de facto control by the church, provided a sanctuary for the development of Renaissance culture and the possibility of independent churches. The medieval church could not maintain itself against the twofold attack of the secular state from without and the increased religious concern from within. With the coming of Calvinism, Protestant piety took on a more polemical cast and provided a religious ideology for the nationalistic struggles during the half century that followed. The so-called confessional wars stemmed from the close ties of political and ecclesiastical-religious commitments. The *raison d'état* of the princely dynasties and, after 1789 of the nations was a natural concomitant of the more sharply delineated particularism of the various secular states as they developed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.” Lewis W. Spitz, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements: The Reformation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 2:548.

⁶ Kolb points out that as the Reformation continued into the latter half of the sixteenth century that the theologians were actually doing the confession and not the princes, as was done at the time of the Augsburg

changed the relationship of the church and the state, giving the state important and sometimes overwhelming influence over the church. As the state in Protestant areas grew stronger in influence, it was able to shape the nature of the Protestant church. Such powers eventually enabled Prussia in 1817, at the 300th year anniversary of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, to decree the forced union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches.⁷ Confessional Lutherans perceived this union as a tragic event, compromising the teachings and integrity of the historic Lutheran church. This melding together of confessions was felt especially in the church's theology as expressed through the liturgy and worship agenda. Through this union church in Germany, confessional Lutherans felt that the Lutheran church had lost control over the content of its theology. Likewise, they felt that church became increasingly subjected to the more liberal and rationalistic theologians. Ironically, Frederick William III "had pressed for the union of Lutheran and Reformed in Prussia ... to overcome rationalism."⁸ Unionism as experienced in Prussia was not only the mixing of two different ecclesiologies, but also of their theologies. Key points of conflicted doctrine were justification and the sacraments. Undue influence by the state over the church was also a great concern. Because of the theological and ecclesiological concerns, confessional Lutheranism in the nineteenth century, in Germany especially, often saw the state as detrimental to the faith life of the Lutheran church.

Theologians and churchmen, struggling to restore the old order and orthodox theologies of the previous eras, resisted state influence over the church. They sought to resist the unionistic

Confession in 1530. At the same time, even at the time of the Formula of Concord in 1580, the princes also signed the confession: "the princes claimed the right to subscribe to the new formula of confession publicly along with their theologians" (131). Kolb, *Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church*, 125, 135.

⁷ Salo Wittmayer Baron, *Modern Nationalism and Religion* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1947), 121.

⁸ Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1972), 1:190n2.

activities of the church as well as the state. Such churchmen included Claus Harms, who published his own *Ninety-Five Theses*⁹ simultaneously with the Prussian Union. In his new theses, he condemned the Union. He was joined by other churchmen, including Stahl, Löhe, Vilmar, Klieforth, Kahnis, Philippi, and Hengstenberg.¹⁰ During this time, various schools of thought, including the Neo-Lutherans and the Erlangen School, also sought to foster a more conservative understanding of the Lutheran faith. But these churchmen and movements were increasingly marginalized. In traditionally Lutheran lands, the confessional Lutherans found themselves an isolated minority within their own historically Protestant, if not, Lutheran country. Some of these marginalized, confessional Lutherans formed the initial Saxon immigration that established the Missouri Synod in America. Like these Germans, unionism was also a concern of Slovaks of the mid-nineteenth century living in the Kingdom of Hungary. In the nineteenth century, many confessional Lutherans in Germany and in the Kingdom of Hungary perceived unionism as well as state interference as a threat. The Slovak Lutheran Synod in the early twentieth century continued in this concern, perceiving the threats of unionism and state interference in both America and in their mission efforts in Slovakia.

Nationalism, Herder, and the Nineteenth Century Slovak

In the transition from confessionalization to nationalism, Slovak Lutherans in the Kingdom of Hungary desired to remain truly Lutheran and purely Slovak. As was shown earlier, with the subscription to the Book of Concord in the early seventeenth century, the Lutheran Reformation in what is now Slovakia became a confessional reality. The Lutheran Reformation became a

⁹ For a translation of many of Harms' accusations against the church, see Robert C. Schultz, "The European Background," in *Moving Frontiers*, ed. Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 66–69.

¹⁰ For a more extensive discussion of the goals and activities of this confessional and reformation movement,

source of identity and weathered the crisis of the Counter-Reformation. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the region changed radically as the Lutheran majority became a minority. Moreover, the process of confessionalization gave way to nationalism. The nineteenth century became the era of nations and nationalism as the old medieval order continued to lose ground. New thinking on nations found an audience in the trend towards nationalism. Klopstock, Fichte, Schleiermacher,¹¹ Hegel, and Rousseau, to name a few, provided new thinking about nationalism. All of these thinkers proved important to one degree or another, but for the rising sense of national identity within the Slovak people, Herder's concepts of *Volk* was particularly core to their understanding of nationalism. Since he was also sympathetic to the Slavs, Slovaks received Herder's thinking with a religious vigor.

Nationalism of the nineteenth century is more aligned with contemporary notions of a nation than its medieval and confessional predecessors. Modern definitions of a nation often begin with Herder, who described a nation that did not require a state. Herder's view was important to the stateless Slovaks because his view provided them, as well as other Slavs in Central Europe, with important intellectual support for their identity as a people. Herder's idea of a nation enabled them to imagine their people within the context of nations with states, such as those with German and Hungarian influences. For these reasons, noted Central European historian Johnson places Herder as the most important influence on Central European nationalism.¹² Herder and his followers in Central Europe held that a nation was comprised of a

see Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, 1:194–98.

¹¹ Schleiermacher had a particularly strong impact on German nationalism. For a more detailed study on his impact see 10. Jerry F. Dawson, *Freidrich Schleiermacher: The Evolution of a Nationalist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966).

¹² Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*, 130.

cultural and linguistic commonality and had a right to develop these attributes; and a state was an artificial phenomenon. If a state was to restrict or even eliminate another nation, Herder would condemn this act as fundamentally unethical: “to deprive the nation of this right was a crime against humanity.”¹³ Thus, it would be impossible, in Herder’s view, for one nationality, such as the Hungarians, to eliminate another one, such as the Slovaks. Herder gave the Slovaks a philosophical reason to justify Slovaks as a distinct nation. Ultimately, Masaryk, noted Czech philosopher and the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic, reflecting on Herder’s blending of nation and faith, opined that “Humanity was for Herder religion, it was his ideal of pure Christianity—nay, it was for him almost God.”¹⁴ Masaryk demonstrated how the Slavs at the turn of the last century perceived Herder. Herder gave them a new absolute that was coterminous with Christianity—a Christianity which at least believes in divine providence.¹⁵ Thus, Herder gave the intellectual and moral arguments for the existence of their nation, even if they did not have a corresponding state on the nineteenth-century European map.

Important to Slovak nationalists of the nineteenth century, Herder also asserted the idea that each people group had a *Volksgeist*, which was their collective voice, including not only their language, but also their poetry, songs, and literature.¹⁶ Barnard points out that for Herder a nation is not necessarily a political entity, an actual state, but an organic ensemble of people. He

¹³ Peter Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 38.

¹⁴ T. G. Masaryk, *Modern Man and Religion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1938), 122.

¹⁵ Herder and Štur did not have a traditional or orthodox Lutheran understanding of the Divine’s role in nation building. See Josette A. Baer, “National Emancipation, not the Making of Slovakia: Ludovít Štur’s Conception of the Slovak Nation,” *Centre for Post-Communist Studies at St. Francis Xavier University Occasional Paper* no. 2 (2003): 29–30, <http://www.stfx.ca/pinstitutes/cpcs/studies-in-post-communism/Baer2003.pdf> [accessed May 22, 2008].

¹⁶ Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*, 131.

explains that for Herder: “Becoming conscious of being a Russian or a German is a wholly integral process that is inherent in the dynamics of human and social existence, an internal culture, so to speak, that requires not external assistance by a lawgiver and no formal drawing up of a social contract.”¹⁷ This definition of nation depends more on cultural and linguistic proofs than actual political power. It gave the Slovak nationalists reason to believe that Slovakia, without a state but with its own language, poetry, and songs, was a nation. As seen through Herder’s idea of a nation, Slovakia deserved not only to survive but also to thrive as a nation and even as a political entity. Typical of this view was the nationalist and confessional Lutheran, Hurban, who advanced his own ideas that were similar to Herder’s in his concept of the “tribal uniqueness” (*kmeňova svojbytnosť*) of the Slovak people.¹⁸ Palkovič, another Lutheran nationalist, was a student of Herder’s work while he studied in Jena. It was in Jena that he began to dedicate his literary work to aid in the realization of a Slovak nation.¹⁹ Štúr is the most cited example of a Slovak leader who had imbibed Herder’s thinking. All of these Slovak nationalists incorporated Herder’s ideas (as well as other nineteenth century philosophers) to advance the agenda of Slovak nationalism.

Herder also had a number of noble assertions about the Slavic peoples, which endeared him to them. He even went as far as to proclaim that the Slavic race was the future leader of Europe.²⁰ The “historic” nations of Europe, which included the Germans, Hungarians, Poles, and French, often utilized his ideas for their own political aspirations. As a result, the Slovaks were placed in

¹⁷ F. M. Barnard, *Herder on Nationality, Humanity, and History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 47.

¹⁸ *Slovenský Biografický Slovník*, s.v. “Hurban, Jozef Miloslav.”

¹⁹ *Slovenský Biografický Slovník*, s.v. “Palkovič, Juraj.”

²⁰ Suzanna Mikula, “Ludovít Štúr and the Pan-Slavic Movement,” *Slovakia* 16, no. 39 (1966): 105.

the “unhistoric” category, along with such other nations as the Ukrainians and Romanians.²¹ This bifurcation set up the theoretical possibility of repression by the Hungarians, which came to be known as magyarization.²² Magyarization became one of the chief threats to Slovak identity in the nineteenth century. Through this process, the Hungarians sought to make all the peoples under their rule ethnically Hungarian, that is, Magyar.

It is perhaps possible to be skeptical of Herder’s influence, especially considering the influence of Schleiermacher, Hegel, Kant, and Rousseau on the Slovak as well as European intellectual public. Moreover, later thinkers and movements often misused Herder.²³ Abuse of his thinking sometimes tarnished his legacy. However, as Masaryk intimates, for Central Europeans, especially those like the Slovaks who were considered “unhistoric,” Herder, rather than Kant and the others, proved more influential because he resonated with their ambitions for their nation.

Herder had a large influence on Slovak identity and nationalism in the nineteenth century. In particular, his influence on Slovak Lutherans was strong. Two early examples are Ján Kollár and Pavel Jozef Šafárik. Kollár, a member of the Štúr generation of Young Slovaks, was considered “the father of the idea of nationhood.”²⁴ Kollár was very much influenced by the German national movement: “He was profoundly affected by the writings of Herder and Arndt

²¹ Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*, 135.

²² The Hungarian word for their own nation is *Magyar*. *Magyarization* is the process of changing a people group into a culturally Hungarian one.

²³ In terms of the historical impact, Herder at times has received criticism for his so-called influence on later nationalist rhetoric. But as Evrigenis and Pellerin point out that Herder rejected all “chauvinism and any form of aggression in the service of the nation, he has been accused having laid the foundations for subsequent theories of aggressive nationalism” (xxxvi). And, in particular, he has been accused of being directly linked with German nationalism and even National Socialism (xxxvii). In both cases, he is guiltless of either charge or connection. It is fair to assert that his views were often misused for such purposes. See Ioannis D. Evrigenis and Daniel Pellerin’s introduction to Johann Gottfried Herder, *Another Philosophy of History and Selected Political Writings*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004).

²⁴ Peter Petro, *A History of Slovak Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1995), 59.

and his participation in the huge demonstration by Germany's nationally minded youth at the Wartburg castle in 1817 on the tercentenary of Luther's famous declaration."²⁵ What Kollár brought back from his studies in Jena was a new idea for the region: "cultural and linguistic nationalism."²⁶ Likewise, Šafárik, another early Slovak nationalist, published a text entitled, *Proclamation to the Slavs*. A perceived awakening in the Slavs toward a national identity enlivened him. He conjured up the spirit of Herder and Herder's text *Stimmen der Volker in Liedern* (1778, 1779), "the formative work that inspired Slavs to turn their attention to their folk literature."²⁷ This focus is important because Slovak linguists have always been, according to Johnson, "theoreticians of Slovak nationalism."²⁸ These nationalists were able then to latch onto their literature and folk culture to find that organic community, which is a Herderian concept of a nation.

Slovak nationalism was just one implementation of Herdian thinking. A close ideological relative of Slovak nationalism was panslavism, which strived to unite all Slavs in the region. Other nations feared panslavism because they saw the movement as an attempt to replace their own culture²⁹ or as a tool of Russian foreign policy to incite problems in the region, especially in the Kingdom of Hungary.³⁰ The Hungarians, for example, reacted to the perceived threat of panslavism by persecuting the Slovak nationalists in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

²⁵ Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 21.

²⁶ Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 21.

²⁷ Petro, *A History of Slovak Literature*, 55.

²⁸ Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*, 142.

²⁹ Mikula, "Ludovit Stur and the Panslavic Movement," 106.

³⁰ Gabor Vermes, "The Slovak Dilemma in Austria-Hungary," *Slovakia* 25, no. 48 (1975): 114.

Twentieth century Slovaks were still aware of Herder's influence. Bajus, in his brief account of the Slovak Lutheran Synod's origins, supports the connection to Herder. In reaction to the attempts of the Hungarians to remove the Slovaks from history, typified by the Hungarian proverb "The Slovak is not a man," Bajus argues that the Hungarians tried to stifle the Slovak cultural and language. Bajus continues:

It meant the confiscation of educational institutions, the suppression of Slovak Literature, the forceful introduction of Magyar into the educational system and the church service; it meant fines, imprisonment, and death. Well could the words of Herder be applied to the Slovaks, "*Wer mir meine Sprache verdraengt, will mir auch meine Vernunft und Lebensweise, die ehre und die Recte Meines Volkes rauben.*"³¹

Thus, in the context of nineteenth century thinking on nationalism, in Herder's view of a nation, the Slovak Lutheran Synod found itself heir to that strong legacy of seeking legitimacy and national identity.

To some, much of what Herder argued is no longer considered normative. For example, Gellner argues that the notion of a folk having a special spirit that binds them together, culturally and linguistically, is not useful. In fact, Gellner contests that modern nations are highly specialized educationally and bureaucratically endowed entities: rather than a people having a spirit that compels them to become a nation, the rise of the industrial age is the stimulus to the rise of the modern nation. The key factor in nationalism is not *Volk* culture, as Herder might argue, but power, education, and a shared high culture, all of which are maximized in a modern, industrial society.

But nationalism is *not* the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, though that is how it does present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new form of social

³¹ John Bajus, "The Slovak Lutheran Synod, 1902–1942," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (October 1942): 84.

organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state.³²

Thus, what some early twenty-first century thinkers might understand as a nation appears in contradiction to the understanding of the Slovaks of the nineteenth century or the Slovak Lutherans in America in the early part of the twentieth century. Although outside of the scope of this work, it could even be argued that Herder's understanding is still the dominant view of contemporary Central Europeans. Whatever the current theories of nationalism might suggest or the conventional wisdom on the ground in contemporary Central Europe might appear, at the turn of the last century, they understood nation as a folk people, a lyrical ideal of a people bound together by language and culture. Herder's idea of a nation was also a part of the Slovak Lutheran in America at the time of the Pelikan Movement.

Modernism, Rationalism, and Liberalism

During the nineteenth century, a host of intellectual movements captured the attention and imagination. A number of the movements became terms that were in general usage. These terms had, and still do have, very fluid meanings. For example, *modernism* is a difficult term to define well as there is little agreement on the definition. Generally, modernism is some form of foundationalism, essentialism, and realism.³³ Some historians trace its origins back to

³² Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 48.

³³ In Germany, modernism was first associated with the movement called realism, which "was to present life as it was, low life as well as high, sexual as well as romantic." See William R. Everdell, *The First Moderns* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 20–21. However, Everdell argues that Modernism rather than achieving its goal of honestly reflecting reality in art and literature, in fact, is distinguished by "ontological discontinuity" (347). And that post-modernism is merely another aspect of modernism. Moreover, the Catholic Church understood modernism was a reaction within the Catholic Church itself to similar intellectual tendencies in the culture. This understanding of modernism is not as useful as it was focused, if not limited to the Catholic Church. For a description of this use of the word and a short history of the attempts within the Catholic Church to incorporate modernism into the contemporary late nineteenth and early twentieth-century church, see Alec R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 179–89.

Renaissance Humanism and declare that its father is Descartes, who asserted his philosophical foundation based on man's ability to reason from the one fact he could not doubt, which is that he exists.³⁴ One useful definition is that modernism is that the "connections about our knowledge of Nature, of ourselves, and of history and society are said to be objectively determined."³⁵ It is marked by an attempt to understand the world rationally. However, reason is not bounded by any external authority. Said another way, reason is the only authority. This view of modernism led one Slovak Lutheran to observe as the chief characteristic of modernism the freedom from authority.³⁶

Another important and related term that had become part of the lexicon of the time was rationalism. Rationalism, which suggested that reason was superior to intuition or spirituality, was a part of the modernist project. Rationalism was in full force in Great Britain by the seventeenth century, championed by philosophers such as Hobbes and Hume, and migrated to the Continent in the later centuries. Considering the use of the term in public discourse in the nineteenth century (especially by Lutheran pastors at the turn of the last century), rationalism is often crudely used interchangeably with modernism as both are understood as relying on a confidence in reason to solve the most difficult philosophical problems. Thus, a key characteristic of rationalism was the goal of "reasonableness" in religion, which encompassed

³⁴ Assuming that Descartes is the beginning of the era of modernism is a good starting point. This is a view supported, for example, by the noted philosopher, Bertrand Russell. For his description of Descartes' influence, see Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945). Of course, there is no complete agreement. Others, for example Dupré, place the beginning of modernity in the Middle Ages and with the nominalists. See Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

³⁵ Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon, eds., preface to *A Postmodern Reader* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 3.

³⁶ Martin Rázus, "Je naša cirkev ohrozená," *Cirkevné Listy* 28, no. 2 (February 1914): 34. This analysis is not far from Peter Gay's text suggesting that that a key characteristic of modernism is the desire to reject norms in pursuit of cultural heresies. See Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008).

rigorous analysis as well as the general sense of the age, including antidogmatic and antienthusiastic attitudes, which were often perceived as antireligious.³⁷ It was largely driven by the dramatic gains in scientific knowledge that from time to time challenged key elements of faith and doctrine.³⁸

Rationalism was not necessarily irreligious, even if it was not orthodox Christian; rather advocates either attempted to show how Christianity was reasonable, or they drifted intellectually into a form of natural religion. John Locke was a champion of this early approach as exemplified in his text *The Reasonableness of Christianity*.³⁹ Eventually, and by the nineteenth century, the modernist and rationalist projects began to challenge the reasonableness of such biblical events as miracles, to ponder difficult theological concepts such as theodicy, and to engage in biblical criticism. Even those who defended natural religion were to fall under the analysis of the rationalist philosophers such as Hume and Kant. To many, rationalism was as an intellectual approach that undermined a traditional, orthodox understanding of the Christian faith, regardless of a particular confession. Other philosophical ideas might be considered part of modernist movement such as the romanticist reaction to rationalism. However, in less philosophically rigorous environments, such as a turn of the century parish in a Slovak immigrant community in America, the combatants of the Pelikan Movement often used the terms with less than academic precision. Whether the concerns were modernism or rationalism, both

³⁷ Martin Rázus, “Je naša cirkev ohrožená,” 35–36. Rázus makes this very point, noting that agnosticism was the fruit of this course of thought and that it was dangerous to the faith. Rázus points out that thinkers such as Thomas Huxley felt that rationalism could not comment with any certainty on the supernatural, making the agnostic position the most intellectually honest.

³⁸ For a general discussion of rationalism as it was understood from a theological perspective, see Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, 1:30–51.

³⁹ Locke, John, and John C. Higgins-Biddle. *The Reasonableness of Christianity: As Delivered in the Scriptures*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

represented the entire nineteenth century project that seemed to undercut the orthodox Lutheran faith. In fact, it may be that what the parish pastor was reacting to was not the erudite arguments of philosophers, but the secularization of the Western Mind as the populace began to live out the ramifications of modernism.⁴⁰

As Jan Boor, one of Pelikan's early mentors, opined: "Rationalism is truly a brother of Liberalism, and with Liberalism, it walks hand in hand."⁴¹ Liberalism was more broadly understood as those who were for "liberty all around; liberty of the press, of association, of education, etc."⁴² In this sense, liberalism is really an anti-authoritarian movement that was interested in pursuing goals—intellectually or theologically—that each individual desired.⁴³ Those desiring to pursue a rationalist critique were often considered liberals, mainly because they worked outside or against traditional authorities. But liberals were also characterized by a sense of positivist progress that was very much part of the general ambiance of the nineteenth century:

... they did tend to assume that, once men had been set free and given an opportunity of education, everything would be lovely. The natural perfectibility of human nature, the inevitability of progress, a vaguely conceived utopia on earth, and romantic notions about nationality—such ideas captivate their imaginations.⁴⁴

Their optimism and freedom probably best characterized the positive expectation of liberal thinking; and these same attributes would have made it intellectually attractive, except to the

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the impact on the wider public, see Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

⁴¹ Jan Boor, "Budúcnosť našej cirkve," *Cirkevné Listy* 8, no. 10 (October 1894): 152.

⁴² Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, 148.

⁴³ This analysis is not far from Peter Gay's argument suggesting that that an important characteristic of modernism is the desire to reject norms in pursuit of cultural heresies. See Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy*.

⁴⁴ Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, 149.

orthodox theologian who, because of his sober views of sin and humanity, was not nearly as enamored with the inevitable rise and improvement of mankind.

Modernism, rationalism, and liberalism are linked and co-existed in nineteenth-century Europe. Conservative, orthodox Lutherans (or Catholics, for that matter) would have rejected these concepts. Conservative theologians and churchmen were concerned with maintaining the right teaching of the historic church;⁴⁵ they would list these approaches in *ad hominem* attacks or condemn them interchangeably in rhetorical discourse. Members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod at the turn of the twentieth century participated in such a defense of the faith. These terms often represented the perceived direction of theology and church polity, which were diverging from an orthodox Lutheran view.

The reaction toward Germany of the nineteenth century is personified in Bismarck. Bismarck is an example of this approach and understanding. The famed German chancellor and the architect of both the second German Empire and the subsequent decline of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire was known also for his support of liberalism. This liberalism was turned against the church, as demonstrated most strongly in the attacks against the Catholic Church in the famed *KulturKampf*. But even in conservative Protestant circles, he was considered no friend. The Slovaks noted this political pressure on the church for the sake of Bismarck's liberal agenda.⁴⁶ They further attacked Bismarck's allegiance to liberalism as evident in his membership to the Freemasons, which was, from the viewpoint of the Slovak Lutherans, unchristian.⁴⁷ This entire cultural atmosphere concerned conservative Lutherans. Liberalism opened up many forms

⁴⁵ Boor, "Budúcnosť našej cirkve," 149–53. He felt that rationalism, for example, was "unsheathed" on the church and was a major force hurting the church.

⁴⁶ J.[án] V.[ojtko], "Slovo o Bismarckovi," *Svedok* 10, no. 21 (November 1, 1916): 341.

of thinking that were judged antithetical to true Christianity. For conservative, confessional Lutherans, Slovaks included, at the turn of the century, there existed a clear line of separation between their worldview and the liberal-rationalist-modernist worldview.

Influence of the Hapsburg Empire and Magyarization

Philosophical and religious considerations were not the only concerns pressing on Slovak Lutherans. Since the inclusion of Slovaks into the Hungarian sphere of influence over 1000 years ago and their subsequent assimilation into the Hapsburg Empire, the cultural and political world of the Empire loomed large and provided the political and cultural experience for Slovaks—Lutherans and otherwise—until the end of First World War. As dominant as the Hapsburg influence on Slovaks was, it is no secret that the patchwork ethnic quilt that was sewn together to make the nineteenth century Hapsburg Empire lacked the cohesiveness of both their continental rivals, France and Germany. Built through centuries of political, marital, and diplomatic efforts, the Empire rose to be a great power in Central Europe, but lacked the nationalistic cohesiveness to bond the disparate people groups together in a common cause.⁴⁸ Where France had coalesced during their Revolution (and well before under their absolute monarchy) and German unity arguably reached its zenith in the latter half of the nineteenth century with the rise of Bismarck and the Second Reich (*Zweites Reich*), the Hapsburg Empire remained, as one chronicler of the

⁴⁷ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Slovo o Bismarckovi,” 342.

⁴⁸ Droz quotes Aurel Popovici, author of the text, *The United States of Hungary* (1906), as suggesting that there were 15 major ethnic-nationalities in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire at the turn of the last century. Droz lists these groups: German Austria, German Bohemia, German Moravia, Czech Bohemia, Polish Galicia, Ruthenian Galicia, Rumanian Transylvania, Croatia, Carniola and the Slovene country, Slovakia, Serbian Voivodina, the Magyar territories of Hungary, the Szekler country, the Italian Trentino, Trieste and the Italian sections of Istria. Although this list could easily be disputed, it demonstrates the varied ethnic groups that struggled for influence in Central Europe. See Jacques Droz, “The Empire: Victim of a Loss of Political Will,” in *The Austrian Empire: Abortive Federation?* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1974), 144.

early twentieth century called, “a loosely knit political unit, in no sense a nation-state.”⁴⁹ It lacked the Herderian basis for a nation. For this reason, by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Hapsburg Empire proved very difficult to rule.

Revolts and Revolutions

Long before the end of the Hapsburg Empire after the First World War, tremors cracked the foundation of the empire in 1848, which was a year of revolts and revolutions throughout Europe. In Vienna, the heart of the Empire, the revolution in Austria was brutally suppressed.⁵⁰ During that time in the Austrian sphere of influence, Slavic nationalism was gaining ground as the panslavic Prague Congress convened. This congress represented the first great event of panslavism in the region.⁵¹ In the Hungarian sphere, this epidemic of revolts provided the conditions for the Slovaks finally to resist Hungarian political and cultural influence.

The revolts in 1848 inspired the Slovaks also to rise up against the Hungarians and pursue a nationalistic agenda.⁵² The Slovaks had their own political insurrection, which was only successful for a time.⁵³ Such an event was marked by the meeting of the Slovak Assembly on

⁴⁹ Tomas Capek, *Origins of the Czechoslovak State* (New York: The Revell Press, 1926), 20.

⁵⁰ Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Habsburgs: Embodying Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 260–64.

⁵¹ Mikula, “Ludovit Stur and the Panslavic Movement,” 108–9. “The time seemed opportune for action on the part of the Slavs as well. Štúr offered the idea of proclaiming a Slavic Congress, and on May 31, 1848, it was chosen for the Congress, and a total of 362 delegates from the various Slavic nations arrived. The delegates were largely from among the Slavs under the Hapsburg rule, but the Poles and Russians also were represented.” See also Josette A. Baer, “National Emancipation, not the Making of Slovakia: Ludovit Stur’s Conception of the Slovak Nation,” 15–16.

⁵² Joseph Paučo, “Slovakia's Mid-Nineteenth Century Struggle for National Life,” *Slovak Studies* 1 (1961): 79. Paučo notes that the Croats, Serbs and Romanians were the first to claim national rights. See also Mikula, “Ludovit Stur and the Panslavic Movement,” 108.

⁵³ Stefan Polakovic, “Evolution of the Slovak National Philosophy,” in *Slovakia in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Joseph M. Kirschbaum, (Toronto: The Slovak World Congress, 1973), 25.

May 10, 1848, in Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš in which Štúr, Hurban, and Hodža attended.⁵⁴ The key issues were civil liberties, national autonomy, and universal suffrage.⁵⁵ They were keen to find some sort of autonomy under their Hungarian rulers.

However, the Hungarians were unresponsive to their desires, and Štúr, Hurban and Hodža went in exile in Vienna.⁵⁶ The Slovaks then raised an army and began a yearlong revolt, in which they aided the Austrian emperor to overcome the Hungarians.⁵⁷ After March 1849, when the Austrians crushed the Hungarians, the Slovak army was quickly demobilized and nearly as quickly forgotten by the Austrians. Another set of meetings in what became known as the Slovak National Council occurred in September, which led to the Council declaring separation from Hungary. The Slovaks eventually met with the young Emperor Franz Joseph, and for a moment, it seemed that their hopes for an independent Slovakia, under Austrian and not Hungarian rule, were to be realized.⁵⁸ In the end, when the Hungarian Revolt was suppressed, the Hungarian lands were reorganized and a Slovak state remained just an aspiration. Slovaks persisted in the Hungarian sphere of influence. Only for a short time, they were allowed to have some freedom in the use of their language, including the teaching of Slovak in the grammar schools.⁵⁹ Soon the Slovaks were under a harsh Hungarian rule again. Thus began a long season of repression and

⁵⁴ Mary Lucille Blizman, "The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia" (master's thesis, University of Detroit, 1950), 1. For a complete list of the requests, see Joseph Paučo, "Slovakia's Mid-Nineteenth Century Struggle for National Life," 79–80.

⁵⁵ Milan Hodža, "The Political Evolution of Slovakia," in *Slovakia Then and Now*, ed. R. W. Seton-Watson (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1931), 70.

⁵⁶ Paučo, "Slovakia's Mid-Nineteenth Century Struggle for National Life," 80.

⁵⁷ Paučo, "Slovakia's Mid-Nineteenth Century Struggle for National Life," 81–83. The Hungarians, who saw the Slovak nationalists as playing all sides, viewed such activity as duplicitous. See Gabor Vermes, "The Slovak Dilemma in Austria-Hungary," 113.

⁵⁸ Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 191–92. Baer, "National Emancipation, not the Making of Slovakia: Ludovit Stur's Conception of the Slovak Nation," 16.

magyarization that characterizes the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in Slovakia.

Because the Slovak revolt was unable to mobilize the general populace in a widespread revolution, it proved that the “national consciousness was still confined almost exclusively to a small intelligentsia split along confessional lines.”⁶⁰ Namely, the Lutherans (for example, Štúr, Hurban and Hodža), who represented a large voice in the Slovak intelligentsia, stood primarily alone in their efforts for a wider Slovak national movement; moreover, the revolutionary spirit had not been effused into the masses—it remained the goal of the intellectuals only.

Rather than pursuing Slovak national goals, the Slovaks could have sided with their fellow Slavs, the Czechs,⁶¹ which would later come to fruition in the struggle for the Czechoslovak state at the turn of the twentieth century. For example, Kollár and Šafárik both had wider panslavic aspirations. However, “when the leader of the Czechs during the 1848 revolution asked the Slovaks to join with the Czechs in a new autonomous state within Austria, Miloslav Hurban and Michael Hodža, two [Lutheran] Slovak leaders, refused the suggestion because they hoped to win an autonomous Diet within the kingdom of Hungary.”⁶² The Hungarians had reacted against the rise of panslavism; the Batthyany Cabinet on May 15, 1848, “instructed all the country authorities to set all the rigors of the law in motion against all Panslav movements.”⁶³ The Slovak nationalists had a desire for greater political independence, but their identity remained within the

⁵⁹ Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, 121.

⁶⁰ Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 52.

⁶¹ Some Czech support came with the leadership of the Slovak insurrection. See Paučo, “Slovakia’s Mid-Nineteenth Century Struggle for National Life,” 89.

⁶² Marián Mark Stolárik, “The Role of American Slovaks in the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914–1918,” *Slovak Studies* 8 (1968):11.

⁶³ Blizman, “The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia,” 3.

Hungarian political and cultural world. Even though they were more inclined to see themselves in the Hungarian sphere, through the revolts of 1848, the Slovaks had “given notice that they were no longer an ‘amorphous nation’ but a force to be reckoned with.”⁶⁴

Magyarization: Cultural and Religious Dimensions

The Hungarians were also under the influence of the Herderian understanding of a people, finding unity in language and culture. All people in the Kingdom of Hungary were Hungarians, whether they were culturally Hungarian, Slovak, or Romanian, for example. Magyars are the cultural Hungarians. Magyarization was an attempt by the Magyars of Hungary to make Magyars out of all the other nationalities in the Kingdom of Hungary. By pursuing this sense of being Hungarian as a goal for all people in the Kingdom, magyarization ended a long tradition in Hungary of trying to coexist as different nationalities. The Slovak Lutheran Synod’s relationship with the Hungarians was seen primarily through and against the Hungarian Lutheran Church. This change from a church united by a common teaching and practice began when the church office moved to the Hungarian city of Pest on August 15, 1791.⁶⁵ This year also marks the time when the Hungarians officially rejected German as the official language of the government, which Emperor Joseph II of Austria endeavored to institute throughout the empire. They rejected not only German but also Latin, which was the *lingua franca* of the Kingdom of Hungary. In its place, they made Hungarian the national language of the kingdom.⁶⁶ This change was the

⁶⁴ Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, 122.

⁶⁵ “Synoda a oddelenie sa slovenských evanjelikov a. v. od úrande cirkve v Uhorsku,” *Svedok* 7, no. 3 (December 15, 1912): 40–43.

⁶⁶ M. Mark Stolarik, “Immigration and Eastern Slovak Nationalism,” *Slovakia* 26, no. 49 (1976): 13.

beginning of a Hungarian nation that was culturally Magyar; it was the beginning of a church body that was dominated by Hungarians as well.

The Hungarians did not see themselves as the persecutors. They viewed their church as a positive influence on the national culture, supporting the many nationalities in one unified Kingdom of Hungary. “The Hungarian Lutheran Church has for centuries done the care of its members in Hungarian, German, Slovak, and Vend. There were pastors who preached in three languages on the same Sunday. Each language, or as foreigners prefer to name, each nationality has fully equal rights with the others, which it practices in its individuals.”⁶⁷ The Slovaks did not commonly hold this view of the Hungarian Lutheran Church in the nineteenth century.

In events that parallel the general feeling of unrest in the mid-nineteenth century, religious tremors were also being felt in the Slovak Lutheran world. In September of 1840, the tensions between the Slovak Lutherans, who were primarily from peasant stock, and the Hungarians, who were more urban and intellectual, heightened with the activity of Count Károly Zay, who was appointed as the chief inspector of the Protestant Congregations and Schools on September 10.⁶⁸ Zay had a twofold program to reform the Hungarian Lutheran Church: first, he intended to make Hungarian the official language of the church, and secondly, he wanted a union church between the Lutherans and the Hungarian Reformed.⁶⁹ An aspect of this program was to magyarize the Slovak schools.⁷⁰ Fundamental to Zay’s efforts was to eliminate the use of *bibličtina*, which at the time was the Protestant Slavic language of choice for Slovaks as well as Czechs, in the

⁶⁷ Lajos Ordass (ed.), *The Hungarian Lutheran Church of Today* (Lund, SE: Cal Bloms Boktryckeri A.-B., 1947).

⁶⁸ Edward A. Tuleya, “The Slovak National Awakening,” *Slovakia* 21, no. 44 (1971): 92.

⁶⁹ Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 39.

⁷⁰ Tuleya, “The Slovak National Awakening,” 93.

elementary schools, replacing it with Hungarian.⁷¹ Zay justified his program of linguistic, and thus cultural, changes, as a necessity based on the threat of Russia and Panslavism: “The Magyars, especially Protestant Magyars, stood for liberty, culture, and progress; Russia and the Slav cause for ignorance and despotism.”⁷² Zay’s colleague, Ferenc Pulszky, perhaps voiced an underlying racial sentiment when he suggested that the Slovaks were made up of the “lowest material of civilization.”⁷³ Zay is reported to have said that “we will not be Lutherans, nor Calvinists, nor Unitarians, nor Jews, but we will be all Hungarians.”⁷⁴ In this way, his goals for the church mirrored the wider goals of the Kingdom of Hungary. Being a Slovak Lutheran, then, was a difficult path. They often aligned with the intellectual trends in Europe. However, as their Slavic or Slovak nationality and culture became more central to their identity throughout the nineteenth century, they became more aware of the threat of magyarization.

The danger of the unilingual Hungary was great for Slovak culture, and in particular, for the Lutheran Slovaks, whose concerns were voiced on June 4, 1842 in Vienna. Štúr and Kollár worked together to resist the efforts of the Hungarian liberals, led by Zay.⁷⁵ The results of this petition were modest. They had successfully resisted the church union but the overall program of magyarization continued. In 1844, Hungarian was made the official language of the Kingdom of

⁷¹ Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 40.

⁷² Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 40.

⁷³ Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 41.

⁷⁴ Karol Zay, “Evanjelická a. v. cirkev v bývalom Uhorsku a v terajšej Československej republike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 1–2 (January–February 1920): 35. “Najväčší propagátor Unie gróf Karol Zay vydal heslo: Nebuďme ani luteráni, ani kalvíni, ani unitári, ani Židia, ale buďme všetci Maďari.” Zay’s important work supporting a union church was *Nepředpojaté náhledy o Unii* (1846). See also Ján Ďurovič, “Evanjelictvo a národ slovenský,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 8–9 (August–September 1921): 177–82.

⁷⁵ Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 33.

Hungary.⁷⁶ Štúr himself felt the sting of magyarization; also in 1844, he lost his post as a professor in Bratislava because he resisted Zay's reforms.⁷⁷ Unable to thwart magyarization, the nationalistic Slovaks new strategy was to strengthen the people to resist magyarization. Štúr saw this strategy as a failure of "high" politics.⁷⁸ The strategy in the early 1840s of the Young Slovaks, characterized by three of their leading lights—Štúr, Hurban, and Hodža—moved away from Czech-Slovak unity and focused decidedly on a Slovak only solution.⁷⁹ This change was different from earlier nationalists, such as Kollár and Šafárik, who were either panslavists or forerunners of a Czechoslovak unity. Štúr, in particular, provided a voice for Slovak nationalism, publishing his paper, the *Slovak National News*, from 1845–48, where he "demanded the abolition of serfdom and the establishment of civil and national liberties, without any distinction of race."⁸⁰ These historical events of the 1840s showed, in part, how a Slovak Lutheran identity was forming independent of Czech and panslavic influences in its efforts to resist magyarization and express a true Slovak nation.

The revolts in 1848 did not mark the end of the Hapsburgs. The turning point in Hapsburg hegemony came a few years later. The Hapsburg's loss in 1859 to French and Sardinian (Piedmontese) forces in the fields of Italy was a crushing blow to their pride.⁸¹ More importantly, the loss marked the shift of power from the Hapsburgs to the Prussians, who used the defeat to

⁷⁶ Edita Bosák, "Czech-Slovak Relations from the 1840s to 1914," *Slovakia* 35, no. 64–55 (1991–92): 63–64.

⁷⁷ M. Delphina Opet, "Political Views of Ľudovít Štúr," *Slovakia* 21, no. 44 (1971): 39. According to Tuleya, Štúr had worked and resigned from a post on Zay's estate in the 1830s. See Edward A. Tuleya, "The Slovak National Awakening," 89.

⁷⁸ Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 43.

⁷⁹ Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An essay in the intellectual history of east central Europe*, 46.

⁸⁰ Hodža, "The Political Evolution of Slovakia," 69.

⁸¹ For an expanded understanding of the unification of Italy and the demise of Hapsburgs in the region, see Barbara Jelavich, *The Hapsburg Empire in European Affairs, 1814–1918* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975), 83–

extend their own reach. The subsequent loss of influence by the Austrians to Bismarck and the Prussians, who would dominate a united Germany, is usually marked in the battle of Königgrätz in 1866, in which the Prussians territory crushed the Austrian army in Bohemian; this defeat was catastrophic to any larger Austrian goals of empire.⁸² As one historian points out, “The most spectacular proof of the bankruptcy of a system of absolute government is indeed military defeat.”⁸³ The victory of the Prussians over the Hapsburgs was something that Bismarck had planned for some time; he had asserted that the Austrians had to be “forced out” of German affairs.⁸⁴ This marks the beginning of the end for the Hapsburg Empire as it became a second-rate power in the region as compared to a united Germany.

After those battles and before First World War, this period is characterized by disruptions in the Hapsburg universe. The battle also marked the dual kingdom between Austria and Hungary, in which there was one crown, but two nations.⁸⁵ It is during these disruptions that the Slovaks were able to pursue some of their own nationalistic goals, continuing their efforts from the previous decades. As one commentator notes, this activity took on significant effort:

From 1859 to 1867, while Vienna negotiated with Budapest about a possible accord between the Hapsburgs and the Magyars, Slovak leaders took advantage of the relative freedom that prevailed and demanded recognition as a nation. In 1861, over 5,000 nationalists from all parts of the country met in Turčianský Svätý Martin in central Slovakia and drafted a ‘Memorandum of the Slovak Nation’ to the Budapest

90.

⁸² For a description of these events, see Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 274–76. See also Barbara Jelavich, *The Habsburg Empire in European Affairs, 1814–1918*, 91–106. The Prussian victory emboldened the Hungarians to assert themselves vis-à-vis the Austrian dominated Hapsburgs (100–102). Čapek in *Origins of the Czechoslovak State* makes the argument that the fear of Hungarian power created the dualism that excluded the Czechs from power (24).

⁸³ Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918*, 269.

⁸⁴ Jelavich, *The Habsburg Empire in European Affairs, 1814–1918*, 93.

⁸⁵ James J Zatzko, “Early Beginnings of the Slovaks in America,” *Slovakia* 15, no. 38 (1965): 5.

Parliament. The Hungarians reaction to the Memorandum was that it was an act of separatism and rejected it.⁸⁶

Its themes were similar but its aim was the same as the demands of the 1848 uprising.⁸⁷ They demanded the right, for example, to use Slovak as their official language, which the Hungarians refused.⁸⁸ Besides demanding certain civil rights, they asked for home rule in the region called 'Upper Hungary'. In this way, they were seeking a federated union within Hungary.⁸⁹ Štúr and his co-workers had many of the same goals.

The Slovaks were not the only ones resisting Hungarian hegemony. The Serbs at this time had a similar cry for a voice in their own destiny through at least partial self-governance.⁹⁰ Also in 1861 and in reaction to the demands of the different nationalities within the Kingdom of Hungary, the Hungarians had introduced the Law of Nationalities. This law had some provisions for the rights for the individuals, but it had no recognition of the rights of people groups, or nations, within Hungary. This Law of Nationalities was modified in 1868 soon after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 with a similar law with much less potent protections of individual civil rights.⁹¹ In reality, the law remained a "dead letter for summonses were issued in Magyar, and verdicts given in Magyar and the need for an interpreter was disregarded."⁹²

⁸⁶ Marian Mark Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1989), 137.

⁸⁷ Blizman, "The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia," 4.

⁸⁸ Hodža, "The Political Evolution of Slovakia," 73.

⁸⁹ Marian Mark Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918*, 136. See also *Slovenský Biografický Slovník*, s.v. "Hurban, Jozef Miloslav."

⁹⁰ Hodža, "The Political Evolution of Slovakia," 74.

⁹¹ Hodža, "The Political Evolution of Slovakia," 74. Vermes, a Hungarian, notes that the law granted extensive civil rights, even if it did not recognize the different nationalities. See Gabor Vermes, "The Slovak Dilemma in Austria-Hungary," 108.

⁹² Zatko, "Early Beginnings of the Slovaks in America," 6.

However, these openings did provide a brief season of hope, which was demonstrated by the building of new church schools and the founding of the *Matica Slovaská*, a Slovak literary and culture society.⁹³ By the end of this period, the Slovak nationalists had made little progress towards their goal of a Slovak nation. The program begun in the 1840s by Zay and his contemporaries was able to exist and increase in fervor.

For the Slovaks, Hungary's rise to power after 1868 in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire meant more changes—for the worse. This rise in Hungarian power and subsequent increase in magyarization was, in part, based on their fears of losing their own culture.⁹⁴ Panslavism, in particular, was seen as part of “dark conspiratorial machinations.”⁹⁵ In 1873, the Hungarian leadership changed, and magyarization was intensified. Some schools were closed because they were “bastions of pan-Slavism.”⁹⁶ By 1875, the Hungarian Prime Minister Koloman Tisza had declared that the Slovak nation does not exist.⁹⁷ Such a declaration shows the continued pressure of magyarization as well as the failure of the Slovak nationalists to make any progress since their attempt at a memorandum in 1861. The eastern part of the country, which is where most of the immigrants to America came from and where the Pelikan Movement would return to, was hit the hardest: “The plan [of magyarization] seemed to be working in the 1880's; western and central

⁹³ Stolarik, “Immigration and Eastern Slovak Nationalism,” 14–15.

⁹⁴ Vermes comments on the feelings of Hungarian gentry and their middle class mentality: “Being alone, feeling isolated in the midst of ‘aliens’—Germans, Slavs, Rumanians—was a source of both real pride and real fear, but fear could never be openly confessed, specifically because of the accompanying sense of pride. This lack of balance, therefore, created an unhealthy atmosphere of irrationality and arrogance, which in turn provoked an equally irrational and arrogant response from the representatives of the nationalities; thus, gradually and tragically, all the bridges were burned.” See Gabor Vermes, “The Slovak Dilemma in Austria-Hungary,” 110.

⁹⁵ Vermes, “The Slovak Dilemma in Austria-Hungary,” 109.

⁹⁶ Stolarik, “Immigration and Eastern Slovak Nationalism,” 15.

⁹⁷ Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918*, 138.

Slovaks could find few nationalist leaders, books or newspapers in the eastern countries.”⁹⁸ An example of this kind of persecution comes from the efforts the Hungarians made to restrict the activities of some of the more nationalistic groups. For instance, on January 20, 1875, the directors of the *Matica Slovenská*, a Slovak organization dedicated to Slovak culture, were not allowed to meet and three months later, in April, all of their activities and properties were under surveillance.⁹⁹ Magyarization was forced into all aspects of education. Starting in 1873, the Hungarians waged a campaign against Slovak gymnasiums (high schools), because Hungarians considered the schools to be hotbeds of panslavism.¹⁰⁰ The Education Act of 1879 made Hungarian a required subject in all Slovak primary schools and all teachers had to show proficiency to teach in Hungarian.¹⁰¹ Between 1880 and 1914, the number of schools with Slovak instruction sank from nearly 2,000 to 345.¹⁰² By 1918, there were a total of 3,777 Hungarian primary schools and only 415 Slovak (and only 20 in German).¹⁰³ At the same time, in a church body of about one million people (600,000 Slovaks, 250,000 Germans and 150,000 Hungarians), the Slovaks had only one gymnasium still open, while the Hungarians had eleven.¹⁰⁴ Finally, they even required the Slovaks to change their names:¹⁰⁵ “In 1898, the Prime Minister of Hungary,

⁹⁸ Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918*, 138.

⁹⁹ Blizman, “The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia,” 5.

¹⁰⁰ Zatkan, “Early Beginnings of the Slovaks in America,” 7.

¹⁰¹ Blizman, “The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia,” 5–6.

¹⁰² Blizman, “The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia,” 6.

¹⁰³ Zatkan, “Early Beginnings of the Slovaks in America,” 7.

¹⁰⁴ Zay, “Evanjelická a. v. cirkev v bývalom Uhorsku a v terajšej Československej republike,” 36.

¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, in the 1990s the Slovaks attempted to require their Hungarian minority to modify their names within the context of Slovak grammar. Such activity was condemned by the European Union, which saw such activity as culturally insensitive.

Dezso Baffy, decreed that all state officials Magyarize their names.”¹⁰⁶ In short, while the immigrants to American were experiencing new freedoms to express both their Slovak heritage and their religious predilections, a Slovak in the Kingdom of Hungary was increasingly culturally and legally a non-entity.

Internal problems within the Hapsburg Empire also played a role in the attempt to include new partners in power. The result of these military defeats at the hands of select Italian powers and the Prussians, being cast out of the German Confederation, and the internal rise of Hungarian desires for power and more self-determination, resulted in the Austrian Hapsburgs trying to move their center of power toward the Slavs in their kingdom.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the Hapsburgs reasserted the rights of the Crown of Bohemia, attempting to create a ruling system with Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary.¹⁰⁸ This effort for a new formation of the state was undone by Austrian and Hungarian forces dedicated to the dual monarchy.¹⁰⁹ When the Hungarians were able to solidify their hold on power in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a partner in the dual monarchy, they ended the hopes of the Austrians to mitigate Hungarian political power and felt emboldened to embark on a culture war against the Slovaks and others. This new effort resulted in an intense

¹⁰⁶ Blizman, “The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia,” 8.

¹⁰⁷ Jacques Droz notes that this was also a necessity for the Austrians if they wanted to disenthral themselves from Hungarian “tutelage.” See Droz, “The Empire: Victim of a Loss of Political Will,” 142. In their 1918 declaration of independence, Masaryk, Štefánik and Beneš asserted their historical rights of independence dating back to the defensive alliance to fight the Turks in 1526 and cite the broken faith caused by the Austrians siding with the Hungarians and the Dual Monarchy in 1826. See a complete translation of this declaration in Capek, *Origins of the Czechoslovak State*, 91–95.

¹⁰⁸ This approach was supported also by many Czechs and by Štúr himself, and was denoted as “Austroslavism.” They hoped to create a united Slavic states that was under the Austrian monarch. Such ideas were a major point of discussion at the Prague Congress of 1848. The failure of Austroslavism led Štúr to look to Russia for Slavic unity. See Mikula, “Ludovit Stur and the Panslavic Movement,” 108–112.

¹⁰⁹ Capek, *Origins of the Czechoslovak State*, 27. Hugo Hantsch develops the details of the attempts of the Czechs to assert the perceived rights, the rejection of those rights by almost all concerned parties—Germans, Moravians, Silesians included—and the subsequent decline of Slavic influence in the Empire. See Hugo Hantsch, “The Compromise of 1867: Surrender of the Slavs,” in *The Austrian Empire: Abortive Federation?* (Lexington,

period of magyarization. This period of persecution differentiated the Slovaks from many other Western Slavs, such as the Czechs, who were in the Austrian sphere of influence and did not have to withstand this cultural persecution.

Thus, the Compromise of 1867 provided for the Dual Monarchy and for the persecution, or as Slovaks called it, the chauvinism against the Slovaks; it also had significant impact on the activities of the three major confessions: Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic. The establishment of the Dual monarchy, where the Austrians and the Hungarians divided the internal rule of the different nationalities in the Empire while the Austrians retained the ability to speak for the Empire externally, eliminated any protection the Slovaks could have hoped for from the Austrian half of the empire. “Under the Compromise the Slovaks stood face to face with the Magyars, their masters.”¹¹⁰ Moreover, “After 1867 the Magyars were so strong that they could proceed to put into effect an idea which had been developing since before the days of Joseph II: the transformation of the Hungarian state into a Magyar state as a legal and institutional fact.”¹¹¹ However, as mentioned earlier, the Hungarians did pass in 1868 a Law of Nationalities, “which permitted, among other things, that the citizenry in all non-Magyar districts might use their mother tongue.”¹¹² For practical purposes, this law also enabled the use of the use of national languages in the “lowest levels of county governments as in the primary and high schools.”¹¹³ Even though the Hungarians did not give preference to the Catholics,¹¹⁴ as was characteristic of

MA: D. C. Heath and Company), 68–76.

¹¹⁰ Samuel Harrison Thomson, *Czechoslovakia in European History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 268.

¹¹¹ Thomson, *Czechoslovakia in European History*, 269.

¹¹² Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918*, 137.

¹¹³ Stolarik, “The Role of American Slovaks in the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914–1918,” 12.

¹¹⁴ The most famous act against Catholics was the tragedy in the city of Černova, in which 15 people died and

Austrian Hapsburgs, who had long persecuted the Lutherans and other Protestants, they replaced religious persecution with ethnic persecution.¹¹⁵ Often this persecution was done under the guise of fighting panslavism. Hungarians resisted many attempts to place a Slovak-speaking person in a leadership role, such as teacher or pastor.¹¹⁶ In fact, in the latter half of the nineteenth century no major confession in Slovakia maintained both its ethnic and religious identity while maintaining national leadership.

By 1875, regardless of a confessional stance, the Hungarian prime minister confidently declared that “there was no Slovak nation in Hungary.”¹¹⁷ Concerning the church, as Seton-Watson points out “the Slovaks, among whom the Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist churches alike had been converted by the Budapest Government into powerful instrument of assimilation, were steadily growing weaker. Especially after the notorious Education Acts of Count Apponyi¹¹⁸

many more were hurt. The violence revolved around a Catholic priest, Andrej Hlinka, who insisted that a Slovak Bishop perform the consecration a new church building, which he had built. When the church sent a Hungarian bishop, Hlinka resisted and violence ensued. This event marks a very famous example to Slovaks, especially Catholic Slovaks, of the repression of magyarization. Hlinka became an important voice in the process of establishing the Czechoslovak state. For the differing views of the events of that time, see Roman Holec, “Tragédi v Černovej po sto rokoch,” *História* 7, no. 5 (September–October 2007): 34–37. Hlinka started as a peasant and ended a Monsignor of the Catholic Church. He was a force in the formation of the new Czechoslovak state and in the politics of the nation. For an overview of his role in Černová and his life, see Joseph N. Misany, “Father Andrew Hlinka,” *Slovakia* 15, no. 38 (1965): 68–77. For a Hungarian perspective of Hlinka and the events in Černová, see Gabor Vermes, “The Slovak Dilemma in Austria-Hungary,” 109–110. See also Mary Lucille Blizman, “The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia,” 11, and SME Newspaper, “Príčinou černovskej tragédie bol podľa Slotu veľkomadžarský šovinizmus,” <http://www.sme.sk/c/3558403/Pricinou-cernovskej-tragedie-bol-podla-Slotu-velkomadarsky-sovinizmus.html> (accessed December 3, 2008).

¹¹⁵ Pedro Ramet, “Christianity and National Heritage among the Czechs and the Slovaks,” in *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989), 271.

¹¹⁶ In the late nineteenth century, Slovak Lutherans reported a series of events where Slovaks were not allowed to take a position so that a Hungarian speaking person could. See “A zase panslavismus,” *Cirkevné Listy* 8, no. 8 (August 1894): 116–17.

¹¹⁷ Polakovic, “Evolution of the Slovak National Philosophy,” 31.

¹¹⁸ A leader in the Hungarian Lutheran Church.

in 1907 the process of Magyarisation [sic] was advancing by leaps and bounds.”¹¹⁹ Consequently, by the beginning of First World War, the Hapsburg Empire had become arthritic economically, politically, and socially. But at the same time, most vestiges of Slovak culture were also officially absorbed in the Hungarians program of magyarization. Not a single school that spoke Slovak—Catholic or Lutheran—remained; nor was there even a Slovak Catholic bishop: “the Catholic hierarchy was uniformly Hungarian.”¹²⁰ The churches then, as much as the wider society, were changed by the influence of magyarization.

In the context of this intensive program of magyarization, all attempts to smooth the tensions between the regions and nationalities, including Slovak and Hungarian antagonism, proved difficult and superficial “for regional agreements could calm and soothe the provinces, but not the peoples.”¹²¹ Any efforts by the Austrians also proved fruitless. The divisions between the nationalities remained strong, even though the Austrians worked diligently to include the Slavs into their empire. The result was that the Hapsburg Empire had become, in essence, less German and concerned with German problems, having been excluded from the rise of a united Germany. In terms of its other nationalities, the Empire had endeavored to become more Slavic in some areas, as a result of the Austrian Hapsburgs attempts to include the Slavs more and more in the halls of power. But the Kingdom of Hungary still exacted a strong Magyar influence, which dominated all of the nations in the Kingdom, including the Slovaks.

¹¹⁹ R. W. Seton-Watson, “Introduction. Czechoslovakia and the Slovak Problem,” in *Slovakia Then and Now* ed. R. W. Seton-Watson (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1931), 25. Vermes, a Hungarian, in reference to this quote by Seton-Watson, challenges this dire viewpoint that believed at the turn of the century the Slovak culture was on the verge of destruction because of magyarization, stating that “the term extinction becomes somewhat exaggerated and overly pessimistic.” See Gabor Vermes, “The Slovak Dilemma in Austria-Hungary,” 106.

¹²⁰ Ramet, “Christianity and National Heritage among the Czechs and the Slovaks,” 271.

¹²¹ Hantsch, “The Compromise of 1867: Surrender of the Slavs,” 75.

The First World War ended the Hapsburg Empire. The military defeats and the internal turmoil that gripped the war-torn nation proved too much and the country became undone, splitting into multiple groupings roughly based on the many nationalities once held together by dynastic marriage and alliances. Modern trends in nationalism and new modes of identity overcame the medieval glue that held the Empire together. Moreover, the stress of the war, including the overt efforts of the allies to break apart the Dual Monarchy, were irrepressible. Examples of the forces that broke the Empire were the support of the Czech Legions in Russia, who fought against the Empire, the declarations of independence by leaders such as Masaryk, Beneš, and others, meetings of the “oppressed nationalities” under the allies’ auspices in Italy, support of the Americans and President Woodrow Wilson towards the self-determination of small countries, and eventually the Austrian acceptance of Czechoslovak independence.¹²² By the end of the war, the Hungarian forces that would have eliminated a defined Slovak culture and nation had lost their grip. The Slovaks had survived magyarization. Likewise, the Slovak Lutherans, who also clung to their own heroes of the faith and the nation, withstood the pressure. Their identity too was bruised, but intact. Slovaks then turned to a new nation that was no longer entwined with the policies of Catholic suppression nor magyarization. The new nation allowed for a modern definition of a Slovak nation based on the Enlightenment ideals, similar to France and America. The new free Czechoslovak state promised freedom of religion as well as the separation of church and state. Those expressed ideals looked and felt like the situation that the Slovak Lutheran Synod experienced in the American experiment. Such large changes in the

¹²² Capek, *Origins of the Czechoslovak State*, 37–65.

situation in Slovakia made it possible for those in the Pelikan Movement to reinvigorate confessional Lutheranism in Slovakia.

Slovak Lutherans as Nationalists

From the waning influence of the Hapsburgs and during the height of Hungarian persecution against the different ethnic groups through magyarization, the individual people groups within the region asserted their own forms of nation and identity. As noted, this greater awareness of national and ethnic identity was pandemic in Europe; in addition, in Central Europe, the rise of nationalism impacted not only the Slovaks, but all of the people groups within the Hapsburg Empire. Slovak intellectuals asserted their nationhood. Polankovič remarks that “our nation was profoundly shaken by all that was convulsing Europe in those days: the spiritual commotions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries destroyed the walls imprisoning the Slovak spirit which had begun its arduous march towards the realization of its won natural rights.”¹²³ Such sentiment shows the competing and compelling nature of Slovak nationalism. Slovak nationalism was viewed as a spiritual force of freedom, which had fermented in the intoxicating historical necessity of the traditions of Hegelianism, Herderism, and the other nationalist thinkers. However, concerning the impact on the Slovaks, the rise of Slovak nationalism and Slavic pan-nationalism (panslavism) in the nineteenth century provided the antidote to resist magyarization and to establish a modern Slovak identity, which proved ready for the events of the early twentieth century.

Slovak nationalism and panslavic movements found their voice with a series of writers, poets, and polemicists who asserted a Slovak identity. It was during this time that most Slavs were

¹²³ Polakovic, "Evolution of the Slovak National Philosophy," 17.

under the influence of some other Central European power, the Czechs under the Germans and the Slovaks under the Hungarians, for example. Yet it was from the Germans—namely, Herder, Kant, Goethe, Lessing, and Schiller – that the Slav intellectuals and poets learned how to rouse the nationalistic and panslavic emotions of their peoples. And, as shown, of these German philosophers it was Herder who was the most influential.¹²⁴

Two of the most important writers were the linguists Ján Kollár (1793–1852) and Ľudovít Štúr (1815–1856). They are important not only because of their influence on Slovak nationalism, but also because they represent two different approaches in achieving a form of Slovak identity. Kollár is considered a “mystic humanitarian” panslavist.¹²⁵ He typified a literary or spiritual panslavism that had little desire or hope of political manifestation.¹²⁶ Of Kollár, it was said that he “mentally lived in Slavdom, a beautiful but unrealistic fiction.”¹²⁷ Joined with his classmate, Paul Joseph Šafařík (1795–1861), Kollár was able to charm the Slovaks with his ideas of a united Slav people.¹²⁸ Šafařík provided the intellectual support, with a systematic study of the Slavic nations and culture.¹²⁹ For the Slovak context, these two men can be “regarded fathers of Panslavism.”¹³⁰ Both men, notably, were Lutherans. Kollár was, in fact, a Lutheran minister, who

¹²⁴ Thomas Capek, *The Slovaks of Hungary* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1906), 22–23. For a better understanding of the influence of Herder on the thinking of such Slavic luminaries as Masaryk, see F. M. Barnard, *Herder on Nationality Humanity and History*, 85–104. Goláň adds “Vlastenectvo mládeže podnecoval citátom z Herdera, že každému národu pri jeho pevnej túžbe po vzdelanosti práve vlastenectvo nalieva ohňa do žíl.” See Karol Goláň, *Sturovske Pololenie* (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej Akadémie Vied, 1964), 27.

¹²⁵ Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918*, 389.

¹²⁶ Mikula, “Ľudovít Štúr and the Panslavic Movement,” 107.

¹²⁷ Petro, *A History of Slovak Literature*, 58.

¹²⁸ Capek, *The Slovaks of Hungary*, 30.

¹²⁹ Mikula, “Ľudovít Štúr and the Panslavic Movement,” 107.

¹³⁰ Mikula, “Ľudovít Štúr and the Panslavic Movement,” 104.

was noted for his “preaching of unity among the Slavs.”¹³¹ Czechs and Slovaks, who were in favor of the union of their two nations, often used these two panslavists as resources when the Czechoslovak state was born, giving intellectual and theological reasons for Slovak and Czech unity, especially among the Protestants.

On the other hand, especially early in his career, Štúr was an ardent Slovak nationalist. He founded a Slovak literary journal and was a codifier of written Slovak, having produced a grammar that became the standard for literary uses.¹³² Štúr is often best remembered for this standardization of the Slovak language. His choice of the central Slovak dialect proved enduring. As Paučo states, “the outstanding nationwide achievement of the school of Štúr was its success in bringing the whole country to accept the one standard of literary expression.”¹³³ In addition, Štúr admittedly standardized the language as an attempt to unify Slovak culture.¹³⁴ He understood that through language, the Slovak nation was to be born. Štúr supported an independent Slovak identity,¹³⁵ whereas Kollár intended that the Slovaks become part of a great Czech-Slovak

¹³¹ Capek, *The Slovaks of Hungary*, 18.

¹³² Štúr was not the first person to attempt this task of codifying the Slovak language. Famously, Anton Bernolák (1762–1813), a Catholic priest, also codified the Slovak language, using the Western dialect. His work, which was published in 1787, was very popular among Catholics for 50 years, but because it did not win the support of the Lutherans and those in eastern Slovakia, his codification eventually was surpassed by Štúr’s efforts. See M. Mark Stolarik, “Immigration and Eastern Slovak Nationalism,” 13, and Edward A. Tuleya, “The Slovak National Awakening,” 87–88.

¹³³ Paučo, “Slovakia's Mid-Nineteenth Century Struggle for National Life,” 69.

¹³⁴ Paučo, “Slovakia's Mid-Nineteenth Century Struggle for National Life,” 70.

¹³⁵ Not all see Štúr as only a Slovak patriot. Várady provides a Hungarian viewpoint on him, noting that he and many of these Slovak nationalists were both pro-Slovak and pro-Kingdom of Hungary. He notes that “[the Slovak nationalists] were also patriotic and they also idealized their people. But having become familiar with Hungarian history, language and culture, they wished to coexist with the Magyars in a common state according to the well-tried principles of national harmony and cooperation.” See Steven Béla Várady, “Hungarians and Slovaks in Turn-of-the-Century America,” *The First Millennium of Hungary in Europe* (Debrecen, HU: Debrecen University Press, 2002), 568.

nationality.¹³⁶ Both represented attempts to resist the corrosive powers of the state and church in the Kingdom of Hungary that worked against a Slovak national identity.¹³⁷

Štúr studied in Germany, devoted himself to Hegelianism,¹³⁸ and even though he was a son of the church, he felt that only through a strong national consciousness could the Slovaks be raised to a “higher plane, morally, socially and intellectually.”¹³⁹ Having studied theology in the mid-1830s, he was much more engaged by the rationalist thinkers, and soon dropped his theological focus to study philosophy.¹⁴⁰ Many Slovak scholars and nationalists, including Štúr, were also followers of Herder.¹⁴¹ From Herder they understood the survival of the Slovak language as being the most critical aspect to the survival of the Slovak nation. “Slovaks had to survive or die with their language.”¹⁴² Herder, and his idea of *Volksgeist*, which Štúr internalized as a spiritual force or “life of a nation” was mainly found in a nation’s language.¹⁴³ For this reason, his work with the Slovak language was much more than a literary or linguistic event. His prime goal was “to

¹³⁶ This focus on Czech-Slovak unity and panslavism has perceived risks to the Slovak nation, as the nation would be submerged into either a Czech or Slavic culture. Only by focusing on Slovak as a distinct culture or nation could the Slovaks maintain their identity and, as Palic argues, their Lutheran faith. He argues that Kollár and Hodža, for example, were proper examples of what was needed from Slovak Lutheran churchmen. Ján Palic, “Naša najväčšia bieda v cirkvi,” *Cirkevné Listy* 24, no. 5 (May 1910): 138–42.

¹³⁷ Palic, “Naša najväčšia bieda v cirkvi,” 142. Palic comments that these two forces, the state and the church, worked to “beat down” panslavism.

¹³⁸ Opet, “Political Views of Ľudovít Štúr,” 23.

¹³⁹ Capek, *The Slovaks of Hungary*, 134.

¹⁴⁰ Goláň, *Sturovske Pololenie*, 23.

¹⁴¹ Štúr was a follower of Herder until the failure of the Prague Congress of 1848. At that point, Hegel became a more significant influence. Herder provided Štúr with an intellectual model for the Slovak nation. After 1848, Štúr moved away from Slovak nationalism and began embracing panslavism, with the hopes of Russia being a unifying force for Slavdom. Hegel’s idea of *Geist* provided Štúr with a model for his panslavism. But it is important that for his purposes, he found Herder and Hegel complimentary. For a detailed discussion of this development of Štúr’s thinking, see Josette A. Baer, “National Emancipation, not the Making of Slovakia: Ludovít Stur’s Conception of the Slovak Nation,” 1–52 and Anthony X. Sutherland, “Ludovít Stur and Slovak Cultural Nationalism,” *Slovakia* 25, no. 48 (1975): 134–47.

¹⁴² Polakovic, “Evolution of the Slovak National Philosophy,” 19.

¹⁴³ Sutherland, “Ludovít Stur and Slovak Cultural Nationalism,” 139.

unite the Slovak people culturally, politically and socially.”¹⁴⁴ His blending of Slovak language and culture was in part a reaction to the oppressive nature of magyarization during his time.

During the nineteenth century, the Hungarian Lutheran Church was being reorganized and its official language was determined to be Hungarian. Even though Štúr was, like many Lutherans, accustomed to writing in Czech, he chose to abandon Czech in favor of Slovak in order to resist.¹⁴⁵ His efforts led to the eventual acceptance of a central Slovak dialect as the official language by both Catholics and Lutherans. This new literary language was eventually labeled *štúrvčina* after its founder.¹⁴⁶ By providing proof through a grammar that Slovak was a distinct language, he proved that the Slovaks were a distinct people.¹⁴⁷ His efforts to define the Slovak language paralleled his larger project of defending Slovak as a nation and a state. His work gave “full philosophical justification for Slovak statehood.”¹⁴⁸ This right to use one’s native language was also seen as a result of the Reformation, which enabled each nationality to worship in its own language.¹⁴⁹ Whether from Herder and the other nineteenth century thinkers or the Reformation and its principles, the focus on saving the language was not only in the national interest, but also in the interests of the inheritors of the Lutheran Reformation.

¹⁴⁴ Opet, “Political Views of Ľudovít Štúr,” 22.

¹⁴⁵ Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, 100. Ramet argues that Štúr adopted the Central Slovak dialect as “a concession to Catholic sentiment.” See Pedro Ramet, “Christianity and National Heritage among the Czechs and the Slovaks,” 271.

¹⁴⁶ Hugh LeCaine Agnew, “Czechs, Slovaks, and the Slovak Linguistic Separatism of the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in *The Czech and Slovak Experience*, ed. John Morison, 21–37 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 26.

¹⁴⁷ This was an assertion of Herder in particular. See Barnard, *Herder on Nationality Humanity and History*, 38. This effort was not well received by the Czechs, who saw a separate Slovak language as detrimental for the unity of the regions’ Slavs (Czechs, Moravians, Slovaks and some Silesians). As Bosák points out “The Czechs were involved with the process of establishing their own separate identity from that of the Germans and yet they refused to see or accept the same nationalism in the Slovaks.” See Bosák, “Czech-Slovak Relations from the 1840s to 1914,” 64–65, 67.

¹⁴⁸ Polakovic, “Evolution of the Slovak National Philosophy,” 25.

¹⁴⁹ evanj. a. v. učiteľ, “Materinská reč v evanj. cirkvi,” *Cirkevné Listy* 9, no. 10 (October 1895): 165.

Importantly, these two large personalities—Kollár and Štúr—typify the movement for Slavic and Slovak national identity, and their participation demonstrates that this movement was strongly supported by Lutherans.¹⁵⁰ However, Štúr's vision of a Slovak language and culture proved to be the more resilient, especially for Slovak ambitions in the early twentieth century. He was also able to intertwine Lutheran and Slovak identity. Perhaps this mixing of Lutheran and Slovak identity is best recounted in the story of the beginnings of Štúr's movement as recounted by Agnew:

When a small group of Slovaks, meeting at the Evangelical lyceum in Bratislava early in 1843, decided from thence forth they would write only in the Slovak language, they were in effect publicly declaring their existence as an independent nation in Central Europe. Though only some six students and their leader, Ľudovít Štúr, were present, their decision was quickly accepted by most active Slovak patriots ... the language of these patriots codified established itself as the separate literary language of the Slovak nation.¹⁵¹

The Evangelical lyceum¹⁵² was the Lutheran Gymnasium that spawned much of the Slovak nationalism movement. The Lutherans of the nineteenth century had often blended their religious understanding and their national identity. Agnew places the origins of Slovak nationalism in this Lutheran context, demonstrating the close connection to an independent Slovak identity and a Lutheran one.

Others who were important in the formation and the advancement of Czecho-Slovak literature and linguistics include Jozef Hurban (1817–1888) and Michael Hodža (1811–1870)

¹⁵⁰ Masaryk had a similar view. He converted from Catholicism to Protestantism, specifically to Hussitism, as an act of nationalistic defiance. He felt that to understand the Czech national spirit and soul was to look to the Hussite Era for inspiration. See Pedro Ramet, "Christianity and National Heritage among the Czechs and the Slovaks," 272.

¹⁵¹ Agnew, "Czechs, Slovaks, and the Slovak Linguistic Separatism of the Mid-Nineteenth Century," 21.

¹⁵² Agnew recognizes that the Lyceum was an "important centre for this new generation of protestant intellectuals." See Agnew, "Czechs, Slovaks, and the Slovak Linguistic Separatism of the Mid-Nineteenth Century," 23.

and Juraj Palkovič (1769–1850), who were also Lutheran ministers and friends of Štúr and who were to be resources for the confessional Lutheran tradition in Slovakia. The first two with Štúr were the leaders of the Young Slovak movement, which was important to the Slovak national revival in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁵³ As nationalists, these men also lived in the collective memories of Slovaks. What has been lost to most was their impact on the church. In particular, Hurban and Hodža were both ardent confessional Lutherans and contributed to the life of the church.¹⁵⁴ Hurban had a greater confessional influence. For example, he famously defended Lutheranism against unionistic sentiments in the Kingdom of Hungary (*Unia čili spojení lutheranů a kalviny v Uhrách*).¹⁵⁵ Later in his life, in an address at a pastoral conference, he also

¹⁵³ Paučo, “Slovakia's Mid-Nineteenth Century Struggle for National Life,” 70. Paučo asserts that the work of these three men, starting at a conference in Hlboké, formally began the effort of using language as the unifying event for the Slovak nation.

¹⁵⁴ Recent research in this field suggests that Hurban had a much larger impact on the church and theology than previously thought. For example, Radoslav Hanus is attempting to recover the confessional impact of Hurban on the church. Much of the later twentieth-century analysis of Hurban in Slovak limits or marginalizes his theological contribution while emphasizing his contribution to nationalism. This bias could be the result of the influence of nationalism and communism on the scholarship of that period. Hanus has compelling evidence of Hurban's confessional impact during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Hanus goes as far as to argue that Hurban is the representative of Lutheran orthodoxy in nineteenth-century Slovakia. See Radoslav Hanus, “Project dizertačnej práce na tému: Jozef Miloslav Hurban ako zástupca evanjelickej ortodoxie na Slovensku” (proposal for Ph.D. thesis, Evanjelická bohoslovecká fakulta Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, 2008), 8.

¹⁵⁵ Hurban's famous text has a similar goal as Francis Pieper's discussion on the same topic. In it, Hurban sought out a defense against those who were eager to gloss over the differences between the Lutheran and Reformed traditions, including the Hungarian Count Zay, who had begun just such a program in 1840. But more specifically, Hurban is responding to an Hungarian author, Emanuel Viliam Šimko, and his defense of such a Union. Note that the Prussian Union, which was a source of friction that was part of the impetus for the Missouri Synod's forefathers' exodus from Germany, is mentioned. Daniel comments: “Šimko's tract defended and justified the attempt of Karol Zay to achieve an organizational merger of the Lutheran and Reformed churches in the kingdom of Hungary. After considering the historical circumstances that brought about the separation of the evangelical reform movement into Lutheran and Helvetic Reformed confessions in Hungary, Šimko argued that there were just three issues that separated the Reformed and the Lutherans: First, their understanding of the Lord's Supper; Second, their understanding of predestination and; three, their ceremonies and administrative traditions. Noting that Calvin had a high regard for the Augsburg Confession, he argued that most of the issues that separated the Lutherans and the Reformed were actually insignificant and essentially had been overcome in the recent past. He cites examples from German history, both distant and recent, especially the Prussian Union, in support of his argument that it union would benefit all Protestants in Hungary. He called for German and Lutheran evangelicals to join with the Magyar Reformed to form a united, national Protestant Church in the kingdom.” David P. Daniel, “Konfesionalizmus a unionizmus v Európe 19. storočia,” in *Jozef Miloslav Hurban, evanjelický teológ a národovec*, ed. Lubomír

reaffirmed his defense of the Book of Concord.¹⁵⁶ He was a prolific writer for the laity as well as theologians. He produced numerous works in theology, but he also provided many articles for church magazines such as *Cirkevné Listy* and *Straž na Sione*. His work in *Cirkevné Listy* was from 1863 to 1875.¹⁵⁷ At the time of the Pelikan Movement, the Slovaks credited him as saving both Lutheranism and Slovak nationalism.¹⁵⁸ As Daniel highlights, “Like his counterparts in Germany, Hurban argued that the theology presented in the Book of Concord promoted the ecclesiastical identity and theological integrity of Lutheranism.”¹⁵⁹ In Slovakia at the turn of the century, Hurban was still remembered for his ardent confessional stance. His faith was contrasted to the more liberal Kollár and more liberal yet, but contemporary, Masaryk, whose faith was not in doubt. That dubious honor was reserved for the more radical liberals such as Strauss and Feuerbach.¹⁶⁰ Hurban was understood to be “standing on the basic, clear Lutheran teaching, on the basic symbolic books.”¹⁶¹ He was viewed to be completely contrary to the contemporary liberal theology.¹⁶² Because he was able to defend both the Slovak nation and the

Lehotský, trans. David Daniel (Bratislava, SK: AVE Košice, 2008), 61-62. Translation by Daniel. See also J. M. Hurban, *Unia čili spojení lutheranů a kalviny v Uhrách* (Budína, Slovakia: J. Gyurlána a M. Bagó, 1846).

¹⁵⁶ Daniel, “Konfessionalizmus a unionizmus v Európe 19. storočia,” 65-66. For a concise record of all Hurban’s activities, poetry, prose and religious works, see *Slovenský Biografický Slovník*, s.v. “Hurban, Jozef Miloslav.”

¹⁵⁷ Radoslav Hanus, “Project dizertačnej práce na tému: Jozef Miloslav Hurban ako zástupca evanjelickej ortodoxie na Slovensku” (proposal for Ph.D. thesis, Evanjelická bohoslovecká fakulta Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, 2008), 4 and bibliography. For a complete list of Hurban’s major works, see Hanus’ bibliography.

¹⁵⁸ “Evanjelická a. v. cirkev v bývalom Uhorsku a v terajšej Československej republike,” 35.

¹⁵⁹ Daniel, “Konfessionalizmus a unionizmus v Európe 19. Storočia,” 66. Translation by Daniel.

¹⁶⁰ S. Ostriežsky, “Hurban, Kollár, Masaryk a dnešní pokrokári,” *Cirkevné Listy*, 24, no. 10 (October 1910): 306. “Jeho názor náboženský nie teologický, lež filozofický, a bárs aj stojí na tomto stanovisku, má slovo uznania Kristu, kresťanstvu a protestantizmu, a nie je ako mnohí liberalisti à la Strauss, Feuerbach, všetci materialisti— a konečne dnešní pokrokári. ”

¹⁶¹ Ostriežsky, “Hurban, Kollár, Masaryk a dnešní pokrokári,” 300.

¹⁶² Ostriežsky, “Hurban, Kollár, Masaryk a dnešní pokrokári,” 302.

Lutheran faith, Hurban became a reference for confessional Lutheran Slovaks on both sides of the Atlantic.

Like Hurban, Hodža also wrote his own text against unionism in 1863 and was very active in the literary efforts of the Slovak revival movement. He resisted magyarization after the Protestant Patent of 1859 reorganized the Lutheran Church in Hungary. He fled into exile to Český Těšín, avoiding further conflict with authorities.¹⁶³ Palkovič also participated in the same work of literary development and nationalism; and in particular, his polemic against magyarization can be found in his text *Abkunft der Magyaren* (1827).¹⁶⁴ Although a Lutheran, his work was primarily as a writer, publisher, and educator. He was equally remembered as a true Christian and was an example to the Slovak Lutheran Church as a man who blended national fervor and the Christian faith.¹⁶⁵

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a second wave of important personalities reinvigorated the Slovak national aspirations. One was a poet; the other was a soldier. The most important poet of the Slovak people, Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav (1849–1921), provided a voice for the Slovaks at the turn of the century and tried to capture the essence of Slovak rural culture in his writings.¹⁶⁶ He was also a Lutheran. Another guiding light was the more political example, Milan Rastislav Štefánik (1880–1919), who was the major Slovak in the

¹⁶³ *Slovenský Biografický Slovník*, s.v. “Hodža, Michal Miloslav.”

¹⁶⁴ *Slovenský Biografický Slovník*, s.v. “Palkovič, Juraj.”

¹⁶⁵ Samuel Zoch, “Časopisu ‘Pravda’,” *Cirkevné Listy*, 36, no.10 (15 May 1922): 153.

¹⁶⁶ Jaroslav Vajda translated Hviezdoslav into English in 1950. As he notes in his introduction, Hviezdoslav was a voice for Slovak Slavdom, which argued for a separate but equal relationship between the different Slav nationalities. He also wrote in defense of Slovakia against Hungary. In all, he was able to vocalize many of the nationalistic themes of Slovaks in the late nineteenth century. See Hviezdoslav, *Bloody Sonnets*, trans. by Jaroslav Vajda (Scranton, PA: Obrana Press, 1950). When Hviezdoslav died, the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia remembered him fondly, as a “true son of our Lutheran church.” See “Pavol Országh-Hviezdoslav,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 11–12 (November–December 1921): 274.

leadership (along with Czechs, Masaryk and Beneš) that established the Czechoslovak state. He was the son of a Lutheran pastor and was well remembered by Slovaks for his contribution. By the time of the Pelikan Movement, many of these leaders of the second wave of Slovak nationalists were passing. These examples of nationalists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century demonstrate that in Slovak literary and political history, Lutheran Slovaks played a critical role in national identification—for both the Slovak nation and the Czechoslovak state. These examples also reveal the intimate role of many confessional Lutherans in the national development. The confessional Lutheran tradition among the Slovaks, as typified by Hurban, provided a parallel heritage that would be called upon by the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Pelikan Movement.

Moreover, this close association between Slovak identity and Lutheranism played a major role in the Slovak Lutheran support for a Czechoslovak state. The new state, which was established by key support from Czech Protestants and Slovak Lutherans, was to become the realization of a new opportunity for Slovak Lutherans. This new state was a state that also broke away from the Catholic Austrians and Hungarians. Slovak Catholics resisted such a union with the Czechs, wanting a more independent federalist state. The Czech Protestants, such as Masaryk, and the Slovak Lutherans were eager allies in this work of nation building. Slovak identity in the new Czechoslovakia became an important part of what it meant to be a Slovak Lutheran.

Economic Impact on the Slovak Immigrant Communities

Confessional identity, the political realities, and the underlying growth of nationalism and Slavism were important characteristics of Slovak life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These religious and cultural forces formed Slovak identity. This understanding of

Slovak identity came with the immigrants to America. Slovak identity was also a reaction to the repressive economic efforts of the Hungarians. As noted before, during the nineteenth century, the Hungarians executed a concerted and comprehensive effort to implement of a program of magyarization in Slovakia.¹⁶⁷ In part, because of Hungarian rule, the Slovaks, although coming from similar historical-linguistic beginnings as the Czechs, developed quite differently economically. Whereas the Czech lands (including Moravia and Czech Silesia) grew economically and intellectually, the area in Hungary, where Slovak speaking Hungarians lived, proved to be rural, poor, and relatively uneducated. Magyarization was certainly cultural. As one commentator notes, “It remains a historical fact that, in the period when the Slovaks as a nation were oppressed, the emigrants brought home to the civilized world just how much political, cultural, and social oppression Slovaks were exposed to in the Hungarian state.”¹⁶⁸ However, the impact of the magyarization was pervasive not only culturally but economically.

Because of the revolutions in 1848, the Hapsburg Empire abolished serfdom, which eased some social tensions but at the same time, because of the way the land reform was done, using the ownership standards from Maria Theresa’s Urbarial Patent of 1767, the serfs actually lost land. Subsequently, they lost economically in the process.¹⁶⁹ This act was an important trend in the economic life of the Slovak peasant, which was very difficult and only made worse by the events in the mid-nineteenth century. Eventually, as they continued to lose ground, literally, they

¹⁶⁷ According to Capek, the Hungarians implemented an entire series of measures to enforce the magyarization of the nation, including a law in 1790 to ensure that Hungarian was taught in all higher education institutions, an act in 1830 when the Diet recommended that all business be done in Hungarian, and a law in 1848 when Magyar or Hungarian was made compulsory in all schools. See Thomas Capek, *The Slovaks of Hungary*, 179.

¹⁶⁸ Frantisek Bielik, "Slovak Emigration in the Years 1880–1939 and Problems Involved in Its Study," in *Overseas Migration from East-central and Southeastern Europe, 1880–1940*, ed. Julianna Pukas (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1990), 61.

¹⁶⁹ Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918*, 2.

found themselves compelled by economic reasons to pursue solutions to their poverty. Many left for America.

For the Slovaks, the poverty and lack of economic options were severe as compared to other Central Europeans. In a study of land ownership in 1869, those Slovaks who worked in the agricultural industries had “mere patches of land” of around 10 acres or less, and only one-tenth of the farmers were wealthy enough to sell their own food.¹⁷⁰ In the later part of the nineteenth century, only 11.2 percent of the Slovak population had jobs in industry in contrast to the 59 percent still working in agriculture, who were usually working on small farms.¹⁷¹ As Sayer points out, the situation in the twentieth century was not very different. In regions such as Silesia and Bohemia, the percentage of workers employed in industry was as high as 50 percent, and in Slovakia, that same percentage was as low as 15 percent.¹⁷² Although many of the peoples in Europe in the early part of the twentieth century were hard pressed economically, the Slovaks were some of the most challenged. The Slovak farmer or peasant was squeezed by poor agricultural land, harsh treatment by landlords, low wages, high land prices, and predatory banking.¹⁷³ Slovak nationalists did not miss this situation in the mid-nineteenth century. The Šturists were very much aware of the plight of the typical Slovak and strove to create awareness

¹⁷⁰ Ladislav Tajtak, "Slovak Emigration: Its Causes and Consequences," in *Overseas Migration from East-central and Southeastern Europe, 1880–1940*, ed. Julianna Pukas, (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1990), 74 and 76.

¹⁷¹ Frantisek Bielik, "Slovak Emigration in the Years 1880–1939 and Problems Involved in Its Study," 60–61. Tajtak adds that in 1869 only 37 percent owned their own farms. Most were agricultural labors. See Tajtak, "Slovak Emigration: Its Causes and Consequences," 74–75.

¹⁷² Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: a Czech History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 163 and 172.

¹⁷³ Zatkan, "Early Beginnings of the Slovaks in America," 10–11.

as well as to pursue practical steps to improve the conditions.¹⁷⁴ It became part of the nationalist program to not only promote the Slovak language and culture but the well-being of the people.

This immigration came naturally in many ways, and the Slovaks had a history of migration: in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries over 200,000 migrated en masse to the Banát and Bačka regions of Hungary, in the middle of nineteenth century thousands went to Austria and Russia, and numerous villages and small cities saw the rise and fall of their populations as the Slovaks moved internally.¹⁷⁵ Importantly, however, opportunities arose to leave these economically depressed areas. Especially the eastern part of Slovakia, which did not have the industrial strength of nearby regions, the Slovaks emigrated from their home country to America. Hundreds of thousands of mostly young men left and crossed the Atlantic to find a better way to provide for themselves and for their families.¹⁷⁶ Many intended to return to Slovakia with their newly earned wealth. In 1873, a wide spread depression in Austria-Hungary racked the region, which was in addition to a wide spread cholera epidemic. In this context, plus the decreasing economic opportunities over the previous decades, a rush of immigrants came to America from Slovakia.¹⁷⁷ In fact, in terms of population lost during the period of 1871 to 1914, only Ireland lost more people as a percentage of the population to emigration.¹⁷⁸ At the same time, it is very difficult to measure how many went to the United States because many times the immigrants to

¹⁷⁴ Paučo, "Slovakia's Mid-Nineteenth Century Struggle for National Life," 74–76.

¹⁷⁵ Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918*, 7–27.

¹⁷⁶ Demonstrating this disparity between male and female immigrants, Capek notes: "The number of males to 100 females in 1910 was 154.6 for person born in Austria, 160.8 for persons born in Hungary, 190.6 for persons born in Italy, and 137.3 for persons born in Russia." See Capek, *Czechs and Slovaks in the United States Census* (New York: The Paebar Company, 1939), iv. See also Stolarik, "Slovak Migration from Europe to North America, 1870–1918," *Slovak Studies* 20 (1980): 5–24.

¹⁷⁷ Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918*, 6.

¹⁷⁸ Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918*, 25.

America were categorized by “country of origin” and at other times they were counted by “race or people” and only in 1910 did officials start to count them by their “mother tongue.”¹⁷⁹ For example, before 1899, it is impossible to determine how many Slovaks entered the country as all immigrants were classified by country of origin.¹⁸⁰ Whether they stayed in America or returned home, they came to alleviate the economic and physical hardships of an economically backward Slovakia suffering under Hungarian rule.

Slovak Immigration to America

Sparked primarily by economic hardships, the history of Slovak immigration to America is a relatively brief tale, but important to understanding the particular impulses driving the Pelikan Movement. Before the outbreak of First World War, around 750,000 Slovaks had emigrated from Slovakia to the United States.¹⁸¹ These estimates are rough. At the time of Pelikan’s arrival, the Slovak church in America estimated that there were 100,000 immigrants, with 20 percent of them being Lutherans.¹⁸² In just the years between 1900–1913, it is suggested that 360,000 Slovaks crossed the Atlantic to America.¹⁸³ This group of Slovaks represents the biggest wave of immigrants from Slovakia in history.¹⁸⁴ There were other waves, between the wars, and shortly

¹⁷⁹ Stolárik, “The Role of American Slovaks in the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914–1918,” 13.

¹⁸⁰ Zatkan, “Early Beginnings of the Slovaks in America,” 15.

¹⁸¹ Bielik, “Slovak Emigration in the Years 1880–1939 and Problems Involved in Its Study,” 62. Capek reports that in 1920, 619,866 Slovaks were in America. It is difficult to know the precise numbers as the records were often confusing. People were often classified incorrectly, and many who came to America returned to their homelands. For a more detailed description of the Census data near the time of the Pelikan Movement, see Capek, *Czechs and Slovaks in the United States Census*, 1–19. This blurring of identity is important in light of magyarization. Polakovič reports that at the turn of the century nearly all Slovak children in the Hungarian dominated school system declared themselves Magyars. See Polakovic, “Evolution of the Slovak National Philosophy,” 31.

¹⁸² Michal Mako, “O evanjelických Slovákoch v Amerike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 15, no. 4 (April 1901): 110.

¹⁸³ Tajtak, “Slovak Emigration: Its Causes and Consequences,” 85. Zatkan, “Early Beginnings of the Slovaks in America,” 15.

¹⁸⁴ At some level, the Slovak American Lutherans were aware of this steep decline in numbers. In an article in

after Second World War, but this first wave provided the bulk of the immigrants and represented those who would later engage themselves in American church life.

These immigrants to America were determined to return home.¹⁸⁵ Meanwhile, they sought work primarily in the mines and mills in the Northeast and Midwest. The largest portion of the Slovaks went to Eastern States to work in these industries; Pennsylvania was the favorite state, but by 1930 Chicago had the most Slovaks of any city with over 122,000.¹⁸⁶ As it has been noted, most Slovaks worked in the agricultural sector before coming to America. The majority of the immigrants worked in the industrial sector. This focus on industry over agriculture was probably because the location of the initial immigrant communities was near industrial areas. New immigrants were attracted to these established communities more than they were interested in finding employment in their previous profession. Moreover, immigrants from previous generations already took most of the farmland,¹⁸⁷ leaving few options in the agricultural sector of the American economy for new immigrants. They often sent the money they earned to their

Svedok, the editor noted that in the three-month period at the beginning for the First World War (August through October), the number of immigrants decreased from 535,810 in 1913 to 154,642 in 1914. From November of 1914 to June of 1915, the number of immigrants was a meager 208,945 in total. Although this number was the total number of immigrants, it showed the drastic change in immigration to America and that the Slovaks were quite aware of the changes. See "Zprávy zo sveta," *Svedok* 10, no. 7 (April 1, 1916): 110.

¹⁸⁵ Bielik, "Slovak Emigration in the Years 1880–1939 and Problems Involved in Its Study," 72.

¹⁸⁶ Capek, *Czechs and Slovaks in the United States Census*, iii, 16. Chicago was an important location for Slovak immigrants. A Slovak Lutheran Synod missionary to Chicago commented as such when he reported that many families from a Lutheran tradition had arrived from Slovakia to Chicago, and yet they were not involved in any Lutheran church. The Slovak Lutheran Synod saw these immigrant populations as opportunities for mission work. For example, *Svedok* continued to note that there were great opportunities for missions in "New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and so on." See "Zprávy z Ameriky: Nová Missia," *Svedok* 10, no. 9 (May 1, 1916): 143.

¹⁸⁷ Capek, *Czechs and Slovaks in the United States Census*, iii.

relatives or saved for themselves with the intent of being able to set up a new, better life upon their hoped for return.¹⁸⁸

The primary source of new Slovak immigrants to America was from Eastern Slovakia, including the counties of Spiš, Abov-Turna, Zemplín, and Šariš. The Spiš region was where the Reformation first took hold. It was also the location of the Pelikan Movement's mission efforts. Germans originally dominated these towns. In 1870, a German majority populated most of the towns in Spiš. Yet, by 1905, all of the cities in the region had a Slovak majority.¹⁸⁹ This region was growing rapidly with those of Slovak ethnicity. The Slovaks considered these regions the "cradle of emigration."¹⁹⁰ It is estimated that 90 percent of all Slovak immigration to America came from Eastern Slovakia.¹⁹¹ Four-fifths of the emigrants from Slovakia spoke with an Eastern Slovak dialect; many of the early papers published in that dialect as well.¹⁹² Eventually thousands, though, would return to the country. It was these returning Slovaks, who had learned new habits and made much money, relative to their peers who remained in Slovakia, who began to be perceived as forces of instability as they re-inserted themselves into the fabric of the country. Allowing for a Marxist bias, one historian from Central Europe sums up well the attitude of and towards these tainted nationals:

¹⁸⁸ Pelikan Sr. reported this perception: "Now the spiritual life of these emigrants thirty years ago left much to be desired. Their one and only aim seemed to be temporal well-being. Oh, how they worked and slaved! How they hoarded their hard-earned dollars and what great pleasure they derived from the fact that within a short time they were able to send unheated [sic] of riches to their dear one at home!" See Jar.[oslav] J. Pelikán, "The Silver Jubilee of the Slovak Evangelical Synod of the United States of America," *Svedok* 21, no. 18 (September 15, 1927): 432.

¹⁸⁹ Stolárik, "Slovak Migration from Europe to North America, 1870–1918," 20.

¹⁹⁰ Tajtak, "Slovak Emigration: Its Causes and Consequences," 75 and 77.

¹⁹¹ Monika Glettler, "The Hungarian Government Position on Slovak Emigration, 1885–1914," in *Overseas Migration from East-central and Southeastern Europe, 1880–1940*, ed. Julianna Pukas, (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1990), 107.

¹⁹² Glettler, "The Hungarian Government Position on Slovak Emigration, 1885–1914," 109.

The situation changed in the following years, notably after 1905, when the Government, along with conservative political circles, began to regard the returning emigrants as a real threat because of their frank and vocal comments, their political influence and their class consciousness. The most important change occurred in Eastern Slovakia, which had, till then, been considered the safest part of the country, as the population there was untouched by the national political movement of Western Slovakia and was indifferent to the patriotic efforts of the Slovak press and cultural leaders.¹⁹³

Not only religious leaders returning from America offered insights. Back with the Slovaks in Hungary or later in the Czechoslovak Republic, there were literally thousands of Slovaks returning with a confidence that their experience in America gave them. They became “eloquent apostles of ideas dangerous to the state.”¹⁹⁴ The Pelikans and their coworkers were part of this wave of returning American immigrants.

What were these dangerous ideas? Liberalism was a strong force that the confessional Slovak Lutherans resisted. As will be shown, Slovak Lutherans resisted liberalism as it pertained to theology, but what is also true is that in other areas, the Slovak living in America actually participated in liberalizing trends. This shift in attitude can be seen in their idea of the proper relationship between church and state or in the relationship to traditional church hierarchies and eccesiologies. The Slovak Lutherans in America no longer felt bound to these traditional relationships and Tillich’s “curses of European history.”¹⁹⁵ The returning immigrants then were mixed in their respect for authorities. They embraced a number of new, liberal freedoms, such as

¹⁹³ Tajtak, "Slovak Emigration: Its Causes and Consequences," 86.

¹⁹⁴ Glettler, "The Hungarian Government Position on Slovak Emigration, 1885–1914," 116.

¹⁹⁵ Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 167. The full quote from this comment from Tillich is helpful in that it shows the transformation of the immigrant’s mind from European to American: “The whole history of America has turned the American mind in a horizontal direction. The conquest of a vast country with a seemingly unlimited extension, the progressive actualization of the infinite possibilities in man’s dealing with nature and himself, the dynamics of Calvinism and early capitalism, the freedom from a binding tradition and from the curses of European history—all this has produce a type of thinking which is quite different from the predominantly vertical thinking in Europe.”

a free press, while defending other traditional authorities, such as Scripture. In this way, they were not only holding to traditions and thinking like an “old” European, but they also embraced their liberal American culture.

More importantly, perhaps, was the role of newspapers as the mass media of choice in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Štúr understood this well. He saw the newspaper as a necessity for a nation that wanted to develop itself.¹⁹⁶ From a Hungarian perspective, the influx of Slovak-American newspapers provided the greatest perceived challenge. Between 1905 and 1908, the Hungarians pursued 43 court cases against Slovak papers, primarily on the grounds of panslavism.¹⁹⁷ Before 1914, the Hungarian government banned 40 Slovak-American newspapers.¹⁹⁸ Even with such great concern from the Hungarians, the Eastern Slovak migration proved to provide little actual instability to the Hungarians before the First World War.¹⁹⁹ The war proved to be much more destabilizing to Hungarian interests and national ambitions.

Once in America, the immigrants coalesced into communities. To maintain these communities and to absorb the onrush of new immigrants, the parish became the main force to organize the immigrant groups and sustain cultural unity. Coupled with the parishes are the numerous societies that also sprung up to provide mutual support. As Barton notes, “Slovak clerical and lay leaders ordered the community by means of a network of parishes and mutual

¹⁹⁶ Agnew, "Czechs, Slovaks, and the Slovak Linguistic Separatism of the Mid-Nineteenth Century," 25.

¹⁹⁷ Zátka, “Early Beginnings of the Slovaks in America,” 6. The contribution from Slovak Lutherans in America were many. According to *Svedok*, the first Lutheran newspaper was *Slovenská Pravda*, established in 1893. Others soon followed, including *Lutherán* in 1900, *Slovenský Sion* in 1903, *Slovenský Hlásnik* in 1904 and *Svedok* in 1906. See J. V. “Zo všetkého po troške,” *Svedok* 14, no. 15 (August 1, 1920): 343.

¹⁹⁸ Glettler, "The Hungarian Government Position on Slovak Emigration, 1885–1914," 115.

¹⁹⁹ Glettler, "The Hungarian Government Position on Slovak Emigration, 1885–1914," 118.

benefit societies.”²⁰⁰ This loyalty to religious groups is a characteristic of Slovak communities. Contrasting with Italians and Rumanians, Barton demonstrates that religious identity played a more important role in Slovak immigrant identity than many other newly minted immigrants.²⁰¹ Thus, the Slovaks created communities that valued order and maintaining community within the ethnic group.²⁰² The Lutheran as well as the Catholic parishes became central to the life of the Slovak. June Alexander’s study of the parishes in Pittsburgh demonstrates the close connection of the Slovak immigrant to parish life. As she illumines, “the formation of ethnic churches is performe the story of immigrants coming together and recognizing their shared goals and interests as well as their common language, religion and culture.”²⁰³ The parishes were, in short, the touch points for the Slovak immigrant’s cultural and religious identity. Through these ethnic communities, the connection between the homeland and the new land was strong. Since many Slovaks continued to understand themselves as Slovak rather than American, their first allegiance was to the Slovak nation (even though a state did not exist) and culture; and their efforts to stay connected with other Slovaks in America, and their countrymen in what was to become Czechoslovakia, remained strong. They continued to communicate and they desired to have a common cultural experience. They often rallied around their local parish. In other words, they had not made the leap to becoming Americans first. They had yet to experience that tipping point.

²⁰⁰ Josef J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890–1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 71, 77.

²⁰¹ Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890–1950*, 89.

²⁰² Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890–1950*, 172.

²⁰³ June Granatir Alexander, *The Immigrant Church and Community*, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 134.

Each of these elements—the influx of new money, new ideas, new voices all supported with new media—are all evident in the Pelikan Movement. Riding the wave of returning immigrants, the Pelikan Movement provided many of the same characteristics, including the influx of money, which was supporting the mission work, and the printing of numerous Slovak-American newspapers. The movement represents an example of the overarching historical memory and social forces that were in full force at the end of the First World War.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SLOVAK LUTHERAN SYNOD BRINGS ITS HERITAGE TO AMERICA

The genesis of Slovak Lutheranism, which traced its identity in the historical events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the persecution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, found a confessional Lutheran expression in the Slovak Lutheran Synod, which became a close ally and institutional partner of what was to become The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (Missouri Synod or LCMS). While creating a new church in America, the Slovak Lutheran Synod's collective historical memory of Slovakia and the contemporary situation in the "old country" at the turn of the century proved to be opposing perspectives; and this conflict of perspectives turned into obstacles when they tried to establish a free, confessional Lutheran Church in Slovakia. The juxtaposition of national sentiment with confessional Lutheranism contributed to the formation of the Slovak Lutheran Church but also challenged it as it confronted the problems created by magyarization, unionism, liberalism, and modernism. The Slovak Lutheran Synod was, therefore, a church in transition with one foot rooted on the shores of the old world while the other was being planted in the new. The founders identified with both a national and a confessional heritage and tried to synthesize both as they also attempted to bridge the gap between old church and new synod. The Pelikan Movement made it clear, however, that it was difficult if not impossible to function effectively in two worlds, with two cultures, two worldviews or two confessional identities. One would have to take precedence.

Slovak Lutheran Identity within the Slovak Lutheran Synod

In 1914, J. Maňka, a contributing writer to the Slovak Lutheran Synod's church magazine, *Svedok*, exhorted Slovak Lutherans to remain united, ending his article with this final thought:

To defend our Lutheran Church and Slovak nation is our holy charge.¹ With this statement, he tried to resolve what was actually in tension: the two foci with which the members of the Synod would struggle—their allegiances to their religious convictions and their cultural heritage. Early in the process of establishing an identity in America, the Slovak Lutherans that formed the Slovak Lutheran Synod focused first on clear teaching, preaching, and practice. In the inaugural issue of the *Svedok* church magazine the editors staked out their position for their Synod, emphasizing their focus on the teaching and confession of the church. The main concern was the adherence to the Word of God as understood through the confessions of the historic Lutheran Church; that is, “so that the application of the Holy Scripture for our Slovak Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession in this land would come to relevance, our Synod serves towards this goal.”² Secondly, and perhaps a close second, they had a desire to witness in the context of their own culture and language. They were dedicated to ministering in their mother tongue so that they could continue to share with their Lutheran people as well as maintain the language they loved.³

However, the founders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod made it clear which value would dominate. Demonstrating a willingness to divest themselves of aspects of their culture for the sake of their dedication to the Lutheran church and to differentiate themselves from goals other than the faith, including political, national and racial identities, they aligned themselves to others who were of the same belief and teaching as their confessional Lutheran beliefs.⁴ In this way, they set their course. They remained faithful to this course throughout the Pelikan Movement,

¹ J. Maňka, “Aby sa sl. ev. a. v. v Amerike spojili,” *Svedok* 8, no. 16 (July 1, 1914): 219.

² “Čo chce naša Synoda,” *Svedok* 2, no. 1 (November 15, 1907): 3. “Aby táto žiadosť Písma svätého pri nás slovenských evanjelickoch augšp. vyzania v tejto zemi k platnosti prišla, tomu cieľu slúži naša synoda.”

³ “Čo chce naša Synoda,” *Svedok* 2, no. 2 (December 1, 1907): 17–18.

⁴ “Čo chce naša Synoda,” *Svedok* 2, no. 1 (November 15, 1907): 4.

and arguably throughout the twentieth century. Throughout this time, they denied neither their nationality nor culture, but subordinated those concerns to the demands of their faith. This priority of religious identity over and against cultural identity, allowed them to create strong relationships with other Lutherans, whose origin was not Slovak, such as the ethnically German Missouri Synod. It also enabled them to distance themselves further from their Hungarian past.

Slovak Lutherans immigrated to America in significant numbers the late 1800s, and those immigrants established the first churches at this time.⁵ By the turn of the century, the number of congregations they had established enabled them to form religious associations and churches. Dolak reports that by 1895, nine pastors were in the country.⁶ Societies and associations such as the Slovak Evangelical Union (SEU),⁷ which was formed in 1893, were also flourishing.⁸ There were attempts to form basic organizational districts, namely, a *Seniorat*, which was proposed at the national convention of the SEU in 1894.⁹ Those efforts, although well-intentioned, failed to create a viable church body. An early historian of the Slovak Lutheran Synod wrote in 1930, suggesting that the reason for this failure was that “there was not a desire for true spiritual union,

⁵ The first Slovak Lutheran congregation in America was founded in Freeland, Pennsylvania in 1883. The first pastors, Karol Horák and Cyril Droppa, arrived in 1882 and 1884 respectively. For a short history of the work of these two men and a list of congregations and their founding see George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 16–17, 26. See also John Body, *History of the Slovak Zion Synod LCA* (Chicago, Slovak Zion Synod, 1976), 114 and Fedor Ruppeltdt, *Slovenskí Evangelici v Amerike* (Ružomberk, SK: Cirkev evanj. a. v. na Slovensku, 1932), 35.

⁶ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 17.

⁷ The Slovak Evangelical Union was known as the Evanjelická Slovenská Jednota.

⁸ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 25. For an early account of the history, see also “Slovenská evanjelická Jednota v Amerike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 13, no. 7 (July 1899): 196–99. The date for the beginning of the SEU is stated here as 1892. Many of the people that would later play a role in the founding of the Slovak Lutheran Synod as well as the conflict between them are evident, such as Daniel Lauček, the first President and C. L. Orbach, a foe of Pelikan.

⁹ S. G. Mazak, “A Brief History of the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the United States,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 3 (1930): 85. Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 33. “Zprávy,” *Cirkevné Listy* 8, no. 8 (August 1894): 130–31.

but for outward secular union for the sake of peace.”¹⁰ This perspective probably reflects more the polemic of the time. However, this understanding demonstrated the lack of unity in purpose. Moreover, these young congregations were greatly taxed by the logistical circumstances. In any case, it was too difficult to create a functioning church body.

Unity was not far off. The Missouri Synod would provide an example for the Slovak Lutheran Synod. The Missouri Synod had contacts with Lutherans from Slovakia living in America. Some of these Slovak immigrants welcomed the Missouri Synod’s understanding of the Lutheran faith as “true Lutheran teachings.”¹¹ C. L. Orbach, who would later leave the Slovak Lutheran Synod and would be in conflict with Pelikan for many years, saw the Missouri Synod as a close, kindred church, with a similar understanding of the Lutheran faith. He was trained at the Missouri Synod seminary in St. Louis.

[Orbach] showed that many of [the American Lutheran churches] have only the name of Evangelical Lutheran, surely, but they are very far from the teachings of the Lutheran Church. Clear and true evangelical Lutheran teachings are ascribed to only the Missouri Synod and for this reason our brother Slovak Lutherans make adjustments so that when one of our Slovak Lutheran pastors are not nearby, they only turn to the pastors belonging to the union of the Missouri Synod.¹²

The Slovak Lutherans in America, even before the creation of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, had close ties to the Missouri Synod. In the Missouri Synod, they saw something that they aspired to—a truly confessional Lutheran church in America. The Synod was the example of an immigrant, confessional Lutheran church that became the Slovak Lutheran Synod’s goal.

¹⁰ S. G. Mazak, “A Brief History of the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the United States,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 3 (1930): 86. Bajus, on the other hand, gives no reason for failure of this initial effort, only remarking that the effort was revived five years later. See John Bajus, “The Slovak Lutheran Synod, 1902–1942,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (October 1942): 85.

¹¹ Gustáv Krno, “Dopisy,” *Cirkevné Listy* 9, no. 1 (January 1895): 16. This article is a report from a congregation in Chicago—Trinity. Trinity is the congregation that Jan Somora would arrive at in 1905.

¹² Michal Mako, “Dopisy,” *Cirkevné Listy* 9, no. 8 (August 1895): 139. “Čisté a pravé evanj.-lut. Učenie vyznáva len Missouri-synoda a preto naši bratia evanj. slovenskí sa upravujú, aby, kde niet na blízku nášho ev.-lut. Slovenského kňaza, obrátili sa len na kňazov, patriacich do sväzku synody Missouri.”

A few years later, this situation was to change; what seemed impossible was now possible. The Slovak pastors organized a series of three meetings leading up to the formation of the church, focusing their discussion around four points—the Four Wilkes-Barre Points—crafted during the first meeting in 1899.¹³ They rallied around these four points to find unity—or at least enough unity to form a church body.¹⁴ Of these four points, three of them proved prophetic of the issues that would challenge Slovak Lutherans in America for the decades to come. The second point included a statement that focused the Gospel work of the Synod on “pure evangelical teaching.” This focus on the pure teachings of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions was to be a rally cry for the Slovak Lutheran Synod. As Bajus intimates, this point was “a defense against the insinuations that they were becoming disloyal to the Slovaks of America by fostering friendly relations with the German Lutherans.”¹⁵ The new synod was to maintain this teaching and not corrupt it by any association outside of the Slovak Lutheran cultural-religious tradition. This point was a foreshadowing of the difficult identity decision the synod would have to make: was unity within the synod primarily theological or cultural? The third point is particularly against the administration of communion with the Reformed, thus avoiding unionistic practices. Unionism, which was a theme in the Slovak Lutheran’s resistance to magyarization, proved to be a concern throughout the early years of the Synod and during the Pelikan Movement. The fourth point condemned the holding of picnics and balls, which was probably a reference to some of the

¹³ The First Catholic Slovak Congress in 13 September 1906 was also in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

¹⁴ To see the four points in translation see S. G. Mazak, “A Brief History of the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the United States,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 4 (1930): 106, George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 36, and John Bajus, “The Slovak Lutheran Synod, 1902–1942,” 85–86. To read a short history of the Synod and the four points in Slovak, see P. Rafaj, “Historický vývin Slovenskej Ev.-Luteránskej Synody v Spojených Štátoch Amerických,” *Svedok* 21, no. 18 (September 15, 1927): 413–19.

¹⁵ Bajus, “The Slovak Lutheran Synod, 1902–1942,” 86.

activities of the SEU. This point also restricted the pastors from engaging in “worldly pursuits.”¹⁶ This last point emphasized that the Synod was to become, according to its leaders, the best example of spiritual care for the immigrant Slovak Lutheran.

In 1900, an attempt to form a Slovak Lutheran Synod was aborted because of conflicts with memberships in existing synods. Slovak Lutheran pastors, who were also members of the Missouri Synod, refused to join. They refused because they were concerned about being in fellowship with other synods, such as the Ohio Synod and the General Council.¹⁷ They saw the risk of unionism. The result of this activity and other events reported back to the church in Slovakia was that the Missouri Synod was gaining notoriety in Slovakia for the perception, at least, that it was divisive towards Slovak Lutheranism.¹⁸ The Slovaks in Slovakia saw the resistance to unite on a cultural or national basis as detrimental to the unity of Slovak Lutheranism in America.

On September 4, 1902, in Connellsville, Pennsylvania, the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church¹⁹ in the United States of America was born, with Daniel Lauček as the president.²⁰ In his presidential address, Lauček ushered in the synod with themes that would dominate its internal and external discourse. He was concerned about working together to form a new way, based on the Word of God, with a different spirit than in Europe. He was also troubled with the influence

¹⁶ Bajus, “The Slovak Lutheran Synod, 1902–1942,” 86.

¹⁷ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 68–69. “Z cirkve evanjelickej slovenskej v Amerike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 15, no. 6 (June 1901): 173–75.

¹⁸ “Zprávy,” *Cirkevné Listy* 15, no. 9 (September 1901): 287.

¹⁹ The church body went under a series of names. For simplicity, I continue to identify it as the Slovak Lutheran Synod throughout the text.

²⁰ Body, *History of the Slovak Zion Synod LCA*, 118. See also page 118 for a list of all the officers of the first synod. See also Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 167–68. See also Ludovít A. Engler, “Všeobecná evanjelická augš. vyzn. slovenská cirkev v Amerike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 16, no. 10 (October 1902): 294–96.

of rationalism.²¹ Moreover, Lauček recognized the tension between Lutheran and Slovak identity, suggesting that the tension could not be resolved completely. He shared that the new Synod must not let the nationalistic teachings overwhelm the message of the salvation; however, it was important that they also maintain their national identity, as “the love of the nation is a great help and a sharp weapon in helping salvation.”²² And he recognized, in conclusion, the new freedom in America enabled them to pursue their goal of God’s truth.²³ He was referring to the separation of church and state.

Any concerns of unionism were, for a moment, relaxed as the immigrant Slovaks rallied around the Missouri Synod’s teachings. To show unity based on theology, the “[Slovak Lutheran Synod] declares that in doctrine and practice it is one conviction and faith with the orthodox Missouri Synod.”²⁴ The Missouri Synod then filled a necessary gap in needed support. For example, especially in terms of education, Pelikan, Sr. remarked in retrospect “where the Slovak Lutherans [European] failed to do their duty, the Missouri Lutherans courageously stepped in and filled the breach.”²⁵ The Missouri Synod was not only a model for their theological understanding, but also a model in terms of polity and education. Just a few weeks after the founding of the synod, Pelikan arrived in America in November, 1902.²⁶ Pelikan quickly found

²¹ First Presidential Address of D. Z. Lauček, September 6, 1902, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 2, Folder 44, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²² First Presidential Address of D. Z. Lauček, September 6, 1902, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 2, Folder 44, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis. “... láska k národu je velika pomoc a ostrá zbroj na pomahajúcia posvatenie”

²³ First Presidential Address of D. Z. Lauček, September 6, 1902, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 2, Folder 44, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁴ Bajus, “The Slovak Lutheran Synod, 1902–1942,” 88

²⁵ Jar.[oslav] J. Pelikán, “The Silver Jubilee of the Slovak Evangelical Synod of the United States of America,” *Svedok* 21, no. 18 (September 15, 1927): 433.

²⁶ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 49. See footnote 2. The Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia also noted the establishment of the church in America and their meeting in 1903 in Cleveland. It is noteworthy that they were encouraged by the freedom the immigrants were

that this new church body was embolden to be a confessional Lutheran church and equally wedded to its Slovak heritage. The new church was a new spiritual home for Pelikan.

Unity and harmony did not last long. Dolak notes that the first President of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1902, Lauček, who was noted for his “Slovak convictions,” broke away from this very same church because, according to his perspective, the church was operating in such a way as to be overly predisposed to foreign influence.²⁷ This language was almost certainly intended to attack the close ties with the Missouri Synod.²⁸ Lauček’s concern harkened back to the second Wilkes-Barre point, which was designed to inhibit the influence of non-Slovak denominations. Dolak further argues that the situation was probably more complicated than merely rejecting the cultural tendencies of the synod. Theological concerns were also important. This difference is also recounted by the Zion Synod of the ELCA, adding that “the pastors ordained by the Missouri Synod took the position that the congregations should accept the practices of that body, and attempted to draw the congregations into that organization. Opposing this position were the other pastors, who, ... should develop and continue its work independently of any other influences.”²⁹ Dolak adds, however, that many in the Slovak Lutheran

experiencing in the new land. Also, Jan Pelikan is listed as a pastor in Chicago at this time. See “Z Ameriky,” *Cirkevné Listy* 17, no. 11 (November 1903): 350–352. Besides his role in the polity of the nascent church, Pelikan’s early activity as a pastor in Chicago was highlighted in the home country. See “Z Ameriky,” *Cirkevné Listy* 18, no. 3 (March 1904): 95–96 and “Z Ameriky,” *Cirkevné Listy* 18, no. 5 (May 1904): 163.

²⁷ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 167–68. See footnote on page 168 as well. Dolak also reports that Drahotín Kvačala left “because [the Slovak Synod] was entering into friendly relations with the Missouri Synod” (57).

²⁸ The influence of the Missouri Synod was also reported in Slovakia, where it was understood that Missouri affiliated Slovak pastors were encouraging people to step away from any association with the SEU. See “Zprávy,” *Cirkevné Listy* 16, no. 2 (February 1902): 62. The Slovaks in Slovakia were aware of the Missourian perspective, even printing a speech of Francis Pieper’s. Pieper was President of the Missouri Synod in 1902. The speech stakes out the claim that the Missouri Synod taught the clear teachings of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. This theme is also repeated in the texts of many Slovak Lutheran Synod publications. See Francis Pieper, “Reč, ktourou otvoril zasadnutie missúrskej synody Fr. Pieper, predseda synody,” *Cirkevné Listy* 16, no. 11 (November 1902): 332–34.

²⁹ Body, *History of the Slovak Zion Synod LCA*, 118. See also Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 37–39, 69. Dolak expresses also the conflict with

Synod felt that Lauček had difficulties not being able to lead in his preferred authoritarian style.³⁰ These varied reports hint that more than one reason led to the split. The early conflicts within the Slovak Lutheran Synod were religious allegiances, allowing partnerships to grow across cultural lines, such as with the Missouri Synod, and cultural homogeneity, blending national feeling and religious confession into a unified Slovak Lutheran experience.

Another element that could have contributed to the split was the generational difference. The older pastors generally represented the faction that sought a Slovak only solution. They were those who mainly left the nascent church body. The new leadership was younger and more focused on maintaining the purity of confessional Lutheranism at the expense of cultural unity. The Slovak Catholic communities also experienced this generational effect.³¹ The split indicated that those who remained with the Slovak Lutheran Synod were consistently siding with confessional stridency and doctrinal alliances rather than cultural affiliations. The generational difference also was a part of the personal conflict between Lauček, Kvačala, and others who consistently opposed the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Kvačala and four other pastors later joined the opposing Synod in 1911.³²

independence from and association with the Missouri Synod, noting that three of the early congregations were actually considered mission church plants, and there was a movement to try to create a separate synod, which would be in alliance with the Missouri Synod, under the auspices of the Synodical Conference. This effort failed.

³⁰ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 167–68. This conflict can be best understood as a doctrinal fight about a confessional prayer in the Agenda of the Lutheran Church of Hungary. See Dolak pages 56–57. Mazak agrees stating that Lauček “had left the synod because it would not conform to his hierarchical demands.” See S. G. Mazak, “A Brief History of the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the United States,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 4 (1930): 111, and also Marciš, who recalls Lauček’s authoritarian ways, John M. Marciš, “Dvadsaťpäť rokov žijeme,” *Svedok* 21, no. 18 (September 15, 1927): 427.

³¹ Marian Mark Stolárik, “Slovak Migration from Europe to North America, 1870–1918,” *Slovak Studies* 20 (1980): 58–59.

³² Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 66. By 1922, at the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the synod, through attrition, defections and deaths only one remaining pastor of that initial meeting in 1902 survived, that is, Daniel Bella. See P. J. R., “The Watch Tower,” *Svedok* 16, no. 20 (October 15, 1922): 466.

By the turn of the century, after a number of false starts, the Slovak Lutheran Synod had begun its journey on the American scene. Early in its history, it had already experienced a division based on national identity and confessional adherence. The pastors in the church body who had adhered closely to a traditional confessional experience became the leaders of the church body and continued to guide it along the preference of theological unity over and against national unity, whenever the two would come into conflict. The strong relationship between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Missouri Synod was established, also demonstrating the preference of theological over ethnic unity. Even so, after this early conflict, the work of the church, the pastoral work of the care of souls, and the missionary task of gathering together Slovak Lutherans in America continued under Pelikan's leadership as president of the Synod.³³

Early Pelikan in the New Synod

Pelikan was a key leader in the early history of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. He was its President and often its voice during the first two decades leading up to the Pelikan Movement. In many ways, the beginning of the synod coincided with the rise of Pelikan's leadership. Pelikan influenced the course and views of the Slovak Lutheran Synod greatly.

When he arrived in America, he came ready to pursue a ministry as a confessional Lutheran. His personal history is closely linked to many of the major confessional theologians and pastors who served in Slovakia in the nineteenth century. He grew up imbibing confessional Lutheran thought and doctrine, making the new Slovak Lutheran Synod an ideal vehicle for his vision for an orthodox Lutheran ministry to Slovaks.

³³ "Z Ameriky," *Cirkevné Listy* 19, no. 12 (December 1905): 396–97. For a description of the pastoral work of both Ján Somora and Pelikan as described by themselves while both were serving in Chicago, see Ján Somora and Ján Pelikán, "Z Ameriky," *Cirkevné Listy* 20, no. 3 (March 1906): 84–88.

Pelikan was born in Holič, on July 24, 1870, in the Kingdom of Hungary. He grew up in Holič, receiving his elementary education and then continued his studies at the gymnasium in Skalica. In Holič, his pastor was Ján Jaromír Boor, who began his ministry in 1876.³⁴ Boor was an effective pastor in that he was completely dedicated to the ministry. He was also equally dedicated to the nation as he was to the church.³⁵ Importantly, he regulated his theology according the orthodoxy of Hurban.³⁶ Perhaps it is in this environment, with a dedicated orthodox Lutheran pastor, steeped in the nationalist and orthodox traditions of Hurban, as his example in life and ministry that Pelikan assumed a similar role for his work in Slovakia and in America. In 1888, he enrolled at the Lyceum in Bratislava, which was famous as the school that educated many of the heroes of the Slovak National Revival, such as Hurban and Štúr. Perhaps more than most he was aware of the strong tradition of Slovak nationalism among the Lutherans as well as the teachings of such confessional luminaries as Hurban. He was a student in Erlangen in 1891–92,³⁷ which at the time was considered a conservative Lutheran university.³⁸ Erlangen, indeed,

³⁴ Ladislav Pauliny, *Dejepis superintencie nitranskej* (V Senici: Ján Bežo a spol., 1891), 62.

³⁵ Pavel Proksa, *Stánok Boží s Ľuďmi* (Senica: RECO print servis, 1995), 165.

³⁶ Pavel Proksa, *Stánok Boží s Ľuďmi* (Senica: RECO print servis, 1995), 165. “Mal mimoriadne rečnícke nadanie, básnický talent a duchovnopastiersku múdrosť (*prudencia pastoralia*), ktorá vrastala z jeho vzdelania i srdca usmerňovaného živou pravovernosťou typu Hurbanovho.” Ján Boor son, Peter Boor, who also studied in Skalica and Bratislava, was also a confessional, orthodox Lutheran. See Pavel Proksa, *Stánok Boží s Ľuďmi* (Senica: RECO print servis, 1995), 167. “Veľmi hojne z neho priliehavo cituje a exegetuje vecne v duchu Symbolických kníh a aplikuje na život svojich poslucháčov diferencovane podľa patričných súčasných okolností.” Peter Boor also would also work with Július Bodnár in the 1920s, and was the person who kept his guardianship. Bondár was with Pelikan in Bratislava in the 1890s and was considered one of the Slovak Lutherans who suffered for their national and orthodox beliefs. See P. B., “Julius Bodnár, Senior nitriansky, 60-ročný,” *Evanjelický Posol Zpod Tatier*, 20 no. 10 (October 1930): 230–31. Peter Boor was also the chairman of the Nitra seniorát (district) pastoral conferences, which Hurban began in 1872. See Pavel Proksa, *Stánok Boží s Ľuďmi* (Senica: RECO print servis, 1995), 168.

³⁷ Other important Slovaks who studied at Erlangen that would have been contemporaneous with Pelikan are Theodor Bálent (1893) and Julius Bodnár (1893). Bálent served with Pelikan in America. Both were with Pelikan in Bratislava as persecuted theologians. For a complete list of all the students from Slovakia to Erlangen, see S. Ostrižský, “Slováci na erlangeskej universite,” *Cirkevné Listy* 15, no. 11 (August 1911): 244–45. Dolak has Pelikan in Erlangen in 1892. See Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 168, and Ján Bódy, et. al., *Pamätník Souvenir: Slovenskej Evanjelickej a. v. v. cirkvi Sv. Petra a Pavla v Chicago, Ill.* (Chicago: The Mally Press, 1936), 12. This document is located in SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 23, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

was famous for its Neo-Lutheran school of theology, which tried to combine the historical Lutheran teachings with the new learning of the period. This school was not the same as repristination theology, which is often associated with the Missouri Synod theologians. Repristination tried to conserve orthodox Lutheran theology without adapting to nineteenth-century theological movements. Partly, it was a conservative attempt to react to the Prussian Union and the growing liberalism in German theological thinking. Pelikan could have been more than open to the Missourian approach of repristination because he had studied in Erlangen. He graduated from Bratislava in 1892, ready for ministry and steeped in a conservative Lutheran understanding of the faith.

Even early on in his life as a pastor, the rest of the Slovak Lutheran Church knew something of Pelikan. He began his ministry in Modra, near Bratislava, in 1893. He was ordained in Modra by Bishop Baltík in September, 1893.³⁹ He was soon in conflict. The conflict in Modra was purportedly for his Slovak convictions, while serving under another pastor.⁴⁰ Remembering his strong ties to Slovak nationalism and the intense program of magyarization at

³⁸ The Erlangen School produced many famous neo-Lutherans, including Theodosius Harnack and William Loehe (or Wilhelm Löhe). But its main focus was not repristination, which Pelikan would find in the Missouri Synod. The focus of the Erlangen Theology was a mixture of confessionalism, which they always emphasized and experience and other modern thinking, which they saw as confirming their confessionalism. They were a reaction against the growing force of rationalism in the German theological faculties, and in this sense, they were partners with the repristinators, who also sought to resist the onslaught of rationalism and modernism. For more on the Erlangen School, see Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 1:218–27. If Pelikan was aware of the school's heritage, and it is likely that he was, he would have been exposed to the conservative, orthodox theology of the school. Moreover, he may have been aware of the Missouri Synod, considering the connection to Wilhelm Löhe and the similarities with the repristination theology of Claus Harms, August Vilmar, Theodor Kleifoth, F. A. Philippi, and Ernst W. Hengstenberg. For a short, but more complete understanding of the movement, see See Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, 1:194–98. Importantly, F. H. R. Frank, the last, major representative of the Erlangen school, would have been still teaching when Pelikan was there, and Frank was a noted antiunionist. See Martin Hein, *Lutherisches Bekenntnis und Erlanger Theologie* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1984), 280–81.

³⁹ Miroslav Hvožd'ara, "História Evanjelického Augsburgského Vyznania, Cirkevého Zboru v Záriečí," *Záriečie*, edited by Emília Novosádová Šidlikova (Dohňany: Ametyst, 1998), 34.

⁴⁰ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 168.

the turn of the century, conflict over his Slovak convictions is likely. Pelikan proved to be intensely anti-Hungarian. However, it was also possible that he was persecuted for his orthodox beliefs. Even after his death, the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia recognized him (as well as Theodore Bálent, who served with Pelikan in America, especially as an editor of *Svedok*, and who also was in Slovakia and supported the mission while serving as a chaplain in the Czechoslovakian army) as one the pastors and theologians who was persecuted during this time, especially for his work as a theological educator.⁴¹

After he had served in Modra, he then served in Brezová as a chaplain (*kaplán*), where he stayed until 1897.⁴² When he was there, he worked with Ján Leška (1831–1909). Leška served in Brezová from 1881 until 1908,⁴³ held the rank of *senior* of the district⁴⁴ and translated the Book of Concord into Slovak.⁴⁵ The Slovak Lutheran Synod also reprinted Leška's translation in America.⁴⁶ He was also well known for resisting magyarization, especially within the church.⁴⁷ The parish in Brezová was also famous for its own confessional roots. Hurban had served as a *kaplán* in Brezová from 1840–43 and also finished his ministry in Brezová where he died in

⁴¹ P. B., "Julius Bodnár, Senior nitriansky, 60-ročný," *Evanjelický Posol Zpod Tatier* 20, no. 10 (October 1930): 230–31.

⁴² Julius Dérer, *Aj, Stánek Boží s Lidmi, 1835–1935*, (V T. Sv. Martine: Tlačou Kiníhtlačiarsheho, 1936), 15. He served in Brezová September 1893 to May 1896. Other sources say he was in Brezová until April, 1897. See Ján Bódy, et. al., *Pamätník Souvenir: Slovenskej Evanjelickej a. v. v. cirkvi Sv. Petra a Pavla v Chicago, Ill.*, 12.

⁴³ Darina Lehotská, "Dejiny Brezovej od Najstarších Čias do Roku 1918," in *Brezová Pod Bradlom*, ed. Ján Micháleck (Bratislava, SK: Stimul, 1998), 139.

⁴⁴ Slavomír Michálek, *Brezová Pod Bradlom Osobnosti (Ne)známe* (Bratislava, SK: Vydavateľstvo, 1999), 63.

⁴⁵ Miroslav Hvožd'ara, "História Evanjelického Augsburgského Vyznania, Cirkevného Zboru v Záriečí," 34.

⁴⁶ Leška's translation of the Book of Concord was available during the turn of the century. The book was available to buy; see "Literatúra," *Cirkevné Listy* 12, no. 12 (December 1898): 192. According to the author's preface, the book was completed in Advent of 1898 (xiv). For Leška's preface describing his thoughts on the Book of Concord and this translation, see Ján Leška, trans., *Kniha Svornosti* (East Akron, OH: Nákladom Slov. Ev. Lut. Vyd. Spoločnosti, 1918). In the preface of this American printing, the author, who is unknown, quotes Hurban, when referring the worth of the Book of Concord (iv). The Slovak printing of the same text is Ján Leška, trans., *Kniha Svornosti* (W Békéš Čabě: Nákladem Ewanjelického Cirkewního Kníhkupectwi, 1898). See also T. B., "Nemecké litery," *Svedok*, 1 January 1919, 10–12.

⁴⁷ Lehotská, "Dejiny Brezovej od Najstarších čias do Roku 1918," 140.

1888.⁴⁸ During his ministry in Brezová, Pelikan would have had many opportunities to further his dedication and study of orthodox Lutheranism. Leaders and legacies of confessional Lutheranism in nineteenth-century Slovakia surrounded Pelikan in his early years of ministry.

He then moved to Záriačie in 1897, when shortly after his arrival he married Milka Gavorova. Jaroslav Ján Pelikan, Sr., also a future churchman of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and missionary in Slovakia, was born the next year, in 1898, and their daughter Anna in 1900. While serving Záriačie, Pelikan was known for his affinity for orthodox Lutheran theology and his defense of the Book of Concord.⁴⁹ Moreover, he was also noted for his strict congregational discipline.⁵⁰ His sense of congregational discipline was a value he would bring with him to America. As a pastor, he also demonstrated care for the personal welfare of his parishioners; for instance, Pelikan sent a thank you to the Church magazine, *Cirkevné Listy*, thanking individuals for financial support during a difficult time.⁵¹

Besides the contact Pelikan had with orthodox Lutheran supporters within the Slovak Lutheran Church, while still in Slovakia, he showed that he also aligned with the Missouri Synod in its polity. He argued, just a few months before he left for America, that a congregation and not the district was independent theologically, hinting at his affinity for the congregational polity that was and is one of the tenants of the Missouri's Synod ecclesiology.⁵² In addition, before he arrived in America, Pelikan was strongly pro-Slovak and anti-Hungarian. Back in Slovakia, before he came to America, Pelikan and Bálent vigorously argued for a Slovak cultural agenda,

⁴⁸ Michálek, *Brezová Pod Bradlom Osobnosti (Ne)známe*, 63.

⁴⁹ Miroslav Hvožd'ara, "História Evanjelického Augsburgského Vyznania, Cirkevého Zboru v Záriačí," 34.

⁵⁰ Miroslav Hvožd'ara, "História Evanjelického Augsburgského Vyznania, Cirkevého Zboru v Záriačí," 34. For example, if a congregational leader or elder (presbyter) missed one meeting, they were fined 50 crowns. If they missed two meetings without an explanation, they were expelled from their office as elder.

⁵¹ Ján Pelikán, "Verejná vďaka," *Cirkevné Listy* 11, no. 12 (December 1897): 196.

⁵² F. P., "Zo seniorálnych konventov," *Cirkevné Listy* 15, no. 8 (August 1901): 231.

arguing in a district meeting that those meetings should be held in Slovak and not Hungarian.⁵³ His confessional Lutheranism and Slovak nationalism were strongly evident on the eve of his arrival in America.

His son, Ján Matej, was born on February 7, 1902, but his wife died a week later, which probably precipitated his taking the call to Sts. Peter and Paul in Chicago. He resigned his call in Slovakia on October 23, 1902 and left for America soon after. He arrived in America with his family in November, 1902. In Chicago at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church,⁵⁴ which would become the church of Ján Somora, the last missionary to be a part of the Pelikan Movement, Jan Boor's brother Ladislav⁵⁵ was the pastor.⁵⁶ Ladislav was eight years Pelikan's senior, but also a graduate of Erlangen. He was the first Slovak to study at the Missouri Synod's seminary in St. Louis.⁵⁷ Perhaps this connection brought Pelikan to America and to Chicago.

Upon arrival in America, he served at Sts. Peter and Paul in Chicago from 1902 to 1907. The split from Sts. Peter and Paul happened on September 12, 1906. The issue was communion announcement. Many of the parishioners felt that Pelikan was importing a foreign element based

⁵³ F. P., "Zo seniorálnych konventov," *Cirkevné Listy* 15, no. 8 (August 1901): 231.

⁵⁴ Holy Trinity is the oldest congregation in Chicago. It was founded in 1893. See Peter Hletko, "The Slovaks of Chicago," *Slovakia* 19, no. 42 (1969): 36.

⁵⁵ For a short history of his experience at Holy Trinity in Chicago, see *The Congregation of Holy Trinity, Chicago, Dejiny* (Chicago: The Mally Press, 1943), 16–25. Boor was a teacher from Slovakia and was ordained by the Missouri Synod; he became a member of the Missouri Synod. But because the Missouri Synod only accepted German-speaking congregations at the time, Trinity could not join the Missouri Synod. See The Guest-Host's, church newsletter, Special Issue, November, 1965, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 15, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

⁵⁶ Dagmar Oupické, List of Lutheran families, <http://www.volny.cz/ms-oup/dagmar/genopro/index.html> (accessed May 1, 2008).

⁵⁷ "Zo života našich bratov za morom," *Tranovský Evanjelický Kalendár* (W Lipt. Sv. Mikulási: Nákladom spolku "Tranoscius", 1903), 142–3. Ladislav Boor was one of the founding members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the first vice-president of the church. He eventually split with the Slovak Lutheran Synod in 1911. For more information on Boor, see Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 17, 37, 39, 40, 42, 44, 66.

on the Missouri Synod communion practice.⁵⁸ From 1907 until 1911, he served in two congregations, one in St. Paul's in Whiting, Indiana and Bethlehem⁵⁹ in Chicago. From 1911 until 1927, save the period he served in Slovakia, he was in Pleasant City, Ohio at Holy Trinity.⁶⁰ It was during his time, at this last parish, that he also served as president of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and was the representative from the synod to the Slovak Lutheran Church during the beginning of the new Czechoslovak state.

Pelikan's early life was as a confessional, Slovak Lutheran finding his way in a liberal, Hungarian church body. When he arrived in America, he took these experiences and applied them to his American context. In America, he found a number of likeminded, young pastors interested in creating the denomination they only dreamed of back in the Kingdom of Hungary.

American Slovak Lutherans and Their Hungarian Past

As exemplified in the early life of Pelikan, many Slovak Lutheran immigrants came with their own sense of history and personal experiences relative to the Lutheran Church in Hungary. These experiences included resisting current trends in the political and theological culture, such as magyarization, unionism, and liberalism. These political and theological realities limited their confessional witness in Hungary. Having been influenced by Slovak confessional Lutherans such as Hurban, who resisted all three of these ideological movements during the nineteenth century, the Slovak Lutheran Synod pastors carried on their fight against these influences into the American context.

⁵⁸ Bódy, et. al., *Pamätník Souvenir: Slovenskej Evanjelickej a. v. v. cirkvi Sv. Petra a Pavla v Chicago, Ill.*, 17. For a more complete description of this conflict, see Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 56–62. See also T. Bakalyar, *Dejiny: Slov. Ev. Lutheránskej d'ľa A. V. Cirkvi Betlehem v Chicago, Illinois* (Chicago: J. Roško, 1920), 6–19. This document can be found in SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 24, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

⁵⁹ Bethlehem arose from the split with Sts. Peter and Paul. See Bódy, et. al., *Pamätník Souvenir: Slovenskej Evanjelickej a. v. v. cirkvi Sv. Petra a Pavla v Chicago, Ill.*, 16.

Perception of the Hungarian Lutheran Church

Many in the Lutheran community saw the church in Slovakia as a tool of the Hungarian state in its campaign of magyarization, which began, as discussed earlier, in the mid-1800s as part of a program to make all of Hungary, including Upper Hungary or Slovakia, more Magyar in language and culture. The Hungarian Lutheran Church also had a growing affinity throughout the nineteenth century towards rationalism and modern theology. Added to that was its historic attempts to unite the Reformed Church with the Lutheran Church within its lands. These three factors—magyarization, rationalistic theology, and unionistic practices—made the Slovak Lutheran Synod very concerned about the role of the Hungarian Lutheran Church both in America and back in the “old country.” The Slovak Lutheran Synod related not only the spiritual needs or confessional concerns of their church members, but also recognized how church and national issues intertwined. In its polity and ministry, the Hungarian Lutheran Church had intertwined these ideas into the fabric of the church; the Slovak Lutheran Synod had the opportunity to unwind them and create what they considered a pure Lutheran church for Slovaks. These three threats of magyarization, unionism, and liberalism, as seen by the Slovak Lutheran Synod, were embodied in the Hungarian Lutheran Church. The greatest of these was magyarization because it embodied the most visible attack on Slovak Lutheranism.

The largest segment of immigrants from Slovakia was from the eastern counties. It was not obvious at the time that those from the eastern part of Slovakia subsequently would be anti-Hungarian. By the time the Slovak Lutheran Synod was formed an important change had occurred in the Eastern Slovak immigrants. They had come to America, usually, the most loyal to the Hungarian regime and to Hungarian culture. As shown from the Slovak-American

⁶⁰ Bódy, et. al., *Pamätník Souvenir: Slovenskej Evanjelickej a. v. v. cirkvi Sv. Petra a Pavla v Chicago, Ill.*, 12.

newspapers of the latter half of the nineteenth century, they later became nationalists in their new country, switching, for example, from their eastern dialect to the more widely accepted central dialect, which Štúr had supported.⁶¹ As Stolarik adds, “Therefore, while central Slovaks formed the bulwark against Magyarization in the Old Country, eastern Slovaks did so in America.”⁶² These Slovaks in America were very concerned about the magyarization of the people back in Slovakia. The Slovak Lutheran Synod was no different, expressing its own concern over the decline of Slovak language and culture relative to the increasingly intrusive nature of Hungarian magyarization and the not-so-subtle persecution of Hungarians against Slovaks dedicated to maintaining their cultural identity.⁶³

Their perception of the Hungarian Lutheran Church was that it had lost its way theologically. As one observer in Slovakia noted, the Lutheran Church in Hungary was “sick.”⁶⁴ In 1908, the Hungarian Lutheran Church, according to Pelikan, was viewed as a source of errant teaching and unchristian practice, and ultimately as a false Lutheran witness.⁶⁵ The early members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod understood that the church in Hungary had drifted away from a true witness of the Christian faith and the Lutheran understanding of that faith, and that if the Hungarian Lutheran Church did not reform, it would be necessary to split or disconnect from that church.⁶⁶ In response to this situation, Pelikan even wanted to create a brochure outlining the difference between the false teaching of the Hungarian Lutheran Church and true teachings of

⁶¹ Marian Mark Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1989), 140–45. M. Mark Stolarik, “Immigration and Eastern Slovak Nationalism,” *Slovakia* 26, no. 49 (1976): 16.

⁶² Marian Mark Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1989), 145.

⁶³ “Zprávy zo starej vlasti,” *Svedok* 8, no. 1 (November 15, 1913): 14.

⁶⁴ Ján Palic, “Naša najväčšia bieda v cirkvi,” *Cirkevné Listy* 24, no. 5 (May 1910): 138.

⁶⁵ Ján Pelikán, “Verejná odpoveď,” *Svedok* 2, no. 11 (April 15, 1908): 171.

⁶⁶ Ján Pelikán, “Verjná odpoveď,” *Svedok* 2, no. 11 (April 15, 1908): 171.

the Slovak Lutheran Synod. He argued that it was because of the false teaching that the Hungarians were splitting the church.⁶⁷ He supported a perspective that the members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod were the faithful ones remaining within the church and the Hungarian Lutherans were the ones leaving the church.

The teaching of the Hungarian professors and the preaching of their pastors was perceived as in violation of the clear teachings of the Bible and of the Lutheran Confessions.⁶⁸ This rejection was in part theological and in part nationalistic. The Slovak Lutheran Synod recognized that the majority of the Slovaks who immigrated to America did so under the rubric of national consciousness, even though some immigrated for religious freedom.⁶⁹ Though it is difficult to know how much of their distrust of Hungarians was ethnically driven or theological caused, both elements were evident in their reaction to the Hungarian Lutheran Church. The perception of chauvinism in the Hungarian Lutheran Church against Slovaks was understood as “godless” and included violence against Slovaks, which caused great skepticism of any alliance within the Hungarian Lutheran Church between Slovaks and Hungarians.⁷⁰ The Hungarian Lutheran Church appeared flawed in a myriad of ways. These flaws made it difficult for Slovaks to relate to their mother church positively. Once these immigrants were loosed in America, they charted a path often independent of the Hungarian Lutheran Church.

⁶⁷ Ján Pelikán, “Verjná odpoveď,” *Svedok* 2, no. 12 (May 1, 1908): 185.

⁶⁸ Ján Pelikán, “Verejná odpoveď,” *Svedok* 2, no. 9 (March 15, 1908): 140.

⁶⁹ “Reformácia v Slovenskom Národe Vôbec,” *Zápisnica*, 1919, 90.

⁷⁰ Theodor Bálent, “O hlavných úlohách pravovernej luteránsko=evangelickej aug. vyz. synody,” *Svedok* 3, no. 11 (April 15, 1909): 162–63.

Slovak Theology Taught in Slovak. In contrast to the dire situation of Hungarian rule, their new home in America provided welcome relief from their Hungarian dominated past. Pelikan in a lecture, originally in German, honoring the first Slovak Professor, Štefan Tuhý, to the faculty at the Missouri Synod's Springfield,⁷¹ Illinois seminary, remarked that at that time,⁷² that in Hungary Slovaks did not have opportunities to study theology at any theological faculty and hear lectures in their own language.⁷³ Pelikan considered an opportunity to study in one's own language and in America as remarkable. Pelikan's appreciation for this historic event was one of gratitude. He intimated that "the sister German Missouri Synod was always well-disposed to us Slovak Lutherans in heartfelt Christian love."⁷⁴ He also recognized that their new bond was not cultural, but theological, adding that the Missouri Synod does not know the difference between nationalities and languages.⁷⁵ This opportunity for Slovaks to teach Slovaks orthodox

⁷¹ The Springfield Seminary was the most likely place for a Slovak Lutheran to study within the Missouri Synod. The Synod positioned this seminary as the "practical" seminary, but also as the seminary that was best equipped to work with other immigrant groups. Nearly as soon as Slovak pastors could be trained, the Missouri Synod was training them at Springfield. For a description of the early years, see Michal Mako, "O evanjelických Slovákoch v Amerike," *Cirkevné Listy* 15, no. 4 (April 1901): 109 and Ján Pankuch, "Niečo o našich bratoch v Amerike," *Tranovský Evanjelický Kalendár* (W Lipt. Sw. Mikulássi: Nákladom spolku "Tranoscius," 1902), 135.

⁷² Tuhý was installed at the Springfield Seminary on 24 November 1909. See Pelikan's lecture at Tuhý's installation in Jan Pelikan, "Reč, ktorú povedal predsed synody djct. p. Ján Pelikán pri inštalácii slovenskeho profesora djct. p. Štefana Tuhého v Springfield, Ill.," *Svedok* 4, no. 4 (January 1, 1909): 54–58. See also a student's report of the event in Štud. Mládež, "Inštalácia slov. ev. theologického profesora na theologickom semeništi v Springfield, Illinois," *Svedok* 4, no. 4 (January 1, 1909): 63–64. See the report to the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia, "Zprávy," *Cirkevné Listy* 24, no. 1 (January 1910): 29–30. Tuhý had graduated from Springfield in 1906. He was ordained in Chicago at the congregation St. Peter and St. Paul by Pelikan and Somora in June, 1906. See "Z Ameriky," *Cirkevné Listy* 20, no. 7 (July 1906): 216.

⁷³ Ján Pelikán, "Řec, povedaná predsedom synody, slov. ev. a. v., J. Pelikánom," *Svedok* 4, no. 6 (February 1, 1909): 87.

⁷⁴ Ján Pelikán, "Řec, povedaná predsedom synody, slov. ev. a. v., J. Pelikánom," 87. "Sesterská nemecká missourská synoda bola nám slovenským luteránom vždy v uprimnej kresťanskej láske naklonená."

⁷⁵ Ján Pelikán, "Řec, povedaná predsedom synody, slov. ev. a. v., J. Pelikánom," *Svedok*, 87. "Ona nečiní rozdiel medzi národnosťami ani rečami" Tuhý's time at the seminary was short-lived. By September 1, 1910, *Svedok* reported that Tuhý had taken a call to the congregation in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. See "Zprávy," *Svedok* 4, no. 20 (September 1, 1910): 315. In the minutes from a conference held in September 1910, Tuhý admitted that he did not desire to be a professor because of his age. See Štefan Tuhý, "Zápisnice zasedaní slov. ev. luth. Synody v Spoj. Štátoch Ameriky, obdývaných v dňoch 6., 7. a 8. sept. 1910, v chráme cirkve slov. ev. luth. Sv. Petra, v Connellsville, Pa.," *Svedok* 5, no. 3 (December 15, 1910): 31.

Lutheran theology is also an achievement that the Slovak Lutheran Synod noted to their fellow Lutherans back in Slovakia.⁷⁶ Just a few years after the foundation of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, Pelikan and the Slovak Lutheran Synod realized the freedom to pursue a truly confessional Lutheran church in his new American context. They were able to experience the freedom of teaching and learning theology in their own language, within the context of their own culture, and in support of their national identity.

In contrast to the revitalized Lutheran education, the Hungarian Lutheran immigrants, considering their leanings towards Reformed theology, were seen from a Slovak vantage point as joining with all forms of Reformed churches in America, lacking any real understanding of their Lutheran faith and heritage.⁷⁷ The Slovaks did not see joining with their former countrymen as a viable option. Pelikan's denunciation of the theological education system in Hungary and the praise of their experience with the Missouri Synod demonstrated this preference for religious and confessional identity over and against a national one. It is simply more important to be educated as a Lutheran—in America by German immigrants—than to be educated by their mother church, which was liberal and primarily Hungarian. In this way, their experience with the Missouri Synod and the ability to choose their partners typified the possibilities that were now open them in opposition to the repressive situation they felt they left back in Hungary.

Hungarian Lutheran Church's Leadership Failure. Having found a means to teach orthodox Lutheran theology in Slovak, the Slovaks were on their way to achieving their aspiration of a truly Slovak and a truly Lutheran church. They were free to cast off their old ties to the Hungarian Lutheran Church. In relation to the work of the Hungarian Lutheran Church in America, the Slovak Lutheran Synod was sure in its conviction that they did not need the

⁷⁶ Lud[ovit] A. Engler, "Bratrstvo milujte!," *Cirkevné Listy* 24, no. 1 (January 1910): 4.

structure or the support of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. The Slovak Lutheran Synod's alliance with the Missouri Synod provided the structural support the small denomination needed. Besides church administration, the Slovaks were convinced that the Hungarians were a church of false teaching, and thus a poor guide to their church in the new land. Their concerns were not only about the theological teaching of the church, which Pelikan and others routinely condemned, but also their abuses of power and their chauvinistic policies against the Slovaks.⁷⁸ During the years before the Pelikan Movement, the drumbeat of news from Hungary, according to the voices from within the Slovak Lutheran Synod, were full of accounts of the systematic persecution the Slovak Lutherans under the heels of their Hungarian Lutheran oppressors. For example, in providing examples of the chauvinistic policies against the Slovaks by the Hungarian Lutheran Church, the editors of *Svedok* retold a story from Slovakia. In one small town, the citizens tried to find or call a Slovak-speaking pastor. The Hungarian Lutheran Church interfered with the process, pressuring the Slovaks to accept their candidate instead.⁷⁹ Secondly, the editors of *Svedok* noted that in one church district (*seniorat*), Šariš, which was in the Eastern part of Slovakia, 18 of the 22 congregations were Slovak speaking, but the leading pastor of the district did not know a word of Slovak.⁸⁰ Many of the stories from the old country were about the Hungarian Lutheran Church denying Slovaks positions of power and influence within the church. The stories of chauvinism against the Slovaks continued in America in much the same way as they had in Slovakia in the nineteenth century.

⁷⁷ Lud[ovit] A. Engler, "Bratrstvo milujte!," 3.

⁷⁸ "Zprávy," *Svedok* 6, no. 3 (December 15, 1911): 51.

⁷⁹ "Zprávy," *Svedok* 6, no. 3 (December 15, 1911): 51.

⁸⁰ "Zprávy," *Svedok* 6, no. 5 (January 15, 1912): 83.

The Hungarian Lutheran Church also persecuted those who spoke Slovak, working in cooperation with the state's plan of magyarization. The Slovak Lutherans felt that when the church accepted support from the state, it served the state and the political power of the state.⁸¹ This cooperation between the Hungarian state and the Hungarian Lutheran Church was seen in the ability of the two estates to work together to force worship services in Hungarian instead of Slovak.⁸² Such accusations were accompanied with the assumption that the church had a broad, meaning liberal, understanding of the Scriptures and the Augsburg Confession. The implication was that the church, which was understood as apostate in many ways, was reaping immoral or heretical thought and behavior. It was also understood to be no longer a strong, orthodox Lutheran church. The Hungarian state and church relationship made the church less of a church and more of a tool of state oppression.

For example, in rallying against the influence of Bishop Baltík (remembering that Baltík ordained Pelikan) and the magyarization of the churches in Slovakia, Vojtko, a pastor of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and vocal opponent of unionism, expressed deep concern about how candidates for the pastoral ministry were accepted or disqualified for service. His concern was that they were not approved or rejected based on their theological understanding and pious life, but on their willingness to support the Hungarian nationalist campaign of magyarization as well as their overall nationalist agenda, including the destruction of some churches for the sake of this agenda.⁸³ In contrast, according to Vojtko, also the assistant editor of *Svedok* at this time, a proven Slovak candidate, who upheld right doctrine and who lived a good life, was considered a

⁸¹ Ján Pelikán, "Verejná odpoveď," *Svedok* 2, no. 10 (April 1, 1908): 154.

⁸² Ján Pelikán, "Verejná odpoveď," *Svedok* 2, no. 10 (April 1, 1908): 154.

⁸³ J.[án] V.[ojtko], "Anarchia--Hierachia," *Svedok* 5, no. 19 (August 15, 1911): 295.

believer in panslavism.⁸⁴ This accusation is the same that a nineteenth century Slovak nationalist would have received, such as from Zay, the Hungarian count who proposed the union church in the 1840s. Vojtko further added the slurs of hungry wolves, Lutheran popes and Jesuit inquisitors to the attributes of Hungarian Lutheran leadership.⁸⁵ The intensity of the distrust of the Hungarian Lutheran Church is evident in this polemic. The leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod viewed the Hungarian influence as detrimental to a true Lutheran church.

Church without the Hungarian Lutheran Church. Considering the possibility of a Slovak Lutheran experience without the failed leadership of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, some members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod began to imagine a world without the burden of their home church. As early as 1911, in an almost prophetic voice of the strategy embodied in the Pelikan Movement, the editors of *Svedok* dreamed of the day when a true Slovak Lutheran church would secede from the Hungarian Lutheran Church.⁸⁶ Reflecting on an article from a Slovak nationalistic magazine, which called upon Lutherans in Slovakia to push for an independent church, the author suggested a mix of nationalistic and religious chauvinism was oppressing the Slovaks.⁸⁷ This mix within the Hungarian Lutheran Church, part magyarization and part theological liberalization, made it difficult to determine which was more pernicious. However, if Slovaks Lutherans would throw off the Hungarians, confessional Lutheran teaching would dominate. They would reject both the liberal theology and magyarization. This expectation was fundamental to the Pelikan Movement.

⁸⁴ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Anarchia--Hierachia,” 295.

⁸⁵ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Anarchia--Hierachia,” 295.

⁸⁶ “Zprávy,” *Svedok* 6, no. 3 (December 15, 1911): 51.

⁸⁷ Ky., “Zprávy,” *Svedok* 7, no. 1 (November 15, 1912): 13.

Upon further reflection, the leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod called for a split in the Hungarian Lutheran Church. At stake was a church united by teaching and practice versus a church beholden to the state. The church should be divided into those who are willing to uphold clear teaching and those who do not.⁸⁸ They were well aware of the many sins of the Hungarian Lutheran Church: the connection between the state's involvement in church affairs, the chauvinism of the Hungarians, the unionistic activities of the church, and the influence of the rationalistic and liberal teaching of the church.⁸⁹ More than once, the Slovak Lutheran Synod repeated this call for a Slovak Lutheran Church independent of Hungarian domination.⁹⁰ The Slovak Lutherans in America could not have known that less than decade later their goal of a Lutheran church separated from the Hungarian Lutheran Church would be realized; but they had the vision of a confessional Slovak Lutheran church without Hungarian influence. What they did not foresee is that Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia were not developing in the same direction, theologically, as the Slovak Lutheran Synod. A large movement in Slovakia towards confessional Lutheranism was not waiting to rise from the ashes from the Hungarian Lutheran Church. To create a true orthodox Lutheran church, according to Pelikan and his coworkers, a schism from the Slovak Lutheran Church would also proved necessary.

In 1913, the Slovak Lutheran Synod continued to purport that the church back in Hungary needed to be cleansed.⁹¹ By the end of the 1913, the editors of *Svedok* were calling again for the a new start in Slovakia, as the Hungarian Lutheran Church was not called (*svolana*) and a new

⁸⁸ "Synoda a oddelenie sa slovenských evanjelikov a. v. od úrande cirkve v Uhorsku," *Svedok* 7, no. 2 (December 1, 1912): 21–25.

⁸⁹ "Synoda a oddelenie sa slovenských evanjelikov a. v. od úrande cirkve v Uhorsku," *Svedok* 7, no. 3 (December 15, 1912): 40–43.

⁹⁰ "Starokrajová generálna cirkev," *Svedok* 7, no. 3 (December 15, 1912): 43.

⁹¹ "Zprávy zo starej vlasti," *Svedok* 7, no. 23 (October 15, 1913): 359.

work needed to be done, a church in which the spirit was clear and clean. The Slovak Lutheran Synod saw itself as an example of a purified church.⁹² They implied that the members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod would be source of a purified Slovak Lutheran Church. By the eve of war, Pelikan, in his role as the then President of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and speaking at their annual convention in 1913, held the line that the Hungarian Lutheran Church was not a church held together by clear teachings. Rather it was a tool of the Hungarian state.⁹³ This association again linked the chauvinistic practices of the state to the work of the church. Instead, the church should be focused on the office of preaching of God's Word—the clear Gospel.⁹⁴ To emphasize the growing divide between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the church in Hungary, Somora observed in 1914 that his Synod did not have any official contacts or activity with Lutheran church back in Hungary.⁹⁵ The members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod had a sense that the only way to save the Lutheran church in Slovakia was to disenthral itself from the Hungarians; and perhaps more to the point, the Slovak Lutheran Synod as a free, orthodox Slovak Lutheran church was the model for such change.

Hungarian Neglect or Slovak Sedition. Even though they were not eager for Hungarian help and even dreamed of a complete separation from their mother church, many of the Slovak Lutherans in America felt abandoned and neglected by the Hungarian Lutheran Church. In a speech printed in 1914, then President Tuhý reflected on this feeling of neglect as he discussed the topic of national or inner mission. In his opening remarks, he noted that the Hungarian Lutheran Church neglected them, withheld from them spiritual provision, and did not send them

⁹² “Zprávy zo starej vlasti,” 359.

⁹³ [Ján Pelikán], “Zpráva synodálneho predsedu,” *Svedok* 7, no. 21 (September 15, 1913): 325–26.

⁹⁴ [Ján Pelikán], “Zpráva synodálneho predsedu,” 325.

⁹⁵ Ján Somora, letter, February 5, 1914, SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 200.19-15-13-15-18-01, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

missionaries.⁹⁶ In the midst of the war, in 1915, Pelikan noted that the state of the Hungarian Lutheran Church was in a dire condition, rife with leaders who did not believe in the Word of God and did not care what the Holy Scripture said, but saw the church as tool of Magyar chauvinism against the Slovaks.⁹⁷ The Hungarian Lutheran Church was not providing aid to the Slovak Lutheran Synod.

Complicating the relationship even more was the feeling that the war had turned into a war against the Slavic nations. First the Germans, but also their allies, the Austrians and Hungarians, were blamed for aggression against all Slavs. A commentator from *Svedok* wrote that “the Hungarians with the understanding of the Germans are against us Slovaks on political, cultural, and yes even on religious grounds.”⁹⁸ Thus, as the war continued, the intensity of Hungarian persecution against Slovaks increased. The war provided yet one more example of the lack of care for the Slovaks and the Slovak Lutherans.

What the Slovaks saw as persecution, the Hungarians saw as sedition. The Hungarians accused the Slovaks of seditious attitudes against the Hungarian led institutions, including the church. The Slovak Lutheran Synod noted one such occasion when it reported on a meeting of the Hungarian Lutheran Church in December of 1913. During this meeting, some Hungarian church officials raised concerns about the loyalty of the Slovaks, labeling the Slovaks as panslavists, separatists, and dangerous Hungarians.⁹⁹ These complaints against the Slovaks were based on history as the link between a Slovak expression of confessional Lutheranism was perceived as seditious to the state and even the Hungarian Lutheran Church.

⁹⁶ Štephan Tuhý, “Kázeň o vnútornej missii,” *Svedok* 8, no. 16 (July 1, 1914): 222.

⁹⁷ J.[án] P.[elikán], “Zprávy z Uhorska,” *Svedok* 9, no. 22 (November 15, 1915): 364.

⁹⁸ “Zprávy zo sveta,” *Svedok* 10, no. 10 (July 15, 1916): 223. “Maďari s usrozumením Nemcov sú proti nám Slovákom na politickom, kultúrom, áno i na náboženskom poli.”

⁹⁹ “Zprávy zo starej vlasti,” *Svedok* 8, no. 4 (January 1, 1914): 49.

Case Study: Bishop's Visit. A visit by a Hungarian bishop provided one of the few moments of direct contact between the two warring sides. When visited by Bishop Alexander Raffay¹⁰⁰ in 1914, the Slovak Lutheran Synod reacted strongly against any association with the representative or his church. Even though the stated reason for coming to America was to assess the situation and needs of the Hungarian (including Slovak) Lutherans, the Slovak Lutherans rejected the visit on theological grounds. In their synodical magazine, *Svedok*, Pelikan was quoted in the Synod's official rejection of Raffay. Pelikan stated that the Slovak Lutheran Synod should not cooperate because the Hungarians represent a false church with false teaching. He compared the intent of the Hungarian Lutherans to Pharaoh's purpose towards the people of God in Egypt.¹⁰¹ Moreover, Pelikan recognized the Hungarian Lutheran Church as a tool of the state in their program of magyarization.¹⁰² Later Pelikan rejected the trip of Bishop Raffay in part because Raffay had spent his time only with Hungarian Lutherans and not Slovaks. His conclusion was again that the Hungarian Lutheran Church was not a true Lutheran church.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ The Slovak Lutheran Church in Slovakia had a deep distrust of Bishop Raffay and continued to attack him long after he had left the country. An example of this is found in the a lecture given to the general conference on September 30, 1920 in Martin, where the author Jur Janoška, condemned Raffay and the rich Hungarian princes for working against the interests of the Slovak Lutherans in international settings. See Jur Janoška, "Zo zprávy," *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 10 (October 1920): 216–19. On another occasion, when one of the Slovak representatives and Raffay met at a conference in 1922, the Slovak bishop greeted Raffay and Raffay did not return the greeting. Such was the bitterness between this former Hungarian bishop of the Slovaks. See "Odkaz na Horniaky," *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 20 (15 October 1922): 311–12. Raffay, whether he was in Slovakia, as he was before the war, or in Pest after the war, was constantly viewed as an enemy of Slovak Lutheranism on both sides of the Atlantic.

¹⁰¹ "Ako sa zadržat' oproti Raffajovi," *Svedok* 8, no. 5 (March 1 1914): 91–92.

¹⁰² "Ako sa zadržat' oproti Raffajovi," 92.

¹⁰³ "Dopré následky Raffajovho príchodu," *Svedok* 8, no. 8 (April 1, 1914): 126. The Slovaks in Slovakia make a similar complaint about his visit and reject the notion, sardonically, that the trip was a success as it focused on those of Hungarian descent. See "Ako sa stará naša úradná cirkev o svojich veriacich v cudzozemsku," *Cirkevné Listy* 28, no. 11 (November 1914): 300. Pelikan's reaction against Raffay was strong. He would later use this experience with Raffay as an example of the potential dangers of state control of church affairs at the founding of the new Czechoslovak state. See "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," *Svedok* 13, no. 4 (February 15, 1919): 61.

This lack of attention to the Slovak immigrant community demonstrated to Pelikan and others that Hungarian Lutheran Church leadership did not care for their Slovak brethren.

If Hungarians viewed the Slovaks as seditious, the Slovaks equally scorned the Hungarians for their meddling role in American Lutheranism. The Slovak Lutheran Synod understood Raffay to be in collusion with the General Council, a Lutheran denomination in America not in fellowship with the Slovak Lutheran Synod. The Slovaks saw both churches as having intent to thwart the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Although the initial split in the Slovak Lutheran Synod was based in part on the idea that the Slovak Lutheran Synod was overly impacted by outside influences (meaning the ethnically German Missouri Synod), the Slovak Lutheran Synod perceived itself as independent. Even though it had strong ties with the Missouri Synod and most of their leaders were educated in Missouri Synod institutions, they still saw themselves resistant to the influence of foreigners, that is, those who were not Slovak.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Raffay was interested in cooperating with the General Council. The General Council had an official organ that was interested in also establishing work among the new Slovak immigrants—the General Council’s Slavic Mission Board. This mission board then appeared to the Slovak Lutheran Synod to be an incursion on their work of providing what they felt was a truly Slovak and a truly Lutheran Church to the Slovak immigrants. The worst, or so it was felt, was that the General Council was raising money from Slovaks to pay for pastors that had been rejected by the Slovak Lutheran Synod.¹⁰⁵ Pastor Kuchárik, who would serve in Slovakia as a missionary, asserted that “the General Council wants to sell out our Slovak Lutheran Church to the American

¹⁰⁴ “Zprávy zo sveta,” *Svedok* 9, no. 11 (June 1, 1915): 185.

¹⁰⁵ “Zprávy zo sveta,” *Svedok*, 185. The Slovaks in Slovakia were well aware of the bias of Raffay towards the Hungarians and towards the General Council. The key here is that the Slovak Lutheran Synod, which was at the time the largest representative of Slovak Lutherans in America, did not fit Raffay’s understanding of a Hungarian ministry or church, because they identified themselves as Slovaks and not Hungarians. The General Council’s approach was more pan-Hungarian; they had a “The Slav and Hungarian Mission Board.” See Ostriežsky, “Otázka

Hungarian General Church. The insatiable wolf Ramer¹⁰⁶ is an emissary and a pastor of the Slovak Lutherans from Mahanoy and the Hungarian Pastor Body from Cleveland, a leader of men of the General Council, are negotiating with Raffay agreements about our churches without our churches.”¹⁰⁷ In short, the General Council was aiding the opposition. Their connection with the Bishop’s visit only intensified their unease with the Hungarian Church’s and General Council’s intentions towards the Slovaks Lutheran Synod.

The Slovak Lutheran Synod was situated between two perceived enemies. The first enemy was from the old country, the Hungarian Lutheran Church, which was a tool of the state. The second was an American Lutheran denomination, the General Council. The General Council focused on the same mission as the Slovak Lutheran Synod, competing for the same Slovak Lutheran immigrant. Vojtko noted that Raffay’s conversation partner on his trip was with the General Council; and his understanding of the Slovak Lutheran Synod was biased by the General Council’s perspective. His complaint is that both Raffay, who represented the mother church, and the General Council with its own mission to the Slovak peoples, were poor representatives of a true, pure Slovak Lutheran church in America. He also dreamed of a time when all the Slovak

uhorských evanjelikov v Amerike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 38, no. 12 (December 1914): 318–21.

¹⁰⁶ Rev. A. L. Ramer served for 11 years as pastor of St. Mark’s Lutheran church in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He resigned his call there in 1906 to take on the role of the leader of Slovak missions for the General Council. He was to study the Slovak language for two years and then return to fulfill this role. According to an article in *Standert*, January 10, 1906, “he will establish missions and procure missionaries from Hungary to take charge of them.” See a copy of this article in SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 200.18-01-13-05-18, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis. He assumed this role, which was a mission to the Slovaks, Magyars, Letts, Slovenians, Seibenbuerger, Poles and Italians. For a history of the 31st Convention that begun this work, see S. E. Ochsendford, *Documentary History of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1912), 316, 318. Ramer was long remembered for his activity, even mentioned as a poor example of unionistic activity during the Pelikan Movement’s falling out with the Slovak Lutheran Church. See Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved’ na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve Na Slovensku* (Pittsburg, Tlačou Československej Tlačiarne, 1922), 24.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Kuchárik, “Čo General Council skutočne učí,” *Svedok* 8, no. 15 (June 15, 1914): 213. “General Council chce zapredať naše slovenské ev.-lut. cirkve americké uhorskej generál cirkvi. Nenasýtny vlk Ramer je agentom a mahanoyský farár slov. ev. a clevelandský maďarónsky farár Bódy a „náčelní mužovia“ General Councilu uzatvárajú s Raffayom dohody o našich cirkvách bez našich cirkví.”

Lutherans would come together in such a church, making those who were enemies, friends.¹⁰⁸ As mentioned, even the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia saw that Raffay was not recognizing the cultural distinctions between the Slovaks and the Hungarians.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, they were not as condemning of Raffay's allegiance with the General Council, in part, because they felt that the Lutherans in Slovakia were not as sympathetic to the "catholic" approach of the Missouri Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Synod.¹¹⁰ The Slovaks back in Slovakia recognized that they were more conservative than the Hungarians, but they also recognized (or were starting to recognize) that their American brothers were of a "different spirit."¹¹¹ Raffay visit also showed the growing divide between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia.

The Slovak Lutheran Synod was incensed. In a blistering condemnation of Raffay's trip to America, Vojtko traced the impact of Raffay's visit through the perceptions of Slovak and Hungarian magazines and was sure that a significant goal of the trip was not the care of souls but the utilization of the Hungarian Lutheran Church as a tool for the Hungarian government.¹¹² Raffay's focus on seeing all the immigrants as Hungarians was also seen from Slovakia.¹¹³ Vojtko stressed that since 1902 the Slovak Lutheran Synod recognized that the Hungarian Lutheran Church and the General Council had false teaching at its base. He contrasted that with

¹⁰⁸ J.[án] V.[ojtko], "Odpoved' vznešenej cirkvi v Mahanoy City, Pa.," *Svedok* 9, no. 11 (June 1, 1915): 182.

¹⁰⁹ Ostrižsky, "Otázka uhorských evanjelikov v Amerike," *Cirkevné Listy* 28, no. 12 (December 1914): 320–21.

¹¹⁰ Ostrižsky, "Otázka uhorských evanjelikov v Amerike," 321. In particular, the "Catholic compliant" was directed at the communion practices of both church bodies.

¹¹¹ Ostrižsky, "Otázka uhorských evanjelikov v Amerike," 320. "Ihr habt einen anderen Geist."

¹¹² J.[án] Vojtko, "Čo vykonal Raffay v Amerike?," *Svedok* 9, no. 7 (April 1, 1915): 112.

¹¹³ "Ako sa stará naša úradná cirkev o svojich veriacich v cudzozemsku," *Cirkevné Listy* 28 (November 1914): 298–300. The Slovak author here makes similar accusations, namely, that during Raffay's visit his focus was mainly on those who were Magyars (ethnically Hungarians) and he neglected the Slovaks in America.

the Missouri Synod as a faithful Lutheran church.¹¹⁴ The Bishop's visit with the General Council produced tremendous anger.

During the war, a revelation surfaced that some of the Slovak Lutherans concerns were true. The Hungarian Lutherans were purposely neglecting the Slovak Lutherans in America. In 1916, noting that the Hungarian Lutheran Church was under the authority of the Hungarian government, *Svedok* reported that Raffay had admitted that the Hungarian government had withheld resources to help form a seniorát (district) in America.¹¹⁵ This echoed the complaint of the Slovak Lutheran Synod that the Hungarian Lutheran Church did not have spiritual interests of the Slovaks in America at heart. Raffay, of course, was not without his own polemical abilities, labeling in the midst of the war the Slovak Synod as having a foreign spirit and an “awkward” orthodoxy.¹¹⁶ The Slovak Lutheran Synod might be eager to label the Hungarian Lutheran Church as unionistic, chauvinistic, and liberal. The Hungarians were just as eager to see the Slovaks as unpatriotic and panslavic, especially in a time of war. The Slovak Lutherans also had a confessional stance that did not easily mesh with the more liberal and inclusive Hungarian church. The war years only heightened the distrust the Slovak Lutheran Synod had with its mother church.

Magyarization, Unionism and Liberalism

The Slovak Lutheran Synod's rejection of the Hungarian Lutheran Church was not only based on its relationships within America Lutheranism, but also on its continued theological dedication to unionism and liberalism. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Slovak Lutheran

¹¹⁴ J.[án] Vojtko, “Čo vykonal Raffay v Amerike?,” *Svedok* 9, no. 8 (April 15, 1915): 128.

¹¹⁵ “Zprávy z Uhorska: Uhorská Vláda Odoprela Dať Podporu na Udržanie Nádejného Seniorátu Amerického,” *Svedok* 10, no. 6 (March 15, 1916): 95–96.

¹¹⁶ [Ján] Pelikán, “Pozoruhodný ohlas,” *Svedok* 10, no. 4 (February 15, 1916): 50.

Synod was very aware of the history of unionism and unionistic tendencies with the Hungarian Lutherans, which they could date back to the mid-sixteenth century. The more direct contact with Hungarian unionism was in the nineteenth century and Count Zay. In a direct reference to Zay, the editors of *Svedok* warned against this unionistic activity, which they saw all too clearly in their own history of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ To resist unionism, the Slovak Lutheran Synod often invoked Hurban.¹¹⁸ The Slovak Lutheran Synod traced their Slovak Lutheran heritage not only through the Slovak Reformation, which culminated in the early seventeenth century with the acceptance of the Book of Concord as normative, but also through the Slovak national revival and its parallel Lutheran revival in the last half of the nineteenth century. Hurban was the leading confessional theologian of this period and a source of anti-unionism sentiment. The Slovak Lutheran Church also felt that the concern of Hurban's time was the rise of Hungarian nationalism at the expense of the clear teachings of the Reformation.

The appeal for unity based on Hungarian nationality was within the context of magyarization.¹¹⁹ As shown, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries proved to be a difficult era for the Slovak Lutherans in the Hungarian Lutheran Church. Beyond the forced magyarization, which had a broad cultural impact on all Slovaks, the Slovak Lutherans Church identity was also threatened. During the early 1840s, the Hungarians had a concerted effort to create a united Protestant Church; and although this effort might have faded in the minds of the Slovak Lutherans, the historical memory of this event was very much intact within the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Under the auspices of Count Zay, the Calvinists, who were mainly Hungarians, sought to

¹¹⁷ "Cirkevné Zprávy," *Svedok* 2, no. 23 (October 15, 1908): 364.

¹¹⁸ "Cirkevné Zprávy," 364.

¹¹⁹ "Reformácia v Slovenskom Národe Vôbec," *Zápisnica*, 1919, 89–90.

unite with the Lutherans, who were mainly Slovak.¹²⁰ The role of Zay was still an important part of this history, and the influence of the Hungarians and the Reformed was still pressuring Lutheranism in Slovakia.¹²¹ In the tradition of Zay, the Hungarians were already claiming that all, including the Germans and the Slovaks, wanted union.¹²²

Many Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia still had significant theological issues with union, including the theology of the Lord's Super and predestination.¹²³ If the Hungarians saw Germans as eager for union, the Slovaks saw Germany as an object lesson of the risks of unionism. The Slovaks attributed such activity, which they understood was led by Schleiermacher, to the "dilution" of the Lutheran church in Germany.¹²⁴ If not a dilution, unionism was a self-annihilation.¹²⁵ Unionism was encouraged by the Hungarians but feared by Slovaks on both sides of the Atlantic.

Pelikan was a young man during this dynamic time in Slovak national and religious history. He would have experienced this conflict directly. Jan Boor, who was a colleague of Pelikan, highlighted in one article the unionistic activities by the Hungarian leadership. Boor noted that this kind of leadership, which leads towards unionism, would make not him a "good Lutheran."¹²⁶ For Pelikan and others, the concerns about Hungarian efforts towards Lutheranism were born not just out of their historical memory, but from personal experiences. Coming to

¹²⁰ Hugh LeCaine Agnew, "Czechs, Slovaks, and the Slovak Linguistic Separatism of the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in *The Czech and Slovak Experience*, ed. John Morison, 21–37 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 24.

¹²¹ "Unia a millenium," *Cirkevné Listy* 9 (February 1895): 31–33.

¹²² "Zprávy," *Cirkevné Listy* 9 (September 1895): 162.

¹²³ "Zprávy," 162.

¹²⁴ "Unia a millenium," *Cirkevné Listy* 9 (May 1895): 86.

¹²⁵ "Unia a millenium," *Cirkevné Listy* 9 (May 1895): 86.

¹²⁶ Jan Boor, "Budúcnosť našej cirkve," *Cirkevné Listy* 8 (November 1894): 168.

America, the members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod had certainly heard voices warning them of the considerable dangers of unionism to confessional Lutheranism.

In terms of unionism, the Slovak Synod Lutherans were concerned about the magyarization relative to its impact on the Lutheran nature and identity of the Slovak Lutherans back in the “old country.” For example, during a meeting in October of 1913 in Budapest, the Slovak Lutheran Synod noted that the Slovak Lutherans had to defend against trends in the Hungarian Lutheran Church to unite the Reformed and Lutherans.¹²⁷ The Hungarian experience had taught the Slovak Lutherans in America to distrust the liberal theology that seemed to walk hand-in-hand with union movements.¹²⁸ The feelings of antipathy were mutual. As much as the Slovak Lutherans disliked and even feared the Hungarian Lutherans, the Hungarian Lutherans were noted enemies of the work of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. And as much as the Hungarians and Slovaks read the papers coming out of America, so too the Slovak Lutherans in America read the papers coming from the “old country.”¹²⁹ The leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod did not want to cooperate with the Hungarians for national and theological reasons. Thus, the anxiety over theological unionism interlaced with the fears of magyarization.

¹²⁷ “Zprávy zo starej vlasti,” *Svedok*, 15 December 1913, 36.

¹²⁸ It was noted in Slovakia that many of their people were choosing the Slovak Lutheran Synod over other options, closer to the Hungarian church in theology and ethnicity. The Slovak Lutheran Synod appeared to have “Catholic” influences to many in Slovakia, especially in the manner in which they understood and administered the Lord’s Supper. But the conservatism of the immigrants over came those concerns; Slovaks immigrating to America were more concerned about Hungarian liberalism than they were the seemingly Catholic practices. See Ostriežsky, “Otázka uhorských evanjelikov v Amerike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 38 (December 1914): 318–21. The concerns about the Lord’s Supper may be an allusion to Pelikan’s own difficulties with communion practice in 1906. Both Bálent and Pelikan had significant conflicts concerning communion in their congregations. Pelikan’s conflict was concerning the communion announcement. He supported this practice but was also significantly pressured by Missouri Synod pastors to implement it quickly. See Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 56–62. Pelikan also concerned Slovak Lutherans with this practice. The Slovak author argued for a more open form of communion than Pelikan desired. See Igor Štefánik, “O zpovedi,” *Cirkevné Listy* 20 (December 1906): 368–69.

¹²⁹ “Cirkevné Zprávy,” *Svedok* 2, no. 23 (October 15, 1908): 364.

Even though the Slovak Lutheran Synod was concerned about magyarization, resisting unionism was more important than losing national identity. Even when pondering the possibility of a union with other Slovak Lutherans, the Slovak Lutheran Synod would only do so when all parties agreed on the clear teachings of the Holy Scriptures and the symbolic or confessional texts of the Lutheran Church.¹³⁰ In fact, on the eve of the end of the war and the beginning of the Pelikan Movement, they were equally resolute: “About our joint work, there cannot be any talk about that while they do not show us by the written word of God that we teach falsely or while our opponents do not accept that they teach falsely.”¹³¹ Even though unionism and magyarization were often one in the minds of Slovak Lutherans, for those in the Slovak Lutheran Synod, the reality is that unionism was still primarily a theological and not national concern. This perspective on unionism and nationality would drive their relationships within America and eventually with the Slovak Lutheran Church.

Magyarization was closely linked to the rise of liberalism within the church. In a lecture reprinted in *Svedok*, Bálent linked the church in the Hungary with the rising tide of liberalism and rationalism as well as an antagonist against true Lutheranism.¹³² In 1910, *Svedok* aligned the Hungarian Lutheran Church with modernism and liberalism. The answer to this modernist plight was the clear teaching of the Lutheran understanding of the Christian faith.¹³³ *Svedok* lamented

¹³⁰ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Spojenie slovenských evanjelikov,” *Svedok* 11, no. 7 (April 1, 1917): 108. The author continued his argument to include a rebuttal to those who might suggest that Lutheranism needed a new Reformation. Rather he suggested that they should return to the old Reformation, where the goal is to maintain the theology and values of a previous era of Lutheranism. In this case, they intended to reprimatinate confessional Lutheranism.

¹³¹ [Jozef] Kuchárik, “Posledná zpráva hlasu o našom synodálnom shromaždení v Akron, O.,” *Svedok* 11, no. 17 (September 1, 1917): 271.

¹³² Theodor Bálent, “O hlavných úlohách pravovernej luteránsko-evangelickej aug. vyz. synody,” *Svedok* 3, no. 11 (May 15, 1909): 196.

¹³³ “Podivné,” *Svedok* 4, no. 18 (August 1, 1910): 280–81.

that the church in Hungary was becoming more and more liberal.¹³⁴ The result was a grim end for the church as it would necessarily become derelict.¹³⁵

The leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod felt a strong linkage existed between magyarization and the liberal apostasy of the Lutheran Church in Hungary. The Slovak Synod Lutherans viewed the Hungarians as supporting the liberal, rationalistic theology, which they understood as a godless understanding of the faith.¹³⁶ They juxtaposed unionism with the Hungarian Lutherans interest in liberal, worldly worldview. When asserting evidence of the Devil's work in the attitudes and events of the Hungarian Lutherans, *Svedok* was able to answer why their mother church was so far gone. They answered that in Hungary the church had a desire for worldly or secular things as well as magyarization and unionism; on the other hand, the Slovak Lutheran Synod was only concerned with clear teaching.¹³⁷ In terms of ecclesiology, the Lutheran Church in Hungary, typified by Bálent's analysis, was beholden to clericalism and church bureaucracy.¹³⁸ He also observed that most Slovaks coming from Hungary were Lutheran in name or according to their family heritage only.¹³⁹ The Hungarian Lutheran Church was viewed often as the source of the many theological ills, including liberalism, which contributed to poor personal piety, if not ambivalence, to the Christian faith. For example, the impact on the schools and complicity of the church hierarchy in adding in this program of cultural hegemony only aided in the wounded piety as evident the subsequent closing of church schools.¹⁴⁰ The

¹³⁴ "Zprávy," *Svedok* 5, no. 15 (June 15, 1911): 233.

¹³⁵ "Zprávy," 234.

¹³⁶ "Cirkevné Zprávy," *Svedok* 2, no. 23 (October 15, 1908): 365.

¹³⁷ "Cirkevné Zprávy," 365.

¹³⁸ Theodor Bálent, "O hlavných úlohách pravovernej luteránsko=evangelickej aug. vyz. synody," *Svedok* 3, no. 11 (April 15, 1909): 162.

¹³⁹ Theodor Bálent, "O hlavných úlohách pravovernej luteránsko=evangelickej aug. vyz. synody," 163.

¹⁴⁰ "Zprávy," *Svedok* 4, no. 24 (November 1, 1910): 369.

Hungarian Lutheran Church had become too close to liberal teachings, secularization, and worldly pursuits.

Slovak Lutherans in America often traced their struggles to the theology and policies of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. *Svedok* supported the separation of church and state in the hope that they would never revisit those struggles. The Slovak Lutheran Synod's constant struggle with magyarization, unionism, and liberalism never waned. Only their concerns changed. Once the Hungarians were no longer a concern, other American denominations and the Slovak Lutheran Church appeared to be afflicted with the same concerns. Everywhere they looked, the leadership of the Slovak Lutheran Synod found the same three challenges: a nationalism that threatened their Slovak culture, a spirit of Christian unity that challenged their confessional identity, and theological innovations that challenged their orthodoxy.

CHAPTER FIVE

SLOVAK LUTHERAN SYNOD'S AMERICAN IDENTITY

The Slovak Lutheran Synod was aware of its past and used its understanding of Slovak Lutheran history to help shape its view of church life in Hungary and its relationship with the Hungarian Lutheran Church. The synod's understanding of historical forces affected the way it also related within the American context. Many of the same issues members had with the Hungarian Lutherans were also targets in America, such as unionism, liberalism, and chauvinism. By the time of the Pelikan Movement, the Slovak Lutheran Synod was also becoming increasingly Americanized, often being unaware of the changes taking place in its community.

Resisting Unionism in America

Unionism was a concern of Slovak Lutherans long before they arrived in America. Their contact with unionism as well as liberalism and magyarization in the Kingdom of Hungary and by the Hungarian Lutheran Church was a long and intense experience. Such an experience lived in the common memory of Slovak Lutherans. As shown, the conflict between the Slovaks and the Hungarians continued within the Slovak Lutheran Synod immigrant community. In the American context, unionism became an important way to maintain their theological identity in a sea of American denominations. Avoiding unionism was useful to maintain a pure expression of Slovak Lutheranism in America just as it was useful in its defense of Slovak Lutheranism in Hungary.

To avoid unionism, the Slovak Lutherans in America turned to the Book of Concord, the standard for their Lutheran identity since the beginning of the seventeenth century. Leška, who supervised Pelikan in Brezová, translated the Book of Concord into Slovak. His translation was the definitive translation for Slovaks. This translation was published initially in Slovakia (at the time, the Kingdom of Hungary) in 1898 and was also published in 1918 in America. The American preface to the text specifically lauded the Book of Concord as a remedy for the unionism that befell the church in Germany and that was promoted by the church in Hungary.¹ The immigrant Slovak Lutherans saw the Book of Concord as a solution for unionism not only in Slovakia but also in America. By tenaciously adhering to the Book of Concord, they could, they hoped, maintain their orthodox, Lutheran identity.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Slovakia, the Book of Concord was how many Slovak Lutherans measured their Lutheran faith in a Hungarian church that was seeking to bring together the Reformed and Lutheran churches. It was hoped that in America the Book of Concord would likewise be a tool for Lutheran identity. In America, they were confronted with a plethora of denominations and confessions, which made the American religious context substantially different from the European one. Europe in the nineteenth century still had mainly three confessions: Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic. America was confessionally more diverse with hundreds of different religious communities, and many denominations shared the same or similar confessions.² For the immigrant Slovak Lutheran, the denominational landscape was much more complex than they had seen before.

¹ Ján Leška, trans., preface to the American edition, *Kniha Svornosti* (East Akron, OH: Nákladom Slov. Ev. Lut. Vyd. Spoločnosti, 1918), v.

² “Zo zahraničia,” *Cirkevné Listy* 26 (February, 1912): 71. Although the editors of this Slovak magazine did not indicate a source for their data, they are aware of the many denominations in America. In this short article, they state that there were 215 different confessions, 212 Protestant, 23 Lutheran, 17 Baptists, and 12 Presbyterians. Moreover, they added that there were a number of other faiths including Buddhism, Hinduism, and the Baha’i faith.

Unlike the Kingdom of Hungary, America had many different Lutheran bodies.³ Each of these organizations was free, independent, and self-supporting. Some maintained orthodox expressions of the Lutheran faith. Others, often older Lutheran groups, found a home in the evangelical consensus, which led to a broader standard of confessional and denominational allegiances. The General Synod is a historic American Lutheran church and one example of the Americanization of Lutheranism. Maintaining an identity in the cacophony of theological voices was challenging. Standing against unionistic church practices was useful in maintaining confessional theology and identity.

For Slovak theologians such as Hurban, unionism was a concern that would grow as the Hungarians began to dominate the religious hierarchy of the Lutheran church in the Kingdom of Hungary in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In addition to the Book of Concord, the Slovak Lutheran Synod minded Hurban's theological tradition. When resisting unionism in America, the Slovak Synod saw Hurban's work as a model of resistance.⁴ Moreover, as Pelikan notes, Hurban was an ideal and example for Slovak Lutherans. He was not only a nationalist and a true Slovak, but a true Lutheran theologian as well. So when Bishop Raffay of the Hungarian Lutheran Church accused the Slovak Synod of a foreign spirit and an odd orthodoxy, Pelikan could answer by calling on the blessed memory of Hurban, who served as a counter example to Hungarian Lutheranism. Hurban was a "good, Slovak nationalist" but he was also an "orthodox theologian," who was able to refute the rising rationalistic theology of such intellectuals as

Thus, Slovaks, including those in Slovakia, would have been well aware of the different theological and religious landscape in America.

³ For a wider description of American Lutheranism, see Charles P. Arand, *Testing the Boundaries: Windows to Lutheran Identity* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995). For a short description from a Slovak Lutheran perspective, see Jaroslav Pelikán, "Tešte sa 'Missouričania,' že nie ste údami United Lutheran Church in America," *Svedok* 14, no. 3 (February 1, 1920): 53–57.

⁴ "Štyristoročné narodeniny Kalvína," *Svedok* 3, no. 17 (July 15, 1909): 258.

Strauss and Renan.⁵ Pelikan embraced the accusation, agreeing with the Hungarian assertion that he and the Slovak Lutheran Synod were orthodox Lutherans, which was a different spirit than the Hungarian Lutheran Church. He called upon a historical model from the nineteenth century for right thinking Slovak Lutherans in the early twentieth century.

Mining a mix of Slovak sources and new American sources, *Svedok* was vigorously opposed to unionism. This rejection of unionism set an agenda and a tone that would remain throughout the early days of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Their American source was primarily the Missouri Synod, which had many years of learning how to express confessional, orthodox Lutheranism in the American context. For example, the editors of *Svedok* quoted from a sermon by Franz Pieper⁶ on Ezra 4. In that sermon, Pieper warned early on against the impact of unionism on the church. Franz Pieper was one of, if not the most, important theologians of the Missouri Synod during the latter decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. He was considered the heir to the Missouri's Synod most famous theologian and churchman, C. F. W. Walther.⁷ He was at his peak of influence within confessional Lutheran circles during the time before and during the Pelikan Movement. Pieper stated that "unionism is then indifference against the truth; it is without a confession, yes, renouncing Christ and his words."⁸ This view against unionistic church practices is amplified in his text on unionism, which was later translated by the Slovak Lutheran Synod pastor, Vojtko.⁹

⁵ [Ján] Pelikán, "Pozoruhodný ohlas," *Svedok* 10, no. 4 (February 15, 1916): 50.

⁶ L. Fuerbringer, "Dr. F. Pieper als Theolog," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 2, no. 11 (1931): 721–29.

⁷ For an overview of Walther's life and theology, see August R. Sueflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C. F. W. Walther* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000).

⁸ "Z Pieperových homílií," *Svedok* 2, no. 5 (January 15, 1908): 66. "Unionismus je ted ľahostajnosťou oproti pravde, je bezkonfesionálnosťou, áno zapieraním Krista a jeho slova."

⁹ Franz Pieper, *Unionismus*. Trans. Ján Vojtko. Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, MO. For an English translation of the text see Franz Pieper, "Unionism," *Concordia Journal* 11, no. 3 (May 1985): 94–100. The editor of the *Concordia Journal* remarks: "Dr. Franz Pieper presented an essay on Unionism und the title 'Einige Saetze

In addition to the Missouri Synod's theologians, the church magazines and other church publications also influenced the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Unionism was a theme of *The Lutheran Witness*, the Missouri Synod's English newspaper. The paper often reminded its readership that the Missouri Synod would only join in worship with other churches that adhered to the same doctrine: "We hold it to be a self-evident truth that, where there is no unity of faith, there ought to be no unity of worship."¹⁰ A drumbeat of arguments against unionism from Missouri Synod sources was steady leading up to the Pelikan Movement.

This resistance to unionism was extended beyond other Lutheran groups to the larger pan-protestant movements. The Interchurch World Movement is one example. This movement was formed to promote world evangelism. The response of *The Lutheran Witness* was to reject the organization but also to link such movements to churches "which are honeycombed with rationalism and unbelief, while the Churches that in a measure remain loyal to the Gospel have withheld official approval."¹¹ Resisting unionism was a tool to thwart the intrusion of ideas such

ueber den Unionismus.' The 1925 Convention authorized a translation." Pieper here defended the Missouri Synod's stance on Unionism and rejected criticism of the Synod for its hard line against such activity. In particular, he rebuked those who would assert that the Missouri Synod acts contrary to Christian love or out of arrogance. To them, Pieper responded "it is God's Word that must determine for us what Christian love is" and "God has so arranged His Word that we not only *may* know the truth, but *must know* it as long as we by faith continue in the words of Scripture and refuse to take our eyes off them" (98). In short, he argued that unionism is the rejection of the truths that are found in Scripture and those truths are attainable. Love, then, becomes sharing those truths for the sake of one's salvation and not for an artificial, outward form of unity. He concluded: "We can neither establish nor maintain church *fellowship*, except with those with whom we are in agreement in the Christian doctrine" (100). Thus, to reject unionism presupposes for Pieper (and thus for Vojtko) the rejection of any fellowship arrangement that would violate the Lutheran Churches doctrines as found in the Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. For the entire text translated in to English see Franz Pieper, *Unionism: What does the Bible say about Church-Union* (Oregon City, Oregon: Oregon City Press, 1925). See also Vojtko's own work on the topic, Ján Vojtko, *Jednota Duchá vo Sväzku Pokoja* (Chicago: Národnej Tiskárne, 1918). A copy is available in SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 371.03, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹⁰ [Theodore] G.[raebner], "Joint Reformation Celebrations," *The Lutheran Witness* 36, no. 19 (September 18, 1917): 292. Other examples abound in *The Lutheran Witness*. These articles would have likely had an impact on the Slovak Lutheran Synod's leadership, who would have read such statements in *The Lutheran Witness* or *The Lutheraner* prior to the Pelikan Movement

¹¹ [Theodore] G.[raebner], "The Interchurch World Movement," *The Lutheran Witness* 39, no. 3 (February 3, 1920): 39. Graebner began a series of short editorials against this aspect of unionism in 1920, which highlighted an additional "leviathan" for his readers. For other examples of this line of argument from *The Lutheran Witness* see:

as rationalism, which might unduly influence the church. Stronger words were to come. In the rejection of the interchurch movement, Graebner was certain of the illegitimacy of these movements. He said: “The Interchurch Movement is Anti-Church. Its principles are destructive of church-life. It proceeds on the assumption that the churches may unite for work no matter what their teachings may be.”¹² Moreover, such interchurch movements were seen as the source of the decline of Protestantism in America. From Graebner’s viewpoint, the interchurch movement was not founded on optimism, but rather on “ruin, decay, bankruptcy, and despair.”¹³ He added that the failure of a church, which is shown with its woeful lack of pastors and new members, is rooted in “tolerance of false doctrine.”¹⁴

The intensity of the polemic is important. Unionism was aid to the enemies of the Lutheran church and to the spiritual detriment of souls. Martin Sommer encapsulates this reaction well when he wrote:

... the daily press gladly prints unionistic sentiments. The Romanists like to read them; they know that such sentiments cause the Protestants to look with admiring eyes upon the unity of Rome. And the lodgemen love to read them. For isn’t that just exactly what the lodge stands for? And our people are endangered by reading them! We dare not cease, therefore, to give proper instruction concerning this soul-poison, and to warn our people against it.¹⁵

[Theodore] G.[raebner], “The Meaning of Interdenominational Movements,” *The Lutheran Witness* 39, no. 6 (March 16, 1920): 88–89; [Theodore] G.[raebner], “The Interchurch Mess of Pottage,” *The Lutheran Witness*, 39, no. 6 (March 16, 1920): 89; [Theodore] G.[raebner], “Lutherans in Interchurch?,” *The Lutheran Witness* 39, no. 7 (March 30, 1920): 102–103; [Martin S.] S.[ommer], “Is Unity or Union Close at Hand,” *The Lutheran Witness* 39, no. 9 (April 27, 1920): 133–34; [Theodore] G.[raebner], “The Interchurch Leviathan,” *The Lutheran Witness* 39, no. 9 (April 27 1920): 134; [Theodore] G.[raebner], “A Background of Ruin and Despair,” *The Lutheran Witness* 39, no. 9 (April 27, 1920): 134–5; [Martin S.] S.[ommer], “Shall the Church Take Orders from the World,” *The Lutheran Witness* 39, no. 10 (May 11, 1920): 149–50; [Theodore] G.[raebner], “The Interchurch Failure,” *The Lutheran Witness* 39, no. 12 (June 8, 1920): 181–82.

¹² G.[raebner], “The Interchurch Leviathan,” 134.

¹³ G.[raebner], “A Background of Ruin and Despair,” 134.

¹⁴ G.[raebner], “A Background of Ruin and Despair,” 135.

¹⁵ [Martin S.] S.[ommer], “Unionism in the Daily Press,” *The Lutheran Witness* 39, no. 4 (February 17, 1920): 56.

Sommer illuminated the linkage between the interchurch movement and the American Christian context when he said: “The Interchurch movement has all the earmarks of being inspired by Satan himself.”¹⁶ In response to any who would see such statements as combative, Sommer quoted Pieper, who spoke at an Atlantic District Conference, saying “we who are known as Missourians are generally accused of an extraordinary unfriendliness.” Sommer added that this perception is in part because Missourians “not only refuse to practise [sic] altar- and pulpit-fellowship with sectarians, but also refrain from church union and fraternal intercourse with those Lutheran synods that still countenance and suffer in their midst false doctrine and unionistic practises [sic].”¹⁷ Finally, unionism is not a goal of the Missouri Synod nor is it the goal of the Christian church: “Let us keep in mind that external union of all Christians into one synod or one church-body for business purposes is neither commended in God’s Word, nor is it essential for the best interests of the church.”¹⁸ Unionism, then, was a significant concern of the Slovak Lutheran Synod’s partner and most influential church body. That concern was to avoid unionism for the sake, if not the survival, of the orthodox Lutheran church.

From such polemics, members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod projected a similar voice in their own church and within the Slovak Lutheran community in America. In a lecture reprinted in *Svedok*, Bálent reiterated the concerns of the Slovak Lutheran Synod towards unionism in the world, which he saw clearly in Germany where they “sold out” the Lutheran faith and where he saw the church working closely with the liberalism and rationalism.¹⁹ Bálent, who had

¹⁶ S.[ommer], “Shall the Church Take Orders from the World,” 150.

¹⁷ [Martin S.] S.[ommer], “Are Missouri Lutherans Unfriendly and Unsocial?,” *The Lutheran Witness* 38, no. 19 (September 16, 1919): 297.

¹⁸ S.[ommer], “A Sane and Sober Statement on Church Union,” 315.

¹⁹ Theodor Bálent, “O hlavných úlohách pravovernej luteránsko-evangelickej aug. vyz. synody,” *Svedok* 3, no. 13 (May 15, 1909): 196.

experienced significant strife over such issues in two previous congregations, went on to outline the basis of true union between churches.²⁰ He noted that a union between churches is not primarily through a common, national language. He was referring to the Slovak Evangelical Union (SEU), who he felt had placed culture and language above confession. He also added that true church union did not depend on having the external commonality in the forms of worship (orders and ceremonies), nor the agreement on the articles of faith, if the meaning is understood differently, nor in the unity of common ministries such as missions. Unity must be based on the same spirit, the same faith, the same thinking and the same teaching in all the articles of faith. In this way, he hoped to avoid unionism, such as in the relationships between the Lutherans and the Calvinists, the London Evangelical Alliance, and the General Synod.²¹

This early reference against unionism staked out a position that would affect the church greatly in its relationships within the Slovak community. The Slovak Lutheran Synod aligned itself with churches and organizations that agreed with it confessionally rather than associations based on a mutual cultural heritage.²² For a theologically driven group, relationships that were ethnically close proved difficult to maintain. The Slovak Lutheran Synod had great angst in its

²⁰ June Granatir Alexander, *The Immigrant Church and Community*, (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 74–82. Alexander recounts Bálent’s experience at Holy Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh. He left that congregation because of their communion practices and other “religious irregularities” (76). Bálent had similar problems with the congregation Saint Lukáš; Pelikan had the same conflict with his early congregation, Saints Peter and Paul, in Chicago. See George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 58–62.

²¹ Theodor Bálent, “O hlavných úlohách pravovernej luteránsko-evangelickej aug. vyz. synody,” *Svedok* 3, no. 16 (July 1, 1909): 241–43.

²² Roger Finke and Rodney Stark posit the thesis that, in fact, those denominations that have “high demands and distinctive boundaries” (249) have historically within the American context resisted unionism and ecumenicalism best and grown the most. In short, the more costly the religion is, the more rewarding it becomes. They also add that denominations that choose unionistic relationships are almost always statistically in the decline and lack an internal vigor (236). This vigor, in defending a strict understanding of Lutheranism and the seeming unending growth of the Missouri Synod impressed the newly formed Slovak Lutheran Synod. See especially chapters six, “Why Unification Efforts Fail,” and seven “Why ‘Mainline’ Denominations Decline” of Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 197–283.

dealings with the SEU. The accusation of unionism (and syncretism) was levied against the SEU because the Synod perceived that the SEU was not concerned with the clear teachings of the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions.²³ The fight between these two Lutheran entities continued on the same theological grounds for many years.²⁴ This conflict was one of the more potent examples of the Slovak Lutheran Synod's application of unionism.

Other Lutheran bodies provided foils for the problems of unionism as well. If the Missouri Synod was a theological and intellectual influence moving the Slovak Lutheran Synod against unionism, the General Council provided an example of the perceived dangers of unionism. Because of the influence of the Missouri Synod, the Slovak Lutheran Synod's view the General Council was not formed independently. Representatives from the General Council and the Slovak Lutheran Synod bantered in various Slovak American periodicals. For example, a pastor associated with the General Council was against a sermon of Missourian and professor Franz Pieper, showing the theological divide between those siding with a Missourian viewpoint, such as the Slovak Lutheran Synod, and those with the General Council.²⁵

The Slovak Lutheran Synod was just as concerned about the general problems of unionism in American Christianity. A highlight of this American experience was the shared religious event at the 1916 Republican Convention, in which speakers from a number of different church bodies, including the Presbyterian, Catholic, Methodist, Jewish, and Episcopal representatives, provided worship and prayers. The Slovak Lutherans expressed their deep concern about this event, but

²³ Ján Pelikán, "Verejné osvedčenie," *Svedok* 2, no. 15 (June 15, 1908): 231–3. In another article, which was marking the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Slovak Evangelical Union, there was another attack on the syncretistic activities of the SEU and of its "compromises with the world." See "15. ročné jubileum Slov. Ev. Jenoty," *Svedok* 2, no. 15 (June 15, 1908): 236–37.

²⁴ For an expanded understanding of the conflict, see George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 63–67.

²⁵ "Cirkevné Zprávy," *Svedok* 2, no. 14 (June 1, 1908): 221.

also highlighted that the link was as liberal churchmen bonding together.²⁶ They perceived this act of unionism as “sheer comedy.”²⁷ The Slovak Lutheran Synod had no interest in joining with a larger pan-church movement.

Maintaining a Slovak Culture in America

Expressing their Lutheran understanding of the Christian faith was paramount to the Slovak Lutheran Synod. At the same time, these immigrants were keen to remain Slovak in culture and heritage and worked hard to maintain that aspect of their identity. To maintain this identity, they preserved their literature and language within the leadership of the church. The connection between nationalism and literature was evident at the collegiate and seminary levels. Within these institutions of higher learning, the Slovak Lutheran Synod attempted to keep alive its national and Lutheran traditions. Much of this heritage, they felt, was previously suppressed through the imposition of magyarization and rationalism. The Slovak Lutheran Synod had its own professor, who assisted in the teaching of the Slovak seminarians at a Missouri Synod seminary. The first Slovak professor to teach at the seminary level, Professor Štefan Tuhý, noted that a seminarian’s training in 1909 included the study of literature, and in particular, Slovak literature. Beyond the core studies in the Bible, History, Church History, and the Confessions, the students not only studied literature, such as Sladkovičov’s *Detvan*, but also participated in a “literary circle.” Here they read articles, lectures, poems, and participated in debates. He reported that “the students love to learn Slovak, they completely study our writers.”²⁸ As part of the

²⁶ “Zprávy z Ameriky: Liberalismus a Unionismus Non Plus Ultra,” *Svedok* 10, no. 12 (June 15, 1916): 191–92.

²⁷ “Zprávy z Ameriky: Liberalismus a Unionismus Non Plus Ultra,” 192.

²⁸ Štefan Tuhý, “Zápisnice zasedaní slov. ev. luth. Synody v Spoj. Štátoch Ameriky, odbývaných v dňoch 6., 7. a 8. sept. 1910, v chráme cirkve slov. ev. luth. Sv. Petra, v Connellsville, Pa.,” *Svedok* 5, no. 3 (December 15, 1910): 31–32. “Študenti sa radi učia slovensky, pilne študujú našich spisovateľov”

theological education for a Slovak Lutheran pastor, the Slovak Lutheran Synod had designated national literature as a core element of the curriculum to maintain their Slovak identity.

Likewise, other students were experiencing a broad education in Slovak culture and Slovak Lutheranism. In 1915, Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr. studied in Fort Wayne. Like the rest of the students, he had a rich program in the old gymnasium tradition, studying a host of subjects, including math, history, and geography to name a few. He had to study many languages, including German, English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French. They also learned theology in German, English, and Slovak, being able to quote from the Lutheran Catechism (by Schwan) in all three languages. Their courses demanded that they read Slovak magazines and Slovak history books (namely a text by J. Čajaka), and memorize hymns from the Slovak Hymnal. They also learned non-religious Slovak folk songs.²⁹ In these many ways, the next generation of Slovak Lutheran leaders kept close to the Slovak language and culture.

This attempt to pass on Slovak culture to the next generation was not just for the future pastors of the church. As Vojtko, the pastor at the congregation in Lakewood, Ohio reported, their youth had formed a “circle” dedicated to not only studying church literature, but also literature of the Slovak nation—all of it in Slovak!³⁰ Not only did the Slovak Lutherans want to preserve their own Lutheran identity through education, but also their cultural heritage. Whether at the highest levels of education or in the parish, the literary and historical aspects of the Slovak culture and nation remained important to the members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod.

For the common parishioner, the Synod took care to reinforce the Slovak expression of the faith through the hymnal. The hymnal was, in particular, an important part of the Slovak Lutheran experience not only because it was important to the piety of the people, but also

²⁹ “Naši Študenti vo Fort Wayne, Ind.,” *Svedok* 9, no. 6 (March 15, 1915): 101–103.

because the hymnal was a battle ground for orthodoxy. In Slovakia in the mid-nineteenth century, the Lutheran Church in Slovakia published a new hymnal, *Zpěvník* (1842). This new hymnal replaced the old hymnal, *Tranoscius*. The old hymnal had roots back to Jiří Tranovský (1592–1637),³¹ who compiled the hymnal in the seventeenth century in old Czech (1636). This older hymnal was originally called *Cithara Sanctorum*, *Písní Duchovních* or *Kancionál*.³² It was also in common use with the Czechs as well as the Silesians, who used the hymnal until 1865.³³ During the very difficult years of the Counter-Reformation, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this hymnal went through a number of printings, often in areas outside of Slovakia, providing a common bond for a persecuted people.³⁴ The time of rationalism, as the famous theologian and publisher of *Tranoscius* hymnal, Ján Mocko, called it, ended the dominance of the old hymnal.³⁵ The perceived difference between the two hymnals was stark to orthodox Lutherans. They saw the new hymnal as largely influenced by rationalism. Many, including the founding president of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, Lauček, viewed the document as the Devil's book (*kniha diabolská*).³⁶

What was the difference to the typical parishioner? As was recounted in the Slovak Lutheran Synod's church newspaper, *Pravda*: "The person who purchases the *Tranoscius*

³⁰ J.[án] V.[Vojtko], "Pracujme!," *Svedok* 6, no. 20 (September 1, 1912): 331.

³¹ Tranovský was important not only for his work on the hymnal and his ability to work with a number of Slavic nations in the region, but he also translated the Augsburg Confession into Czech in 1620. For a description of his career as a pastor, theologian and hymnist (the original hymnal had about 100 of his own hymns), see Andrew Wantula, "The Slavonic Luther," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 17, no. 10 (October 1946): 728–37.

³² Mich. Bodický, "Zpěvník a Kancionál," *Svedok* 7, no. 11 (April 15, 1913): 166. See also [Jaroslav] Pelikan, [Sr.], "The *Tranoscius* Tercenary," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 7, no. 2 (February 1936): 144–45.

³³ Mich. Bodický, "Zpěvník a Kancionál," 166.

³⁴ Ján Mocko, "Předmluva k novému vydání *Písní Duchovních*," *Tranoscius* (Akron, OH: Nakladem Slov. Lut. Vydavateľské Spoločnosti, 1918): 8–19.

³⁵ Mocko, "Předmluva k novému vydání *Písní Duchovních*," 19–27.

³⁶ Jozef Kuchárik, *Rozdiel Medzi *Tranosciusom* a *Zpěvníkom** (Streator, IL: Svedok Publishing House, 1917), 1. For a copy of this text, see SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 405, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

hymnal buys 99 pounds of sugar and one pound of sand; but the person who purchases the *Zpěvník* hymnal buys 99 pounds of sand and only one pound of sugar.”³⁷ That is to say, that the *Tranoscius* hymnal was viewed as more orthodox in its theology and much more edifying to the worshiper. For members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and other orthodox Slovak Lutherans, adopting the *Zpěvník* hymnal was considered a theological and spiritual tragedy. This conflict waged continuously in Slovakia for decades.

In particular, these orthodox Lutherans suggested that *Zpěvník* introduced a host of theological errors, including the idea that God did not come in the flesh, He did not become a man, Christ is not true God, Christ is not in Glory with the Father, Christ did not redeem and free the world from sin, the world and the Devil, and so on.³⁸ These assertions and many more were a result of the critical, rational study of the Biblical text during the nineteenth century. The new hymnal introduced a host of errors into the hymns carried over from the old hymnal.³⁹ Moreover, there was a radical increase in the number of hymns not from the old hymnal. Only 332 were carried over into the new hymnal, which had 842 hymns; and only 55 of those 332 were unchanged.⁴⁰ Particularly, hymns that were very specific to the Lutheran experience, for example, about the Augsburg Confession, were deleted.⁴¹ According to the Slovak Lutheran Synod, all of these modifications were products of rationalism.

³⁷ “Rozdiel medzi *Tranosciusom* a *Zpěvníkom*,” *Pravda* 2, no. 7 (July 15, 1922): 157. “Kto kupuje *Tranoscius*, kupuje 99 funtov cukru a funt piesku. Ale kto kupuje *Zpěvník*, kupuje 99 funtov piesku a len funt cukru.” This article is from Jozef Kuchárik, *Rozdiel Medzi *Tranosciusom* a *Zpěvníkom**.

³⁸ Jozef Kuchárik, *Rozdiel Medzi *Tranosciusom* a *Zpěvníkom** (Streator, IL: Svedok Publishing House, 1917), 4–5.

³⁹ Kuchárik’s text has listed out all the errors between the two hymnals. See Jozef Kuchárik, *Rozdiel Medzi *Tranosciusom* a *Zpěvníkom**, 5–28.

⁴⁰ Kuchárik, *Rozdiel Medzi *Tranosciusom* a *Zpěvníkom**, 39.

⁴¹ Kuchárik, *Rozdiel Medzi *Tranosciusom* a *Zpěvníkom**, 33.

Mocko, the Slovak champion of the movement to reinsert *Tranoscius* into the life of the church, was a pastor who recognized that rationalism had infiltrated the church through the hymnal.⁴² He provided the most recent printing of the hymnal (1895).⁴³ Mocko and *Tranoscius* are important because most Slovak parishioners actually experienced orthodox Lutheranism through worship and the hymnal. As a champion of orthodox Lutheranism, Mocko and the old hymnal are part of the Luther-Tranovský-Hurban⁴⁴ tradition. For example, Kollar, Hodža, and Hurban were all supportive initially of the new hymnal, but Hurban as well as his son, returned to the *Tranoscius* hymnal.⁴⁵ In contrast to the Slovak Lutheran Synod, the Slovak Lutheran Church accepted *Zpěvník* as their hymnal of choice.⁴⁶ Following the Mocko and Hurban traditions, the Slovak Lutheran Synod continued to fight for the *Tranoscius* hymnal in America, imbedding their congregations in the orthodox theology in a very practical way.

In addition to encouraging Slovak literature and language at the seminary and university levels as well as finding ways of encouraging the parishioner to engage Slovak Lutheran culture in an orthodox fashion, the Slovak Lutherans were very concerned to stay connected to the great Slovak nationalists, who they were quick to add were Christian thinkers as well. *Svedok*'s editor, Theodor Bálant, in 1909, when visiting the Slovak students in Springfield, found that they had a literary circle, where they read poetry from Hviezdoslav, which greatly pleased Bálant. He commented that "our students did well in that they did not forget the memory of the great man of

⁴² Kuchárik, *Rozdiel Medzi Tranosciusom a Zpěvníkom*, 3–4.

⁴³ Mich. Bodický, "Zpěvník a Kancionál," *Svedok* 7, no. 11 (April 15, 1913): 166.

⁴⁴ Kuchárik links Hurban to the old hymnal, *Tranoscius*, directly. Kuchárik, *Rozdiel Medzi Tranosciusom a Zpěvníkom*, 1–2.

⁴⁵ Mich. Bodický, "Zpěvník a Kancionál," *Svedok* 7, no. 11 (April 15, 1913): 168.

⁴⁶ Bishop Jur Janoška provided a preface to the 1921 printing of this hymnal. *Zpěvník* (Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš: Nákladom Spolku Tranoscius, 1921).

ours.”⁴⁷ The literature circle was a going concern as one of its students, J. M. Marciš, made a plea for money to buy books for this purpose.⁴⁸ For example, in 1911, the Slovak Lutheran Synod made another request for Slovak books to help the students in Springfield continue in their study of the Slovak language and literature.⁴⁹

In an effort to regain the Christian nature of their heroes, members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod resisted the effort by others to distill Christianity out of their Slovak leaders. The irony of using Christian Slovak thinkers, such as Kollár, Štur, Hurban, Šafárik, and Hviezdoslav for purposes other than Christian ones is not lost on the Slovak Lutheran Synod.⁵⁰ For them, the reality is the opposite; they argued that when reading any of these poets, it is clear these great thinkers and theologians profess God.⁵¹ This study of the confessional leaders of the nineteenth century was supported in Slovakia as well.⁵² Slovak Lutherans strove to keep these Slovak writers and philosophers in front of their congregations and people so that the connection between their culture and their faith could be maintained.

One of the greatest writers and poets of Slovakia was Hviezdoslav. Even in contemporary Slovakia, he is hailed often as the nation’s premier writer. Many within the Slovak Lutheran Synod also had great respect for him. For example, Bálant’s evaluation of Hviezdoslav raised the poet to mythical heights, but also recognized his dual role as a religious writer and a nationalist.

⁴⁷ Th.[eodore] B.[á]lent, “Hviezdoslavov večierok,” *Svedok* 3, no. 8 (March 1, 1909): 126. “Dobre urobili naši študenti, že nezapomenuli na túto pamiatku veľkého muža nášho.”

⁴⁸ J. M. Marciš, “Prosba,” *Svedok* 5, no. 2 (December 1, 1910): 22.

⁴⁹ J. Kolárik, “Dopisy,” *Svedok* 5, no. 22 (October 1, 1911): 362.

⁵⁰ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Poškvrňovanie mien slavných mužov,” *Svedok* 9, no. 17 (September 1, 1915): 272.

⁵¹ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Poškvrňovanie mien slavných mužov,” 273. The Slovak Lutheran Synod was concerned with the mixing of secular elements with the church and its truth. The author added that they should look to the pastors of the Missouri Synod for an example of a group of pastors who worked together, being of the same spirit.

⁵² “Zprávy,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34 (November 1920): 262. Here the magazine announced a Hurban reading circle. The editor quoted a Hurban poem, *Z temné noci bludných mámení*, which invokes the passion of Christ on the cross. See M. J. Hurban, “Z temné noci bludných mámení,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34 (December 1920): 266.

He commemorated Hviezdoslav by saying that “he is in truth a star, which is to us a gift of God ... so that he revealed to our nation in darkness its difficult church as well as national enslavement.”⁵³ This example of how they interpreted the guiding lights of Slovak language and culture demonstrated their desire to stay firmly embedded in their culture and their Lutheran heritage. It was a high value of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and eventually the Pelikan Movement to prove that they were true Slovaks in all ways as well as faithful Lutherans.

Relationships with the Lutherans in America

From this dual identity, in which the Slovak Lutheran Synod emphasized its strong orthodox Lutheran beliefs through its rejection of unionism, rationalism, and liberalism, and its continued allegiance to its Slovak heritage and its accompanying rejection of its Hungarian past, the synod entered into relationships with other groups of Lutherans and Christians in America. These two identity traits were high thresholds to overcome. Other groups were rarely strong enough confessional Lutherans or faithful enough to the Slovak immigrant community. Resisting unionism in America became an important way to resist the weaknesses of these other groups. Because of their theological understanding and their historical reaction to their European past, the Slovak Lutheran Synod pastors and members filtered their relationships with the American Lutheran denominations and societies through those experiences. Although they were well aware of the plethora of American denominations and even the rise of nondenominationalism, what was new to them was the number of American Lutheran churches and groups.⁵⁴

⁵³ Th.[edor] B.[álant], “Hviezdosavov večierok,” *Svedok* 3, no. 8 (March 1, 1909): 126–27. “Je opravdovou hviezdou, ktorá nám, čo dar Boží, slietla s neba, aby svietila národu našemu vo tmách jeho ťažkej cirkevnej i národnej poroby.”

⁵⁴ T. B., “Nedenominačnosť,” *Svedok* 13, no. 5 (March 1, 1919): 83–86.

They had many contacts with other Lutherans in America, but three relationships were most important in their early history. First, they had a strong relationship with the Missouri Synod, which was cemented by their inclusion in the Synodical Conference. Secondly, they were at odds with the other major Lutheran denominations, notably the General Synod and the General Council as well as the subsequent United Lutheran Church in America, which was formed primarily from the union of these two denominations. Thirdly, the closest relationship, which was also the most painful, was the relationship they had with the Slovak Evangelical Union, which started strong in the early years of the synod, but ended in bitterness.

Relationship with the Missouri Synod

The Slovak Lutheran Synod, which formed on September 2, 1902 in Connellsville, Pennsylvania, had nine pastors, four of which were members of the Missouri Synod. From the beginning, the Missouri Synod had a large impact on the formation of their pastors. At that time, the church announced that it was in “full accord” with the Missouri Synod.⁵⁵ Their cooperation in theological education intensified their early connections. Even in Slovakia, the connection with the Missouri Synod was explicitly trumpeted, especially in terms of training and doctrine.⁵⁶ In 1908, the Missouri Synod joined in fellowship with the Slovak Lutheran Synod. As one commentator notes:

The Slovak Synod’s resolve to live up to its officially declared confessional position was tested by two decades of controversy over several issues including the practice of open communion. Though it suffered losses because of it, the synod stood firm in opposing the unscriptural communion practice. Unable to establish a seminary of its own, the synod’s pastors received their training at Missouri’s seminaries, particularly

⁵⁵ Armin W. Schuetze, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000), 122.

⁵⁶ “Náboženský a cirkevný život našich bratov v Amerike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 19 (October 1905): 291–96.

at the Springfield Concordia. The close relationship with Missouri would continue until after the dissolution of the Synodical Conference ...⁵⁷

Also in 1908, as a sign of the close relationship between synods, the Slovak Lutheran Synod had 17 students at the different faculties of the Missouri Synod. By 1912, the number had risen to 21.⁵⁸ In just a few short years, the Slovak Lutheran Synod was in official church fellowship and had integrated their theological educational system with the Missouri Synod. This close cooperation enabled many of the pastors and church leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod to learn and grow side-by-side with the Missouri Synod's theologians and pastors.

From the contact between students who participated in the Missouri Synod's educational system, the relationship between the synods continued to grow and strengthen. This relationship grew into admiration in terms of its mission and reach. As the year 1912 approached, *Svedok* informed its readers of its admiration not only for the Missouri Synod's clear teaching and practice, but also for its growth and mission work.⁵⁹ They greatly appreciated the synod's ability to extend their reach as a growing, dynamic church body through the Synodical Conference. At the same time, they recognized and asserted that they were an independent church body. They were committed to fellowship with the Missouri Synod, but they wanted to find their own way, unbound by church or state interference. In reflecting on a copy of the church annual from the General Council, they noted, with some pride, that the Slovak Lutheran Synod was listed as a separate and independent church body from the Missouri Synod and not as a puppet of the

⁵⁷ Schuetze, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor*, 122.

⁵⁸ "Reformácia v Slovenskom Národe Vôbec," *Zápisnica*, 1919, 89.

⁵⁹ Ján Vojtko, "Niečo o Missii," *Svedok* 6, no. 1 (November 15, 1911): 11. The Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia also reported that the Missouri Synod was the largest of the Lutheran church bodies in America. See Ostriežsky, "Otázka uhorských evanjelikov v Amerike," *Cirkevné Listy* 28 (December 1914): 319.

Synod.⁶⁰ For the Slovak Lutheran Synod, this loose connection with the Missouri Synod was ideal. They were bound theologically into a brotherhood that gave them the reach of larger national and international church, yet they felt perfectly free to manage their own affairs.

To show the positive relationship with the Missouri Synod, the Slovak Lutheran Synod used the Hungarian Lutheran Church as a foil. In a blistering attack on their former church, the Slovak Lutheran Synod denounced the lack of support they had received from the Hungarians, including the dearth of missionary support from the old country. Conversely, they contrasted that support with the embrace they had received from the Missouri Synod. This German synod, or “Good Stepmother,” had by 1913 educated 23 of their Slovak youth at the Missouri Synod seminaries. They were starting to sense their growing ability to minister. Since they were developing the resources of a proper church, the result was the realization that the Slovaks in America were duty-bound to help the Slovaks in Hungary.⁶¹ It was in part the example of the Missouri Synod to the Slovak Lutheran Synod that encouraged them to imagine a place and time where they would be able to share what they understood and believed as right theology and right church practice with the Slovaks in the Kingdom of Hungary. The Missouri Synod was important to opening up possibilities to the Slovak Lutheran Synod to go beyond its American ministry.

Likewise to highlight the positive influence of the Missouri Synod, the Slovak Lutheran Synod used other American Lutheran groups as examples. *Svedok* emphasized that the Missouri Synod was according to the heart of God.⁶² In contrast, their mother church in Hungary and the

⁶⁰ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Zprávy,” *Svedok* 6, no. 21 (September 1, 1912): 342.

⁶¹ “Akú missiu by bola mala konať cirkev ev. a. v. v Uhorsku?,” *Svedok* 7, no. 24 (November 1, 1913): 374.

⁶² “K našim pomerom,” *Svedok* 8, no. 14 (June 1, 1914): 187.

General Council were lumped together as both pharisaical and false.⁶³ This distinction was not solely theological as the Slovak Synod Lutherans also had the perception that the General Council, for example, was working against the goals of their independent denomination.⁶⁴ Like the comparison with the Hungarian Lutheran Church, the Missouri Synod looked like an able and willing partner in their quest for Lutheran orthodoxy. Other American Lutheran denominations looked suspiciously like their Hungarian foes.

In 1915, in an explanation made to the members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, the connection between the two Synods was clearly mapped out for their parishioners in terms of importance, polity, and leadership. First, the Slovak Lutheran Synod was part of a large, important movement in that “the Synodical Conference is the largest Lutheran body in America and is most extensively distributed in the entire world.”⁶⁵ For a small church, a connection to a larger, dynamic church body was important to identify their place in the world. They were part of a very large confessional Lutheran movement.

Secondly, this fellowship had a new polity. This rejection of a European-style ecclesiology demonstrated a level of comfort in the Americanization of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. This church polity was in contrast to the authoritarian rule of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. With this in mind, leaders of the Synodical Conference, in contrast to Bishops, acted only as “humble

⁶³ “K našim pomerom,” 188.

⁶⁴ “K našim pomerom,” 188. The negative impact of the General Council was the attempt to do mission work among the Slovaks, in effect, splitting away a segment of the Slovaks from the Slovak Lutheran Synod. This split was realized after the war and nearly simultaneously with the Pelikan mission effort. The article admonished the Slovaks to rally to the Slovak Lutheran Synod, not aligning themselves with the General Council and their requests to join in union with them.

⁶⁵ *Americký-Kalendár na Rok 1915* (Streator, IL.: Svedok Publishing House, 1915), 37–39 cited in Carl S. Meyer, “The Missouri Synod and Other Lutherans Before 1918,” *Moving Frontiers*, ed. Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 261. Meyer also adds the following note: “The author is unknown—possibly Rev. Ján Pelikán. Trans. Kenneth Ballas, rev. By John Kova.”

servants.”⁶⁶ These Slovaks were most impressed with the character and theology of the men who served in the Missouri Synod, remarking that “here God’s Word is presented in its truth and purity.”⁶⁷ Although the size, polity, and character of the people were appreciated, the doctrinal bond held the Synodical Conference, the Slovak Lutheran Synod, and the Missouri Synod together.

The theological connection cemented these different national cultures together. In 1914, President Tuhý reflected this sentiment when he praised the 20 years of cooperation between the synods. He was encouraged by the planned future cooperation, not only in terms of Altar and Pulpit Fellowship, but also in other areas of ministry, including mission work. Tuhý made the distinction that the Missouri Synod was a German synod, adding that the Missouri Synod was not only a good partner in ministry, but also of a different ethnic, cultural, and national background.⁶⁸ He understood that their unity was based on being “precisely Lutheran” and not based on bonds of nationality.⁶⁹ Following Tuhý’s criteria of church fellowship, by the time of the Pelikan Movement, the Slovak Lutheran Synod had moved away from culture to determine its partners in ministry. This attitude of choosing theological allegiances over national ones foreshadows the eventual break between the Slovak Lutherans in American and in Slovakia.

On the eve of the actual Pelikan Movement in 1919, the Slovak Lutheran Synod reiterated the strong theological connection between the two synods. Recounting their mutual history, they shared that four of their original pastors were nurtured on the sound, orthodox faculty of the Missouri Synod. Two had completed all of their training at the Missouri Synod’s seminary in

⁶⁶ *Americký-Kalendár na Rok 1915*, 261.

⁶⁷ *Americký-Kalendár na Rok 1915*, 261.

⁶⁸ Štephan Tuhý, “Kázeň o vnútornej missii,” *Svedok* 8, no. 16, (July 1, 1914): 222.

⁶⁹ Štephan Tuhý, “Kázeň o vnútornej missii,” 222.

Springfield. Two had begun their work in Slovakia, but then finished at the other faculty in St. Louis.⁷⁰ The Slovak Lutheran Synod found that they could find the kind of teaching and theology that matched their own understanding of the clear teachings of the Reformation at the faculties of the Missouri Synod and the Synodical conference.⁷¹ This declaration in 1919 coincides with a turning point for the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Before this point, the Synod was still engaged in the possibility, at least, of union with other Slovak Lutherans. This strong allegiance with the Missouri Synod coupled with the break with the other Slovak Lutherans who joined with the ULCA made it clearer that the future of the Slovak Lutheran Synod was with the Synodical Conference and the Missouri Synod. The reason for the union between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Missouri Synod was the orthodox teaching of the Missouri Synod, which was felt to be the same teaching as the Reformation so,

... that between the known, so-called evangelical Lutheran church bodies here in the new world, the Missouri Synod upholds the divine teaching most agreeably and most faithfully; consequently, the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession Synod proved that it wants to hold on also to this clear teaching of the Reformation and the Word of God, of which the Missouri Synod holds on to.⁷²

Thanks in large part to the cooperation with the Missouri Synod, the priority of theological identity over cultural identity was firmly in the character of the Slovak Lutheran Synod.

Relationships with General Council, General Synod, and the ULCA

Dolak reports that during the early 1900s, after the Synod was founded in 1902, the Pennsylvania Synod of the General Council tried to establish closer relations with the Slovak Lutheran Synod, but these inquiries by the General Council were rebuffed, based on the fear that

⁷⁰ “Reformácia v Slovenskom Národe Vôbec,” *Zápisnica*, 1919, 88.

⁷¹ “Reformácia v Slovenskom Národe Vôbec,” 89.

⁷² “Reformácia v Slovenskom Národe Vôbec,” 89.

the Slovak Lutheran Synod would become a “mission of the General Council.”⁷³ This rejection of the General Council’s entreaties was a reaction against being overwhelmed by a much larger partner and to resist outside influences. The synod’s desire for independence was organizational. They were comfortable making alliances based on a common theology such as cooperating with the Missouri Synod. Those alliances required them to be within an ecclesiastical organization, the Synodical Conference. However, the Slovak Lutheran Synod still treasured its independence and did not want to be under the authority of another denomination or group.

Since no alliance seemed possible, the General Council began to work with the Slovak immigrants. The editors of *Svedok* rejected the work on the General Council in the Slovak Lutheran Synod’s sphere of influence. In a strong public rebuke and warning, they characterized the General Council’s activity as the work of an enemy. Singled out was their false teaching. The General Council’s motives and practices were also questions, since it had aligned itself not with a church but a society with a hidden agenda.⁷⁴

Jozef Kuchárik, who would serve in Slovakia as a missionary, names this alliance. The General Council had become an ally of those within the Slovak Evangelical Union seeking their own expression of a Slovak Lutheran Church. His comments, which were delivered at the Missouri Synod’s Concordia College in Springfield, Ill., was a detailed and documented account of the differences between the General Council and the Slovak Lutheran Synod, covering such topics as justification of a person before God, the Lord’s Supper, and Millennialism. The General Council also did not follow the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions, because it did not assent

⁷³ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 54. Dolak also discusses the effort of the General Council to court and recruit Slovak pastors for service and mission; Pelikan rejected what he feared was interference in their Synod’s mission (70).

⁷⁴ “Zprávy,” *Svedok* 6, no. 2 (December 1, 1911): 27.

that the Pope was the anti-Christ, which is one of the doctrines of confessional Lutherans.⁷⁵ In studying one of their theologians, moreover, he found fundamental flaws in the teaching of the church, including the belief that man had a free will.⁷⁶ Kuchárik's conclusion was that it was not possible to work with the General Council. He added that working with the General Council would be a unionistic practice because the church did not follow the clear teachings of the Word of God.⁷⁷ Vojtko later charged that the General Council was the most dangerous form of American Lutheranism for its many violations of confessional Lutheran doctrine and practice.⁷⁸

Likewise, the General Synod was also suspect for its theology and practice. For example, the official rejection by the General Synod of the Formula of Concord as an authoritative document put them in the same pond "swimming in the water of Catholicism and sectarianism."⁷⁹ However, the Slovak Lutheran Synod's critique of the General Synod was not without some nuance. The General Synod's seeming lukewarm association with the Formula of Concord provided some ambiguity. The Slovak Lutheran Synod stated that there were two sides in the General Synod: one side was more dedicated to the Formula and the other side did not want to view anything through the Formula.⁸⁰ Although there was this struggle within the

⁷⁵ Jozef Kuchárik, "Rozdiel v učení a praxi našej Synody a nemeckej Synody zvanej 'General Council'," *Svedok* 6, no. 6 (February 1, 1912): 97–100. See also Jozef Kuchárik, "Rozdiel v učení a praxi našej Synody a nemeckej Synody zvanej 'General Council,'" *Svedok* 6, no. 7 (February 15, 1912): 109–110.

⁷⁶ Joseph Kuchárik, "Čo General Council skutočne učí," *Svedok* 8, no. 15 (June 15, 1914): 203. "... že je General Council falošne veriace cirkevné teleso a unionistická cirkevná spoločnosť." In terms of the teachings of one of their theologians, they used as an example a Dr. Seisz, who taught that a person has free will, that is whether one can decide for the Word of God or not ("človek má svobodnú vôľu, že buďto môže prijať Slovo Božie alebo nie"). Kuchárik responded with quotes from the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord (204–205). Other concerns of Kuchárik included the denial of the Real Presence (206) and unionism (207).

⁷⁷ Jozef Kuchárik, "Rozdiel v učení a praxi našej Synody a nemeckej Synody zvanej 'General Council'," *Svedok* 6, no. 6 (February 1, 1912): 100.

⁷⁸ J.[án] V.[ojtko], "Spojenie luteránov," *Svedok* 12, no. 2 (January 15, 1918): 22.

⁷⁹ Theodor Bálent, "O hlavných úlohách pravovernej luteránsko-evangelickej aug. vyz. synody," *Svedok* 3, no. 13 (May 15, 1909): 196. "... ktorá sa cele planí do vôd katolicizmu a sektárstva."

⁸⁰ "Cirkevné Zprávy," *Svedok*, 15 April 1908, 174. For the seeming lack of respect for the Formula of Concord within the General Council and General Synod, see also "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v

General Synod, the conclusion was that “unionism has infiltrated the entire General Synod.”⁸¹

Similar to the General Council, the Slovak Lutheran Synod did not view the General Synod as a trustworthy partner in developing a confessional Lutheran identity in America.

Beyond the theological concerns, there were hints of old world chauvinism. When the General Council announced a new cathedral in Madison, Wisconsin, praising the introduction of English language worship and the integration of the church into American society, the editors of *Svedok* condemned the new English ministry based on their experience with the Hungarian Lutheran Church. The introduction of one language and one culture, in this case English and American, respectively, appeared to be analogous to Hungarian magyarization. Moreover, chauvinism and poor theology seemed to go hand-in-hand. The General Council was seen as deficient theologically, just as the Hungarian Lutheran Church was perceived in the old country.⁸² The leadership of the Slovak Lutheran Synod was able to find similar concerns in the American Lutherans as they found in the Hungarian Lutheran Church.

With the Missouri Synod, educational cooperation was understood as a blessing. Education became another point of contention with the other American Lutheran denominations. One of the strengths of the Missouri Synod had been its educational system, which was robust from the elementary school through the university levels. This relatively large educational system was a great marvel to the Slovak Lutherans, who saw in it a great example of an ethnically specific, confessional Lutheran system that reached from the grade school level to the seminary level. This system was in stark contrast to the Kingdom of Hungary under magyarization. The editors of *Svedok* came out strongly against the General Council before the war because the General

Československu,” *Svedok* 13, no. 12 (June 15, 1919): 223.

⁸¹ “Cirkevné Zprávy,” 174. “Unionismus preniknul celou generálnou synodou.”

⁸² “Zprávy z Ameriky,” *Svedok* 12, no. 5 (March 1, 1918): 75.

Council provided an educational alternative for Slovak Lutherans in America. The Slovak Lutheran Synod saw this activity as a competitor and a false church, trying to educate Slovak students in the ministry.⁸³ They saw the importance of educating their youth in a confessional manner. The leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod lamented also the small number of parish schools in such denominations as the General Council, which the Slovaks saw as a source of their poor teaching and practice.⁸⁴ This concern about the General Council parish schools probably had more to do with the theological teaching and practice, but nonetheless showed concern over an association with the General Council and its less than competitive education system.

The General Council and the General Synod merged to form the lion's share of the new United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA). During the decade before the union, the Slovak Lutheran Synod questioned the theological orthodoxy of those denominations. New immigrants might not have been able to discern the differences between the Lutheran churches. To assist them, the Slovak Lutheran Synod provided consistent analysis of their failure as confessional Lutheran Churches. For example, as early as 1909, *Svedok* noted that the General Synod did not accept the other symbols of the church beyond the Augsburg Confession, and they accepted the Augsburg Confession in name only.⁸⁵ The conclusion was that "in truth they are not still Lutherans."⁸⁶

Moreover, in 1911, an author in *Svedok* listed out many of the perceived ills of the General Council. Quoting mainly from documents written in the 1870s, the author provided evidence of a

⁸³ "Chránite sa falošných prorokov zo Synody General Councilu," *Svedok* 7, no. 6 (February 1, 1913): 85–86.

⁸⁴ "Zprávy," *Svedok* 5, no. 23 (October 15, 1911): 375.

⁸⁵ "Niečo o generálnej synode," *Svedok* 3, no. 24 (November 1, 1909): 369–70.

⁸⁶ "Niečo o generálnej synode," 371. "V pravde nie sú tu už evanjelici."

number of key theological errors, concerning the Lord's Supper, Millennialism, and the status of the Pope.⁸⁷ Foreshadowing the future union, the most severe condemnations were for the unionistic practices of the denomination, which included sharing the pulpit and the communion table with other churches of the Reformation, including the Calvinists, the Presbyterians, and other Lutheran groups.⁸⁸ In conclusion, the General Council was understood as an association that was false and dangerous in its teachings about the true church.⁸⁹

Near the time of the union, in 1917, the polemic against three of the Synods, the General Synod, the General Council, and the United Synod of the East continued, noting that even though they might want to join in a union, they were doing so without agreement on doctrine.⁹⁰ In 1919, the laments were similar. The two larger Synods were described together as part of a great confusion (*babylonský zmätok*), which was a reflection of the myriad of different theological positions that were joining to make the union of these synods.⁹¹ Moreover, it was judged as insufficient to unite based on the Augsburg Confession alone. They should have stood together in faith, in spirit, in teaching, and in practice.⁹² By implication, their union was not theologically deep enough.

At the time of the union, the Slovak Lutheran Synod produced a constant and consistent drum of protest against such unionistic activities. In particular, six areas of error were presented: the teaching on the inspiration of the Holy Scripture, the teaching on conversion, the false teaching of evolution, the teaching on the Sabbath Day, Prohibition Movement, and the teaching

⁸⁷ Farár—Mladík [pseud.], "Nie Osobné Veci, Ale Veci Učenia," *Svedok* 5, no. 10 (April 1, 1911): 143–44.

⁸⁸ Farár—Mladík [pseud.], "Nie Osobné Veci, Ale Veci Učenia," 144–45.

⁸⁹ Farár—Mladík [pseud.], "Nie Osobné Veci, Ale Veci Učenia," 145.

⁹⁰ "Zprávy z Ameriky," *Svedok* 11, no. 16 (August 15, 1917): 254.

⁹¹ J. Manka, "Aký užitek majú cirkvi zo synodálneho spojenia?" *Svedok* 13, no. 2 (January 15, 1919): 254.

⁹² "Spojenie," *Svedok* 13, no. 12 (June 15, 1919): 215.

on election and foreknowledge.⁹³ When the ULCA formed, the Slovak Lutheran Synod roundly rebuked the union. Any Slovaks who would join with them were deemed equally misguided.⁹⁴ The issue here was not the heart of the individuals who believe. It was rather with the church's teaching.⁹⁵

The ULCA would have agreed with an accusation that it was unionistic in so much as it sought, as its founding constitution illuminates, "the unification of all Lutherans in one orthodox faith."⁹⁶ In their Washington Declaration of 1920, they stated that "in the case of those Church Bodies calling themselves Evangelical Lutheran, and subscribing to the Confessions which have always been regarded as the standards of the Evangelical Lutheran doctrine, The United Lutheran Church in America recognizes no doctrinal reasons against complete co-operation and organic union with such bodies."⁹⁷ The ULCA was a force for unity within American Lutheranism in the early twentieth century and produced three separate documents describing its understanding of unity.⁹⁸

From the Slovak Lutheran Synod's viewpoint not all was perfect in this new union. The General Synod was concerned about only adhering to the Augsburg Confession and not all the texts of the Book of Concord.⁹⁹ Moreover, the General Synod subscribed to the Augsburg Confession *zo srdca* or from the heart.¹⁰⁰ Conflict ensued between the General Synod and the

⁹³ "Spojenie," *Svedok* 13, no. 13 (July 1, 1919): 232–35.

⁹⁴ "Spojenie," *Svedok* 13, no. 15 (August 1, 1919): 273–75.

⁹⁵ "Spojenie," *Svedok* 13, no. 16 (August 15, 1919): 295–97.

⁹⁶ Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 275. Wolf has collected a series of documents describing the ULCA's position on church unity, which was to provide a middle way, as Wolf describes it, towards Church unity. See pages 345–59.

⁹⁷ Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America*, 350.

⁹⁸ Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America*, 322.

⁹⁹ "Vierovyznanská otázka v generálnej synode," *Svedok* 2, no. 6 (February 1, 1908): 88.

¹⁰⁰ "Vierovyznanská otázka v generálnej synode," 89.

General Council over the issues of which books were normative and how they were to be received.¹⁰¹ In spite of such concerns, the union went forward and provided yet another example to the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the problems of unionism in the American context.

The General Synod was ambivalent about the necessity to subscribe to the whole Book of Concord. The *Lutheran Observer*, the church magazine affiliated with the General Synod, argued for lack of support for subscription to the Book of Concord:

Some of our Lutheran exchanges that represent bodies whose confessional basis is the entire Book of Concord have lately felt it incumbent on them to publish a good many columns of the matter in explanation and defense of this basis. These articles have been interesting in varying degrees, but they have added nothing new to the literature of the subject. What they have set forth has been, for the most part, some historical facts connected with the origin of the different documents that make up the Book of Concord, together with brief summaries of the teachings set forth in each. What they have not done is to explain why two-thirds of the Lutheran population of the world have nevertheless declined to make the entire Book of Concord their confessional basis.¹⁰²

This lack of worldwide support for the Book of Concord demonstrated their viewpoint that it was enough to subscribe to the Augsburg Confession and not the entire Book of Concord. The Slovak Lutheran Synod was very aware of the differences between the two major synods, the General Synod and General Council, noting in the past that the General Council had protested against the non-biblical teachings of the General Synod. Moreover, they recognized the General Synod as a church body that often deviated from the clear teaching of Scripture and the Word of God.¹⁰³ The

¹⁰¹ J. S. Braren, "The Burning Question," *The Lutheran Observer* 76, no. 6 (February 7, 1908): 6. This article reviews the conflict confronting the General Synod, which was discussed in *Svedok*, and its discussions with the General Council concerning subscription to the Augsburg Confession and the Book of Concord. The article makes the distinction of the *quia* "because they agree" and *quantenus* "so far as they agree" modes of subscription, falling on the side of *quantenus* with the Word of God. Importantly, Braren asserted that "I make bold to say, that there are quite a few men in the Missouri Synod who are restive under these unnecessary doctrinal restraints [which are the doctrinal constraints due to full subscription to the Book of Concord]; and among them, without a doubt, you would also find the above mentioned two classes."

¹⁰² M. H. Valentine, "Editorial Notes," *The Lutheran Observer* 75, no. 46 (November 15, 1907) 15.

¹⁰³ "Zprávy z Ameriky," *Svedok* 12, no. 15 (August 1, 1918): 250. This article is probably a reaction to an article from *The Lutheran Witness*, the Missouri Synod's English language church newspaper.

Slovak Lutheran Synod recognized the varied opinions that formed the ULCA and its mixture of confessional backgrounds. The sum of the synods differed from the Slovak Lutheran Synod's theology and its goal of a confessional Slovak Lutheran church in America.

Last Chance for Slovak Lutheran Unity

Even though the confessional lines within American Lutheranism were growing more distinct, one last hope for Slovak Lutheran unity was attempted. In the spring and summer of 1919, the Slovak Lutherans made a series of attempts to resolve their differences and create one, unified Slovak Lutheran church. There were two main factions, the Slovak Lutheran Synod and those Slovaks associated with the ULCA. The members of this association with the ULCA were a faction that broke from the original Slovak Lutheran Synod, which was formed in 1902. This new group included the first president and secretary of that nascent church body, Daniel Lauček. In 1919 at the Slovak Lutheran Congress in Pittsburgh, the two sides sought to reunite their disparate church bodies. The perception of the Slovak Lutheran Synod members was that those representing the ULCA were interested in unity based along mutual cultural ties and a broad understanding of religious convictions while those representing the Slovak Lutheran Synod focused on unity based on doctrinal agreement.¹⁰⁴ At the end of the conference in April, there seemed to be a general desire to “reconstruct our religious-community life.”¹⁰⁵ They were also able to agree on eight points, including that the union should work together on community, the

¹⁰⁴ For a description of this event from the perspective of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, see “Kongress slovenských evanjelikov a. v.,” *Svedok* 13, no. 14 (July 15, 1919): 257–62. From the author's viewpoint, and the author was probably Pelikan, the issues were theological. The delegation from the Slovak Lutheran Synod brought their own document explaining their position (*Články v Našom Stanovisku*), which covered such topics as The Holy Scriptures, God, Son of God, the way of salvation, sin, and many others. They also expressed deep concerns about the practices of members of the ULCA and their unionistic ways.

¹⁰⁵ *Zápisnica z poradnej schôdze slovenských evanjelikov aug. vierovyznania*, pamphlet, page 1, April 8, 1919, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 16, Folder 35, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

Slovak language and religious tasks.¹⁰⁶ Surprisingly, at the end of the Congress, there seemed to be unity—or at least hope remained.

This plan for unity did not last long. Pelikan hinted at the coming conflict when he asked if the goal of the union should be more than an ethnic organization; others were against the term “union” (*sväz*).¹⁰⁷ However, by the time of the national conference of the Slovak Lutheran Synod later that summer, the synod had repudiated this unity on doctrinal grounds and refused to fund the Alliance of Slovak Lutherans in the United States (*Sväz Slov. Evanjelikov a. v. v Amerike*), the official name of the all but defunct attempt at unity.¹⁰⁸ They had four points. First, the synod claimed that they had true unity based on common teaching, faith, confession, and life. Secondly, they would gladly join with others who stood with the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. Thirdly, the Slovak Lutheran Synod did not want to stand with a church that did not stand with the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. Finally, since the ULCA did not stand with the word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, they could not join with the ULCA or its partners. In the end, the synod realized that the meeting was for nationalistic reasons, and for the Slovak Lutheran Synod those reasons could not trump the theological necessities for union.¹⁰⁹ The conclusion was that no church unity was possible between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and Slovak Lutherans within the ULCA.

By the time of the split between the two Slovak Lutheran bodies in America in 1919, the leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod had heard the accusation that they were the cause of the

¹⁰⁶ *Zápisnica z poradnej schôdze slovenských evanjelikov aug. vierovyznania.*

¹⁰⁷ *Zápisnica z poradnej schôdze slovenských evanjelikov aug. vierovyznania.*

¹⁰⁸ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 87–99. Dolak’s description provides a detailed account of the many events leading to the last serious attempt to have one Slovak Lutheran Church in America. These events are contemporaneous with the meetings for a new Czechoslovak state.

¹⁰⁹ “Kongress slovenských evanjelikov a. v.,” *Svedok* 13, no. 14 (July 15, 1919): 262.

broken unity. In direct response to the chorus of accusations claiming that the Slovak Lutheran Synod was a schismatic element in the world of Slovak American Lutheran unity, they made their case. They argued that they had for the previous 17 years, from the founding of the Slovak Lutheran Synod to that moment, “dedicated to aspire to maintain and to perpetuate peace, love, and unity;” yet, they resisted and ultimately rejected the Alliance out of a desire to find unity based on Biblical truth. They concluded that “of course we condemn each false unity and love, but we seek true unity and love!”¹¹⁰ When forced to choose between the hand of fellowship and truth, that people’s peace does not have to rule the truth of God, but the truth [rules over] peace.¹¹¹ This attempt at unity of Slovak Lutheranism in America lasted just a little more than a year.

Rise of the ULCA and Zion Synod as an Alternative Slovak Lutheran Expression

After the rejection of the Alliance in 1919, the now Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC)¹¹² was watching the larger events in American Lutheranism. They saw a great merger of larger Lutheran churches; namely, the General Council, General Synod, and the United Synod of the South joined, forming what Slovak Lutheran Synod saw as a union of the body but not of the spirit.¹¹³ This new church body, the United Lutheran Church in America, became the associated

¹¹⁰ “Reč predsedu,” *Zápisnica*, 1919, 7.

¹¹¹ “Reč predsedu,” 10. “Ľudský pokoj nemá opanúvať pravdu Božiu, ale pravda pokoj.”

¹¹² The name had changed at this point, but I will continue to use the Slovak Lutheran Synod as the name of the church body.

¹¹³ “Reč predsedu,” 6. “Ale toto je len spojenie bez sjednotenia, jednota tel a nie jednota ducha” For a detailed discussion of the theological implications of the merger see Charles P. Arand, *Testing the Boundries: Windows to Lutheran Identity*, 181–206. In this section, Arand expands upon the theological “window” used by the United Lutheran Church in America to form its union. He also adds how their perspective on the Lutheran Confessions as heirlooms influenced subsequent church bodies formed from the ULCA. For a description of the events and reasons for the formation of the ULCA, see Fred W. Meuser, “Facing the Twentieth Century: 1900–1930,” *The Lutherans in North America*, ed. E. Clifford Nelson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 374–77. Meuser notes here that “Doctrinally, the new United Lutheran Church in America stood precisely where its constituent synods had—the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God were accepted as the infallible rule of faith and practice; the three ecumenical creeds were affirmed; the unaltered Augsburg Confession was recognized as the basic

church body that proved to be in opposition to the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Whereas the Slovak Lutheran Synod was aligned with the Missouri Synod and its understanding of doctrinal agreement as the basis for church unity, the Slovak Lutherans who associated themselves with the ULCA were more concerned, it was felt, with subscription to the Confessions without declaring agreement with the individual doctrines held within them. It was enough to say that one subscribes to the Confessions without deliberating on the totality of the theological ramifications of that subscription. This perspective allowed for a broader understanding of Lutheran identity.

The ULCA was established through its constitution on November 14, 1918.¹¹⁴ The merger that formed the ULCA was rejected not only on theological grounds. The editor of *The Lutheran Witness* said that “faith without works is dead, and profession without practice is a scrap of paper.”¹¹⁵ The view of any unionist activity was strongly resisted by the Missouri Synod:

The road of the unionists – do you see whither it leads? It leads to a dechristianized Church, it leads towards Masonry, and those who are informed know that Masons hold in their hands the whip and the reins by which the Church is to be driven along this road. But, praise be to God! there [sic] are still some who are not ignorant of Satan’s devices. Let us not make the first step on this road towards a dechristianized Church, and we shall not make the last.¹¹⁶

doctrinal statement of Lutheranism, along with the other Lutheran confessions as elaborations of Lutheran doctrine ... An invitation in the constitution’s preamble for all Lutheran Synods in America to unite with the new church on this basis was regarded by its framers as a great contribution to further unity but by the more conservative synods as an arrogant affront.”

¹¹⁴ Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 274–75.

¹¹⁵ Theodore Graebner, “The Merger,” *The Lutheran Witness* 37, no. 22 (October 29, 1918): 341. For a complete understanding of the Missouriian argument against the merger that formed the ULCA, see also Theodore Graebner, “The Merger,” *The Lutheran Witness* 37, no. 23 (November 12, 1918): 354–56, Theodore Graebner, “The Merger,” *The Lutheran Witness* 37, no. 24 (November 26, 1918): 372–73, Theodore Graebner, “The Merger,” *The Lutheran Witness* 37, no. 25 (December 10, 1918): 386–87, and Theodore Graebner, “The Merger,” *The Lutheran Witness* 37, no. 26 (December 24, 1918): 403–406. The last of this five part series deals most explicitly with unionism. It concludes that “unfortunately, the very principle on which the Merger is built is unionistic, un-Lutheran” (406).

¹¹⁶ [Martin S.] S.[ommer], “The Road of the Unionists—Whither Does it Lead?” *The Lutheran Witness*, 4 March 1919, 77.

The Missouri Synod came out against the merger and refused to entertain the idea of a merger with the ULCA, even though they were invited to join. Although they saw that on paper the merger appeared Lutheran, in practice the ULCA did not behave to the Missouri Synod like a confessional Lutheran church. As one of the editors of *The Lutheran Witness* asked, "... what will protestations avail when un-Lutheran practice passes unchallenged in the constituent bodies?"¹¹⁷ Intolerance of unionism was a badge of honor for the Missourian:

May God preserve to us this truly Christlike intolerance, and may He preserve us from the tolerance of false doctrine and unscriptural practice of some who bear the Lutheran name. This He will do if we remain humble. When we begin to glorify the Lutheran Church as an organization, instead of glorifying Christ by taking upon ourselves the reproach of the Gospel, we have become fit material for the unionistic church-politician to work upon.¹¹⁸

Graebner, the editor of *The Lutheran Witness*, was very serious about the Synod's understanding on unionism: in short, it meant the death of the church. He opined that "without question, there is an epidemic of unionism raging in the body of Protestantism ... the Lutheran Church in the United States was killed by unionism a century ago ... Unionism is a disease which is 100 percent fatal."¹¹⁹ These comments were reflections of the merger. Much in the same way that unionism was perceived to mean the death of confessional Lutheranism in the German and Hungarian contexts, so too unionism in America was perceived as a significant problem for the survival of confessional American Lutheranism.

The Zion Synod was formed on June 10–11, 1919 in Braddock, Pennsylvania as the Slovak Evangelical "Zion" Synod. They were originally formed as a conference of the ULCA, but by the end of session the pastors, with the help of representatives from the ULCA, formed a synod

¹¹⁷ [Theodore] G.[raebner], "Why We Cannot Join the Merger," *The Lutheran Witness* 37, no. 2 (January 22, 1918): 22.

¹¹⁸ [Theodore] G.[raebner], "Intolerance of Paul the Apostle," *The Lutheran Witness* 38, no. 6 (March 18, 1919): 90.

(or district) within the ULCA and had drafted a constitution.¹²⁰ The first synodical conference was held November 11–12, 1919. Aided by representatives from the ULCA, they began to take on a fuller role within the ULCA, including supporting the denomination’s efforts to help war torn Europe and to perform mission work in Asia and Africa.¹²¹ By an October 1920 meeting of the ULCA, these Slovak Lutherans had organized themselves as a synod and provided a constitution that satisfied the ULCA so that their executive boards recommended the reception of the synod.¹²² The Slovak Lutheran Church in Slovakia responded warmly to the ULCA’s reception of this new synod. In their 1922 Biennial Convention, the leadership of the Slovak Lutherans, including the Bishop, President of the General Evangelical Lutheran Church in Slovakia, sent a letter greeting the convention. In the letter, they also announced in the conclusion “an agreement of co-operation between [the ULCA] and our Church.”¹²³ They made a special effort to frame the greetings and fellowship in terms of the Zion Synod: “... and particularly since our brethren, countrymen, associate in the Zion Synod, are members of your great ecclesiastical organization, leads us to approach and address you, in order that we may greet you with a brotherly greeting in your assembly.”¹²⁴ The strong relational ties between the Zion Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Church in Slovakia were evident from the genesis of the Zion Synod. This relationship proved to be in sharp contrast with the relationship between the

¹¹⁹ [Theodore] G.[raebner], “Unionism,” *The Lutheran Witness* 37, no. 37 (April 2, 1918): 98–99.

¹²⁰ John Body, *History of the Slovak Zion Synod LCA* (Chicago, Slovak Zion Synod, 1976), 133–34. Body includes the text of this initial constitution.

¹²¹ John Body, *History of the Slovak Zion Synod LCA* (Chicago, Slovak Zion Synod, 1976), 135–36.

¹²² Minutes of the Second Biennial Convention of The United Lutheran Church in America, (Washington, D. C., October 19–27, 1920), 68.

¹²³ Minutes of the Third Biennial Convention of The United Lutheran Church in America, 311.

¹²⁴ Minutes of the Third Biennial Convention of The United Lutheran Church in America, 310.

Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Church as evident in the events of the Pelikan Movement.

The reaction from the Slovak Lutheran Synod was quite different. Their concerns about the ULCA were already well established; they wanted nothing to do with the new church body.¹²⁵ To the Slovak Lutheran Synod, the Zion Synod represented a step backwards. The Zion Synod's allegiance to this heterodox new church body, the ULCA, was similar to the work of Raffay, who was now famous in America for his mistreatment of Slovak Lutherans.¹²⁶ The association with Hungarian Lutheranism also represented an association with liberalism and unionism. This comparison also represented a cultural relativism that bent church to culture rather than putting church under the authority of the Scripture and the Confessions.¹²⁷ Once again, it was Hurban who provided the counter argument to the Hungarian "rationalism and unionism" that the Slovak Lutheran Synod now found extant in the Zion Synod.¹²⁸

In contrast, the best expression of orthodox Lutheranism was the Missouri Synod: "After all, [the Missouri Synod] does not suffer in its own circle sinful rationalism and unionism, neither in teaching or in practice."¹²⁹ Thus, only those associated with the Missouri Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Synod had the right teaching and practice; those Slovak pastors who had joined

¹²⁵ "Na ktorej strane je vina?," *Svedok* 13, no. 17 (August 30, 1919): 320.

¹²⁶ "Na ktorej strane je vina?," 322. See also [Jozef] Kuchárik, "'Sion' Synoda svedčí sama proti sebe," *Svedok* 13, no. 20 (October 15, 1919): 383–88, where the author made more explicit the historical connection of Raffay to the General Council as well as other officials from the Hungarian Lutheran Church and the General Synod.

¹²⁷ "Na ktorej strane je vina?," *Svedok* 13, no. 21 (November 1, 1919): 413.

¹²⁸ "Na ktorej strane je vina?," *Svedok* 13, no. 17 (August 30 1919): 322. Hurban was also used as an example of the defense against unionism with Czech protestant confessions, which was becoming a real concern at this time. See J. V., "Dvojaké spojenie našej cirkvi na Slovensku," *Svedok* 13, no. 18 (September 15, 1919): 350–51.

¹²⁹ "Na ktorej strane je vina?," *Svedok* 13, no. 17 (August 30 1919): 322. "Ved' ona netrpí v svojom kruhu hriešneho racionalismu a unionismu, ani v učení ani v praxi." Examples of teachings that the Missouri Synod resisted included evolution, skeptical liberalism, atheistic naturalism and the higher critical methods to study the Bible. See "Na ktorej strane je vina?," *Svedok* 13, no. 20 (October 15, 1919): 382.

the ULCA “suffer false teaching and unchristian practice.”¹³⁰ The Slovak Lutheran Synod held tight to its viewpoint that they represented true Lutheranism, even embracing the insult that they were in “the spirit of Prussian-Missouri absolutism.”¹³¹ Slovak Lutheranism was officially split between two competing synods or Lutheran denominations. The same basic concerns of unionism, rationalism, and liberalism were repeatedly resurrected to remind the faithful within the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the concerns of this separate expression of Slovak Lutheranism in America as well as to explain the division that would not heal.¹³²

By the next Biennial Convention in 1924, the two groups, the Zion Synod and the ULCA, worked in full fellowship, allowing the exchange of pastors between the two churches, including mutual support for a pastor’s pension and the ability to study theology at each other’s institutions. They even agreed to track, statistically, the movement of Slovak emigrates and immigrants between the two church bodies.¹³³ It was important enough to the ULCA that its President, Rev. F. H. Knubel, remarked in his President’s Report of the successful conclusion of the agreement between the two churches.¹³⁴ In reference to the criticism toward the ecumenical nature of the ULCA, the President’s Report rebuked such criticism, saying that “one thing is

¹³⁰ “Na ktorej strane je vina?,” *Svedok* 13, no. 17 (August 30 1919): 323.

¹³¹ “Na ktorej strane je vina?,” *Svedok* 13, no. 18 (September 15, 1919): 346. Some within the Slovak Lutheran Synod took this phrase as a badge of honor, if it meant fighting the many ills of the liberal teachings of the ULCA and its Slovak pastors in the Zion Synod. See “Na ktorej strane je vina?,” *Svedok* 13, no. 20 (October 15, 1919): 382. The phrase was also turned on its head, when the author asks “Na ktorej strane je ten prušiacko-bašovsko-absolutisticko-unionistický duch?”. See “Na ktorej strane je vina?,” *Svedok* 13, no. 21 (November 1, 1919): 413. Similar concern was over another derogative term for those of adhering to a Missouriian theology and practice—Missourčania. Pelikan, Sr. also was willing to claim that title, if it meant the adhering to the Word of God and the Confessions. See Jaroslav Pelikán, “Tešte sa ‘Missouričania,’ že nie ste údami United Lutheran Church in America,” *Svedok* 14, no. 3 (February 1, 1920): 53–57.

¹³² For a further understanding of the perceived differences between the two main expressions of Slovak Lutheranism in America, see J.[án] Vojtko, “‘Čo nás rozdeľuje?’,” *Svedok* 14, no. 21 (November 1, 1920): 443–47, J.[án] Vojtko, “‘Čo nás rozdeľuje?’,” *Svedok* 14, no. 22 (November 15, 1920): 463–67, J.[án] Vojtko, “‘Čo nás rozdeľuje?’,” *Svedok* 14, no. 23 (December 1, 1920) 489–93.

¹³³ Minutes of the Fourth Biennial Convention of The United Lutheran Church in America, (Chicago, October 21–29, 1924), 93–94.

certain, words of unloving and nagging criticism of one another, wherever practised [sic] are of the devil.”¹³⁵

The continued reaction of the Slovak Lutheran Synod to the rise of the Zion Synod in the ULCA was retrenchment. Daniel, a Missourian, reflecting on the national meeting in 1919, remarked about the unity of the Slovak Lutheran Synod in light of its conflicts the Zion Synod:

During the entire session the outstanding feature was the unity shown by all present. This is especially gratifying since there has been a movement on foot recently by member of the Slovak Synod ‘Zion’ of the United Lutheran Church in America (Merger Synod) to unite, and thus to draw the members of our Slovak Lutheran Synod into that body. Instead of causing a split, the result has been a stronger bond of unity amongst members of the Synod that stands for the old and firm Lutheranism not only in teaching, but also in practise [sic].¹³⁶

Thus, the division of the two main Slovak Lutheran churches in America solidified. The Zion Synod began their journey of close relationships with the Slovak Lutheran Church and the ULCA. The Slovak Lutheran Synod, having rejected any union with the Zion Synod, also began to look eastward to their mother church, with hope of providing support, guidance, and an example of a confessional Lutheran church in a free society.

Conflict with the Slovak Evangelical Union

Besides the Zion Synod, the Slovak Lutheran Synod had a significant relationship with a Slovak Lutheran parachurch group, the Slovak Evangelical Union (SEU). The SEU was a lay association of Slovak Lutherans that predated both the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Zion Synod of the ULCA. Dolak reports that the SEU was formed in 1893, with an initial membership of 130 members. By 1902, when the Slovak Lutheran Synod was formed, it had grown to 92 chapters with 2,668 members. He further notes that the initial focus of the Union was religious,

¹³⁴ Minutes of the Fourth Biennial Convention of The United Lutheran Church in America, 32.

¹³⁵ Minutes of the Fourth Biennial Convention of The United Lutheran Church in America, 33.

and that there was great cooperation between the Union and the Slovak Lutheran congregations.¹³⁷ This initial relationship was in contrast to Mazak's later report, which questioned "whether this movement proceeded from a true desire for a spiritual union whereby the Slovak Lutheran Church would be benefited is doubtful."¹³⁸ This conclusion reflected the eventual deterioration of the relationship between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the SEU.

The conflict between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the SEU became long-lasting and bitter. The official voice of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, *Svedok*, produced a plethora of articles condemning many of the activities and much of the SEU's theology. Although space and focus permit only a cursory view of the many comments from both sides of the conflict, these conflicts mark much of the internal conflict within the Slovak Lutheran community. The conflict characterized the tension between Slovak culture and their confessional Lutheran heritage.

The polemic between the groups was strong. The conflict began early, stayed intense, and was nearly constant. For example, as early as 1908, Pelikan, the President of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, stated that a pastor could not in good conscience be a member of the SEU.¹³⁹ In reaction to this growing division, in 1911, the SEU was well on its way to forming a counter denomination, called *Sion*, which would later become part of the ULCA. As reported by *Svedok*, pastors who were sympathetic to the SEU met as an independent conference. The Slovak Lutheran Synod viewed their actions as a betrayal. Their pastors were false prophets.¹⁴⁰ In

¹³⁶ A. Daniel, "Convention of the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Synod," *The Lutheran Witness* 38, no. 22 (1919), 349.

¹³⁷ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 51–52.

¹³⁸ S. G. Mazak, "A Brief History of the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the United States," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 3 (1930): 85.

¹³⁹ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 65.

¹⁴⁰ "Zprávy," *Svedok* 6, no. 2 (December 1, 1911): 26. "Že sú tieto 'evanjelickí' reverendi na vlas podobní oným prorokom falošným, bálovým v Izraeli, to dosvedčuje celé ich smýšľanie a jednanie." See also George Dolak, *A*

response, the Slovak Lutheran Synod also then formed its own fraternal organization.¹⁴¹ By 1912, elements of the SEU responded by forming their own synod. The members were often former members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Pelikan, who broke the news of the new synod in the pages of *Svedok*, was very critical of its members, calling them out by name for perceived flaws in their teachings, their lives and their allegiances.¹⁴² In 1912, Pelikan announced in his speech to the church-wide yearly conference that what separated the Slovak Lutheran Synod from other groups (and it is safe to assume that he had the SEU and the other Slovak Lutheran denominations in mind) was the teaching and practice.¹⁴³

In the conflict with the SEU, lingering tensions resurfaced. The conflict between Lauček, the first President of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and strong supporter of SEU, and his old denomination continued even past his death. In an article written by Pelikan at the death of Lauček, he systematically discussed the differences between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the SEU, which was led at that time by Lauček. According to Pelikan, Lauček supported many doctrines and practices not supported by the Slovak Lutheran Synod—two of these practices were unionism and syncretism. Pelikan saw Lauček’s work as fundamentally syncretistic.¹⁴⁴ These remarks were his eulogy for the former Slovak Lutheran Synod president and a comment on the state of the SEU.

History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927, 66.

¹⁴¹ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 67.

¹⁴² Jan Pelikan, “Nová Synoda,” *Svedok* 6, no. 8 (March 1, 1912): 126–28.

¹⁴³ Jan Pelikan, “Zpráva synodálneho predsedu z roku 1912,” *Svedok* 6, no. 22 (October 1, 1912): 356.

¹⁴⁴ Jan Pelikan, “‘Nic nemůžeme proti pravdě’,” *Svedok* 5, no. 14 (June 1, 1911): 209–211. For example, Pelikan wrote on page 211, “Lebo on tatýto hriešny synkretismus v Slov. Ev. Jed. nielen schvaľoval, ale bol zrovna dušou tejto ‘evanjelickej’ missie”.

To further their disassociation with SEU, the Slovak Lutheran Synod rejected the money associated with the SEU's mission fund. They did not feel it was right to use that money because of SEU's teaching and doctrine.¹⁴⁵ This action is consistent with the Slovak Lutheran Synod's perception that the SEU did not stay focused on its mission. The SEU was not a church. Yet, it chose to perform the functions of the church. Even when pursuing seemingly worthy goals such as mission work, the Slovak Lutheran Synod felt that the SEU was destroying the order (rules and responsibilities) implicit for the church.¹⁴⁶ One of the editors of *Svedok* saw the SEU as a force that worked contrary to or in competition with the church. By sending out missionaries of its own, the SEU acted like a church. Because of such activities, the Slovak Lutheran Church viewed it as a sect, a lie, and an unsafe organization for true Lutherans.¹⁴⁷ They were also compared to an enemy of the truth of God and even the devil himself.¹⁴⁸ The editors of *Svedok* challenged the SEU's ability to even use the name Lutheran or "evangelical" in its name.¹⁴⁹ The Slovak Lutheran Synod felt, on the other hand, that the synod was the Lutheran church to the Slovak immigrants. In an article written in 1911 in *Svedok*, the difference between those Lutheran Slovaks who were for the Slovak Lutheran Synod and those who were not (an allusion to the conflict with the SEU) was simple: it was merely a matter of those who held tightly to the writings, teachings, and life of Lutheran principles and those who did not.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Synodál [pseud.], "Missijný Fond Sl. Sv. Jednoty," *Svedok* 6, no. 2 (December 1, 1911): 22–24.

¹⁴⁶ "So Pár Poznámok," *Svedok* 5, no. 19 (August 15, 1911): 307.

¹⁴⁷ "Missijná práca S. E. Jednoty," *Svedok* 4, no. 16 (July 1, 1910): 250–52.

¹⁴⁸ [Jozef] Kuchárik, "Lest' a zlost' našich protivníkov v S. E. J.," *Svedok* 10, no. 14 (July 15, 1916): 219. In another instance of a similar polemic, their teachings were compared to the Devil's theology; see J.[án] Gona, "Diablovi bohoslovci," *Svedok* 12, no. 7 (April 1, 1918): 106–109.

¹⁴⁹ "Vysvetlenie k článku 'Dorozumenie--nedorozumenie'," *Svedok*, 15 June 1911, 222.

¹⁵⁰ Jozef Kuchárik, "'Běda spisovatelům, kteříž těžkosti spisují' V obrane přihlasovania sa k večeri Pána," *Svedok* 5, no. 19 (August 15, 1911): 297.

In the minutes of the Slovak Lutheran Synod's synodical meeting in September, 1911, Vojtko puts the lion's share of the blame for the conflict on the SEU's desire to attack the clear teachings of the of the Scripture and the confessions.¹⁵¹ If he had not made his point clear enough, Vojtko's prayer for them was that God would smile upon them and forgive them, because they did not know what they were doing.¹⁵² Later in 1916, Bella asserted that a SEU leader was propagating a works-righteousness-oriented religion, contrary to the Lutheran understanding of salvation. In quoting Matta, a representative of the SEU, he said: "Now it is not necessary to have a Savior, salvation from God is not necessary, but a person must alone by himself achieve."¹⁵³ Bella added that this theology is a terrible darkness.

The SEU was as critical of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. In response to a painfully scathing critique by Pelikan, its newspaper *Slovenský Hlásnik* (V 581) responded strongly, defending the legitimacy of the synod, which was called into question, as well as offering a number of character accusations against Pelikan himself.¹⁵⁴ The newspaper accused Pelikan of seeking after honor, being a self-appointed leader, and a German. This last insult demonstrates that the leaders of the SEU perceived Pelikan as breaking with Slovak culture. Pelikan refuted all allegations. But to the assertion that he was really a German and not a Slovak, he retorted that "no one will curse a German to become a cockroach and hate him as you do, but will esteem German Lutherans that have clear teaching, which comes from them to us."¹⁵⁵ In the heat of conflict with

¹⁵¹ Jan Vojtko, "Poznámky k boju medzi našou Synodou a S. E. J.," *Svedok* 5, no. 22 (October 1, 1911): 353.

¹⁵² Vojtko, "Poznámky k boju medzi našou Synodou a S. E. J.," 354.

¹⁵³ Daniel Bella, "Málo je svetla medzi údmí S. E. Jed.," *Svedok* 10, no. 13, (July 1, 1916): 201. "Tedy netreba Spasiteľa, netreba od Boha spasenie, ale si ho musí sám človek vydobýť."

¹⁵⁴ Jan Pelikan, "Až dokiaľ?," *Svedok* 5, no. 18 (August 1, 1911): 281.

¹⁵⁵ Jan Pelikan, "Až dokiaľ?," 282. "... nikdy nebude nadávať Nemcom do Švábov a nenávidieť ich, jako vy, ale bude si vážiť nemeckých luteránov a to čisté učenie, ktoré od nich k nám prišlo." The idea that the Slovak Lutheran Synod was really a German Lutheran or German Lutheran-influenced church never went away. From the founding of the synod to the time of the Pelikan Movement, the accusation continued to be revived. See J.[án] Vojtko, "Čo

the SEU, Pelikan demonstrated that when pushed, he valued his confessional theology above his cultural allegiances.

Although the Slovak Lutheran Synod was often accused of having foreign influences, which was understood as the influence of the Missouri Synod, they were at the same time wary of any activity that was based on culture rather than theology. Daniel Bella, in 1916, attacked the establishment of a SEU school, because the teacher was a peasant and not a pastor. By placing a peasant and not a pastor, Bella felt that the SEU placed too much emphasis on the society and culture rather than the pure teachings of the church.¹⁵⁶ The Slovak Lutheran Synod considered religious education and clear teachings more important than maintaining Slovak culture.

As late as 1915, the polemic against the SEU was still spirited. The editor of *Svedok* accused many within the SEU as against the Word of God, the witness of Jesus Christ, and the preaching of His word.¹⁵⁷ In addition, the SEU badgered the Slovak Lutheran Synod for ten years, while not standing up against the General Council and their pastors. The conclusion? The members of the SEU must be Hungarians or drunks.¹⁵⁸ The view from the Slovak Lutheran Church was that it was inconceivable for true evangelicals not to adhere fully and tenaciously to a confessional Lutheran understanding. To do otherwise implies that they were either Hungarians, with all the unionistic, liberal, and chauvinistic overtones or incapacitated. This conclusion reflected well Mazak's view that the SEU had, as exemplified in their official paper, *Slovenský Hlásnik*, "heralded forth unchristian views and condemned the true, Biblical stand of

nás rozdeľuje?," *Svedok* 14, no. 23 (December 1, 1920): 490.

¹⁵⁶ Daniel Bella, "Málo je svetla medzi údmi S. E. Jed.," *Svedok* 10, no. 13 (July 1, 1916): 201.

¹⁵⁷ "Ten kultúrny a náboženský vplyv a pokrok S. E. J.," *Svedok* 9, no. 16 (August 15, 1915): 252. J. Matta was the president of the Slovak Evangelical Union at that time.

¹⁵⁸ "Ten kultúrny a náboženský vplyv a pokrok S. E. J.," 252.

our Synod.”¹⁵⁹ He continued, quoting *Slovenský Hlásnik*, to provide evidence for such unionistic thought and a poor understanding of justification. In an article to its members, in reaction, in part at least to the criticism found in *Slovenský Hlásnik*, they asserted that the Slovak Lutheran Church was a true church with pure teachings, whose only authority was Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁰ Thus, the Slovak Lutheran Synod preached the clear, true, and total Gospel.¹⁶¹ The article continued to add a number of other attributes, including the value of adhering strongly to the Scriptures, which produces a strong heart.¹⁶² The Slovak Lutheran Synod positioned itself as a confessional Lutheran church in contrast to the SEU, which it viewed as a non-confessional organization.

These conflicts did not always have the veneer of theological discourse. At times, they were very personal attacks. Dolak recounts one of Pelikan’s early controversies over communion announcement. Pelikan embraced a similar communion practice as was found in the Missouri Synod. This practice required the member of a congregation to announce his intent to have communion before the actual communion service. Although there was a synodical action in support of the effort and even though Pelikan was able to get a congregational vote in agreement with this practice, it proved divisive. It was often understood as an imported practice from the Missouri Synod and perceived as a “catholic” innovation. Pelikan was eventually forced to leave his congregation in Chicago, Saints Peter and Paul, over this conflict. Somora joined Pelikan in this communion policy as well. Because of this communion practice, Slovak Americans,

¹⁵⁹ S. G. Mazak, “A Brief History of the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the United States,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 4 (1930): 110. He added, polemically, but in character for the rhetoric of the time, that “we give recent quotations to show that this organization has not changed and still stands on the side of Satan and aids him in his destructive work.” Later in the article he modified his view slightly, adding “...even today the S.E.J. is not entirely free of the spirit of indifferentism and unions; it still tolerates men who are only professedly Lutherans” (111).

¹⁶⁰ “Sväzok v pravovernej Synode,” *Svedok* 10, no. 16 (August 15, 1916): 244.

¹⁶¹ “Sväzok v pravovernej Synode,” 245.

¹⁶² “Sväzok v pravovernej Synode,” 245.

including the founder of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, Lauček, and Slovaks in Slovakia waged a war of words against Pelikan and the Slovak Lutheran Synod.¹⁶³ Dramatically, the conflict became intensely personal. In an article printed in another Slovak magazine, *Slovák v Amerike*, on 22 December 1915, C. L. Orbach¹⁶⁴ made the accusation that Pelikan's first wife hung herself after childbirth. In response, the devastated Pelikan wrote an article in *Svedok* defending himself against this accusation. Knowing that the wife's suicide would jeopardize his call as a pastor, Pelikan felt it necessary to refute publically the accusation by listing witnesses to prove that the accusation was not true.¹⁶⁵ A veteran of church conflict, this denunciation was a level of conflict that was severe. Pelikan said:

I have been in America 13 years; I was here rightly called by the congregation Peter and Paul in Chicago; I was in the old country after the death of my first wife not only a pastor but also the secretary of the district [seniorálnym zápisníkom]; here I was accepted into the Synod, and after eight years I was its president. I have had many fights for our clear, evangelical viewpoint and all kinds of antagonists, but never has anyone come after me with such a vile lie as C. L. Orbach.¹⁶⁶

Shaken by such a personal attack, he was trying to clear his name and repair his reputation. He also called on the Slovak Lutheran Synod to defend his honor.¹⁶⁷ Pelikan found public discourse much more than the mere defense of the Gospel and its truth. A few years later, the accusation was resolved in the New York Supreme Court. In court, C. L. Orbach's accusation was

¹⁶³ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 58–62.

¹⁶⁴ C. L. Orbach is briefly mentioned in George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 17, 34. He was a graduate of Concordia Seminary in 1887. He was also an early editor of a Slovak church newspaper in America.

¹⁶⁵ [Ján] Pelikán, “Zprávy z Ameriky,” *Svedok* 10, no. 2 (January 15, 1916): 32.

¹⁶⁶ [Ján] Pelikán, “Zprávy z Ameriky,” 32. “Som tu v americke už 13 rokov; bol som sem riadne povalaný cirkvou Petra a Pavla v Chicago, bol som v starej vlasti po smrti mojej prvej manželky nie len farárom, ale i seniorálnym zápisníkom; tu bol som prijatý do Synody a za 8 rokov bol som jej predsedom. Mal som mnohé boje pre čisté naše evanjelické stanovisko a mnoho všeliakých protivníkov, ale posiaľ ešte nik nevystúpil proti mne s takou podlou lžou, ako C. L. Orbach.”

¹⁶⁷ [Ján] Pelikán, “Zprávy z Ameriky,” 32.

determined to be a complete lie.¹⁶⁸ Pelikan was vindicated and Orbach was punished, providing \$500 in reparations. Thus, one of the more bitter entanglements of the conflict between these staunch enemies came to a legal end.

However, the polemic between the two did not end. In an article probably written by Pelikan in 1919 (no authorship is provided in *Svedok* but Pelikan was the editor at the time), he accuses Orbach of burying a man who had two wives, one in America and one back in Slovakia.¹⁶⁹ His argument was that these were the kind of people that were joining with the ULCA and forming another witness to Slovak Lutheranism in America. The conflict between the Slovak Lutheran Synod members and other Slovak Lutherans in America was spirited and, at times, brutal.

The conflict with the SEU proved to be theological, in that the issues of ecclesiology, unionism and basic tenants of the Lutheran faith remained bitter points of public discussion. It also proved to be part of the experience of Slovak Lutherans in America that led to the eventual split of Slovak-American Lutheranism into the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Zion Synod. From the side of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, the conflict was viewed as one of upholding Biblical truth and a pure Lutheran theological teaching versus a compromised theology for the sake of a false unity. Any irenic sentiments were not allowed and no quarter was given in the fight for a true, free Lutheran Church.

The Americanization of Slovak Lutheranism

The main influences of Slovak Lutheran immigrants to America have been explored; namely, there was an intense focus on their relationship with their Hungarian government,

¹⁶⁸ “Pravota P. F. J. Pelikán Proti Denníku ‘Slovák v Amerike’,” *Svedok* 11, no. 13 (July 1, 1917): 207.

¹⁶⁹ “Spojenie,” *Svedok* 13, no. 15 (August 1, 1919): 274.

Hungarian chauvinism, and the Hungarian Lutheran church, especially as it related to unionism and liberalism. The Slovak held the Hungarians responsible for these difficulties. Reporting on activities in Austria, they highlighted that the Emperor Franz Joseph I had assured his people that all protestant pastors were “completely free in religious affairs.”¹⁷⁰ This sentiment was the ideal for them. Once upon the shores of America, it became clear to them that to achieve their goal, their best hope was in an American-like context of church freedom from state control.

Influence of the Missouri Synod and American Lutheranism

The German-based Missouri Synod, because it did not share the same national or cultural history, was seen as a primarily a theological association, not bound by the expectations that a common past brings. They both found their identity primarily as orthodox Lutherans—reprinters or Neo-Lutherans. They both had a history of escaping from liberal churches, which were bound to the state and flushed with unionism. As shown, the Slovak Lutherans were escaping the Hungarian government and church, which they saw as chauvinistic, unionistic, and liberal. In part, the Missouri Synod also was a reaction to historical events; they rejected similar trends in Germany at the turn of the previous century, spawned from the Prussian Union of 1817.¹⁷¹

The Slovak Lutheran Synod proceeded to take on other aspects of the Missouri Synod’s culture and practice. One of the aspects was quietism. Like the Missouri Synod, they strove to create their own subculture within the American context, largely functioning independently of the wider American culture. To achieve this goal, they sought the same linguistic and educational

¹⁷⁰ “Zprávy,” *Svedok* 3, no. 9 (March 15, 1909): 141.

¹⁷¹ William W. Schumacher, “Civic Participation by Churches and Pastors: An Essay on Two Kinds of Righteousness,” *Concordia Journal* 30 (July 2004): 174.

approach as the Missouri Synod, keeping their people united in language and with a strong Lutheran education, but also separated from American culture and its influences.

Secondly, the American understanding and implementation of the separation of church and state enabled them, especially in the early years, to embrace this self-imposed isolation from the wider culture. As a result, the Slovak Lutheran Synod became fierce defenders of this relationship between church and state, which was very much different than the relationship of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Hungarian Lutheran Church. For instance, the Missouri Synod was able to maintain the German language as their worship language, create numerous schools and institutions of higher education, which worked primarily in German, and were often located in areas that were dominated demographically by German immigrants. The Missouri Synod tenaciously defended their isolation and separatism until after the First World War. Even from Slovakia, observers of the American Lutheran scene noticed this cultural isolation.¹⁷²

The official organs of the Missouri Synod, reaching out to pastors and laity alike with the church's perspective, were *The Lutheran Witness*, an English language magazine, and the *Der Lutheraner*, which was in German. Both magazines were published during the early twentieth century and both reinforced a "siege mentality" among the Missouri faithful against other churches and sect.¹⁷³ The periodicals were often seen as polemical. The editor of the of *The Lutheran Witness*, Theodore Graebner, responded that "such attacks were necessary to keep the people aware of the difference between the Missouri Synod and other bodies and to show the

¹⁷² For example, although from the 1930s, one Slovak pastor made a comment that the Missouri Synod "did not have a does not have any thing in common with anyone," concerning the other 70 million Lutherans in the world. "Neuznávajúc iné cirkve za pravoverné luteránske, mimo tých, ktoré sú v Synodálnej Konferencii, odlučuje sa od celého ostatného luteránskeho sveta, tedy od asi 70 milionov evanjelikov, neche mať a nemá s nimi ničoho spoločného, nezúčastňuje sa nijakej ich spoločnej práce" Fedor Ruppeltdt, *Slovenskí Evangelici v Amerike* (Ružomberk: Cirkev evanj. a. v. na Slovensku, 1932), 50.

¹⁷³ Alan Graebner, "The Acculturation of an Immigration Lutheran Church: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1917–1929" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1965), 130.

laity that issues were still alive.”¹⁷⁴ As Meyer pointed out, this cultural isolation protected them from many of the dangers of this period.¹⁷⁵ The isolation from the wider culture allowed the Missouri Synod to maintain its identity in the ever changing and increasingly challenging religious landscape in America.

Church and State

In this context of remaining separate, church and state issues also loomed large for Missourians as well as for those in the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Missourians took very seriously the separation of church and state, even raising it to the level of doctrine: “It devolves, therefore, upon those who do know the correct and American position upon the separation of Church and State to publish and proclaim this doctrine everywhere, not only through our own religious press, but wherever we have an opportunity.”¹⁷⁶ According to Noll, a noted scholar of American Christianity, this self-imposed isolation was maintained until after the Second World War.¹⁷⁷ But this isolation was closely linked, theologically, to unionism. As Schumacher points out, some in

¹⁷⁴ Alan Graebner, “The Acculturation of an Immigration Lutheran Church: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1917–1929,” 129–30.

¹⁷⁵ Carl S. Meyer, *A Brief Historical Sketch of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 20. He writes: “During the years [the turn of the century] Darwinism, social evolution, the higher critical theories, social reform, and liberalism had invaded the American Churches. The Social Gospel, and outgrowth of earlier reform movements, revivalism and Puritanism had taken over in these churches. Theology which took solid heed of the Scriptural truths was being sacrificed. The ‘cultural isolation’ of the Missouri Synod protected from some of these dangers.”

¹⁷⁶ [Martin S.] S.[ommer], “Tolerance and Tolerance,” *The Lutheran Witness* 38, no. 12 (1919): 179. See also William W. Schumacher, “Civic Participation by Churches and Pastors: An Essay on Two Kinds of Righteousness,” 173. Schumacher here argues that this blurring of church doctrine with the American notion of the separation of church and state was not a traditional Lutheran doctrine. He quotes a LCMS theologian of the 1920s and 30s, J. H. C. Fritz as making a similar statement as Sommer, that is, he proclaimed the “doctrine of separation of Church and State.” Schumacher responds that “the kind of strict separation of church and state envisioned by Fritz has almost never been the condition under which Lutheran churches have lived, or have sought to live.”

¹⁷⁷ Mark Noll, “Change and Movements in American Lutheranism: American Lutherans Yesterday and Today,” *Lutherans Today: American Lutheran Identity in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Richard Cimino (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 12. Noll does not presume to know the actual source of this desire for cultural isolation but writes: “Connections to the wider worlds of American religion would not be reestablished to any significant degree until after World War II. Whatever brought about this situation—the upsurge of immigration, a more strictly theological solicitude for Lutheran traditions, or a morally suspect retreat

the Missouri Synod viewed any religious activity within the secular sphere as unionistic activity. He adds that this understanding of unionism goes “beyond what was described in the Missouri Synod’s constitution.”¹⁷⁸ As Schumacher suggests, this understanding of unionism represented the practical application of this doctrine in the life of the church within the state. The Slovaks in America at the turn of the century saw a similar distinction between church and state. This view closely aligned them with what they saw as the traditional Lutheran doctrine of the Two Kingdoms: “We agree with the separation of the church from the state. The Church is the not from this world; it is the kingdom of God and the State is the kingdom of the world.”¹⁷⁹ They would have understood such a doctrine of separation of church and state in much the same way as the rest of the Missouri Synod. The Slovak Lutheran Synod also attempted to create an isolated community for immigrant Lutherans to worship in their native language and culture. They relied heavily on the Missouri Synod’s interpretation of the American style separation of church and state to justify this island of religious expression.¹⁸⁰

At the time of the Pelikan Movement, the view of the Slovak Lutheran Church concerning the separation of church and state was in contrast to the growing feelings of cooperation between

form public activism to social quietism—the course of Lutheranism was unalterably changed.”

¹⁷⁸ William W. Schumacher, “Civic Participation by Churches and Pastors: An Essay on Two Kinds of Righteousness,” 172–73.

¹⁷⁹ “Štát a cirkev pápeža,” *Svedok* 3, no. 13 (May 15, 1909): 199. “My hlásame oddelenie cirkve od štátu. Cirkev je kráľovstvo nie zo sveta tohoto, je kráľovstvo Božie a štát je kráľovstvo svetské.”

¹⁸⁰ “Potreba cirkevných škôl,” *Svedok* 12, no. 7 (April 1, 1918): 105. The editors here even quoted the Constitution directly, noting the States’ limits in legislating religion. In particular, they quoted the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, which states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” This separation of church and state helped them avoid moments of joint activity, such as government sponsored prayer events, where a number of denominations would meet under the auspices of the government and conduct activities that were viewed as unionistic. For an example of this attitude and theological perspective around the Pelikan Movement, see J. V., “Modlitby na politických konvenciach,” *Svedok*, 1 July 1920, 297–98.

the church and state in Czechoslovakia.¹⁸¹ *Svedok* noted that there was a growing desire to find a role in the new state. They Slovaks in Europe were concerned that they would not have the protection they once had and were eager to see the state as their protector. The church polity that the Slovak Lutheran Synod learned during their time in America taught them otherwise. They saw the separation of church and state as empowering.¹⁸² They saw it as the best hope for the new church in a free society. Thus, the argument for the separation of church and state from the Slovak Lutheran Synod moved from its American context and the new American partners to the church back in Slovakia.

When examining other immigrant groups for examples of living in an American context, they looked for the way they formed their immigrant religious community. In 1908, an observer of the Slovak Lutheran context made the following observation about how the Missouri Synod created its own subculture:

And for this reason, when our pastors and our churches will hold on so, as we see in the example of the German pastors, which indeed do not create a political uproar, yet they firmly hold on to their German language in the home, in the church, in their associations (namely in the Missouri Synod) and in their German denominations, which they build for themselves their own German church schools¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ “Evanjelické stredné školy na Slovensku,” *Svedok* 14, no. 21 (November 1, 1920): 447–49. In this example, the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia were reported to have been eager for state cooperation and support for their parochial schools. This seeking of support was rejected by the author as against not only the role of the local congregation and the local pastor (“According to the Word of God each preacher is a bishop.”), but also against the Formula of Concord that the church body has only a supervisory role over the congregation. Thus, the state and the church hierarchy were wrong to interfere in the freedom of the congregation.

¹⁸² P., “O rozluke cirkvi od štátu,” *Svedok* 14, no. 8 (April 15, 1920): 171–74. The author, who was probably Pelikan, made the further distinction that the church should not be built primarily around love, but the Word of God. He was distinguishing the between a perceived attitude in Slovakia that a proper heart (that is, one of love) would be the defining characteristic of the church to the view held widely in the Slovak Lutheran Synod that the truth found in the Holy Scriptures, which surely included love, defined a proper church.

¹⁸³ “Odkaz redakcie,” *Svedok* 2, no. 10 (April 1, 1908): 155. “A preto, keď sa my farári a naše cirkve budeme tak držať, ako kto vidíme na príklad u nemeckých farárov, ktorí nerobia síce politického hluku, ale húževnate sa pridžajú svojej nemčiny v dome, v chráme, v spoločnosti (menovite v missourskej synode) a u nemeckých cirkví, ktoré stavajú svoje nemecké cirkevné školy”

They treasured and contrasted this freedom to worship with their previous experiences in Hungary; they described such a contrast to the Slovaks in Slovakia when sharing the news of their growth and challenges in America.¹⁸⁴ Slovak elementary schools were perceived as being a part of the effort to preserve the Slovak language, culture, and church.¹⁸⁵ A Zion Synod pastor argued:

Although in America, we had a completely Slovak congregation. It was isolated from American life, and what is more, from American church life, for it was without interest in the work of the church as a whole. It had a nationalistic orientation, and the emphasis in the name “Slovak Lutheran” was on Slovak.¹⁸⁶

This quietism or isolated experience was a goal of the Slovak Lutherans to ensure that they would continue to exist as a distinct group with the American culture.

Although probably imperceptible to the Slovaks living America at the time, the Missouri Synod was changing. German was becoming, even before the war, a lesser and lesser part of the life of congregations and the districts.¹⁸⁷ Likewise, even in the Slovak Lutheran Synod, which only a few years prior had expressed concern about adopting English, awareness was growing that the children of the immigrants were no longer speaking Slovak, but were transitioning to

¹⁸⁴ Lud[ovit] A. Engler, “Bratrstvo milujte!,” *Cirkevné Listy* 24 (January 1910): 5.

¹⁸⁵ D. Bella, “Cirkevná slovenská škola,” *Svedok* 10, no. 9 (May 1, 1916): 132. This call for their own church schools was revived in later issues of *Svedok*, with special reference to the positive example of the Missouri Synod. See “Potreba cirkevných škôl,” *Svedok* 12, no. 7 (April 1, 1918): 104–105, and “Potreba cirkevných škôl,” *Svedok* 12, no. 8 (April 15, 1918): 104–105.

¹⁸⁶ J. Igor Bella, “Transition from Slovak to English,” *Lutheran Quarterly* (1953): 298. J. Igor Bella was President of the Zion Synod from 1938 until 1945. He was involved in the post-World War II reconstruction in Slovakia and Yugoslavia until he was expelled by the communists. He also served with the National Lutheran Council of The United Lutheran Church in America, continuing to give aid to the Slovaks in Europe into the 1950s. See John Body, *History of the Slovak Zion Synod LCA* (Chicago, Slovak Zion Synod, 1976), 155 and 159.

¹⁸⁷ Paul T. Dietz, “The Transition from German to English in the Missouri Synod from 1910 to 1947,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (October 1949): 100–104. In particular, Dietz points out a few key events, such as the dissolution of the English Mission Board in 1905 and moving all the English work to the districts, the absorption of English Synod as a district in 1911, and the rise of English “stations” from 471 in 1910 to 2492 in 1919. Of course, he mentions the more radical changes that followed the First World War. By 1919, only 62% of the churches were using German, and some districts were primarily English speaking (106). Examples of such districts are the Atlantic (64%), Southern (83%) and the Western (51%).

English as well.¹⁸⁸ They were beginning to realize the need for a witness in English to this new American. This goal, then, of being like the Missouri Synod, an isolated and yet pure expression of confessional Lutheranism united through culture and nationality, was almost certainly doomed to fail. The reality was that the Missouri Synod was unable to maintain that distinct culture. The Synod was also becoming more like its surrounding American culture. The Missouri Synod was still holding to its own confessional identity, but it was losing its German culture and becoming more and more American. The Slovak Lutheran Synod would do likewise.

The Missouri Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Synod were somewhat typical examples of immigrant American Lutheran synods at the turn of the last century. As Meuser points out, “the picture of Lutheranism before World War I as a quiet, almost totally foreign-language church, content to confine its activities to corporate worship, religious education, and private piety is only partly accurate.”¹⁸⁹ Exceptions to this norm are the more culturally integrated churches, namely the General Synod, the United Synod of the South, and elements of the General Council. Those churches formed the ULCA. In contrast to these Americanized denominations, the Slovak Lutheran Synod desired to create an island of Slovak Lutheranism. Early perspectives from the Slovak Lutherans saw the Lutheran church back in the old country as restrictive by its association with the state and with the Hungarian government.¹⁹⁰ The freedoms in America and the separation of church and state allowed them to focus on their Lutheran church life and

¹⁸⁸ “Či zostaneme luteránmi, hoci sa aj poangličtíme,” *Svedok* 15, no. 16 (August 15, 1921): 340–43. For the first “English Page” in *Svedok* see, “English Page,” *Svedok* 16, no. 11 (June 1, 1922): 251.

¹⁸⁹ Fred W. Meuser, “Facing the Twentieth Century: 1900–1930,” 389.

¹⁹⁰ The same was true, according to Bella, in the Zion Synod. He reported: “As one man said to me, ‘In Hungary they forced Hungarian upon the church, and now you are trying to force English upon it.’” J. Igor Bella, “Transition from Slovak to English,” 297.

theology rather than politics.¹⁹¹ America became to them a new land where all things were possible.

Wartime Changes: Nationalism and Confessionalism

Like many immigrant groups, Slovak Lutherans initially grasped tightly to their national heritage. At the same time, they found in America the opportunity to leave behind their old identity and form a new identity. This situation was different in Hungary; in Hungary, the oppression of the state was severe and America more was open to new possibilities.¹⁹² The Slovak Lutheran Synod was well aware of some of the major differences, in terms of church and state relations, between their homeland and America. In an explanation to the readers of *Svedok*, they staked out the differences, noting the role of Luther's two kingdoms and the distinction that the Constitution made relative to these two estates.¹⁹³ Their new synod in this new nation was the real miracle. They intimated that they were more than aware of the impossibility of their own Synod, the Slovak Lutheran Synod, in the context of the Kingdom of Hungary. They recognized that without the Emperor's permission, they "are not able to have a Lutheran synod."¹⁹⁴ In Hungary, because of this relationship, the church and the state were on the precipice of destruction.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ "Odkaz redakcie," *Svedok* 2, no. 10 (April 1, 1908): 155. The section referred to ends with this quote: "Čiastka však tohoto výťažku, z vďačnosti oproti našej novej vlasti, mohla by byť venovaná na podporu tunajších evanjelických vecí." By the 1930s, when a Slovak church official was visiting the different American Slovak Lutherans, he made note of the different systems, but reflected that these different systems had developed within different historical, political and spiritual influences, recognizing the otherness of the American system to the (Czecho-)Slovak system. See, Fedor Ruppeldt, *Slovenskí Evangelici v Amerike* (Ružomberk: Cirkev evanj. a. v. na Slovensku, 1932), 34. "Je to sztem hodne odlišný od nášho, podmienený celkom iným historickým, politickým i duchovným vývinom v Amerike. Dobre zhodnotiť oba systémy vyžaduje dodromyseľnosť a ducha pokoja a lásky na oboch stranách Atlantu."

¹⁹² Július Botto, *Slováci, výnin ich národného povedomia*, (Bratislava: Tatran, 1971), 430.

¹⁹³ "Cirkev a štát," *Svedok* 8, no. 21 (September 15, 1914): 299–300.

¹⁹⁴ "Cirkev a štát," 300. "Bez jeho dovolenia nesmie cirkve ev. a. v. mať Synodu."

¹⁹⁵ "Cirkev a štát," 300. "Že miešanie cirkve so štátom je škodlive a zhubné, ako pre cirkev tak pre štát, to

The conditions in Europe were dismal, according to the editors of *Svedok*. During the early months of the First World War, they identified the reason for the war and the sickness that was Europe. The cause of the war was sin: “For these same sins [those of the Israelites], God judgment and punishment, this horrible war, came on the nations of Europe.”¹⁹⁶ Each country had its role to play in this growing tragedy. Germany assumes the role of the Israelites, once blessed by God but now fallen from grace, rather and full of socialism, rationalism and irreligion, apostasy, and obscenity.¹⁹⁷ The Austrian-Hungarian Empire was as Sodom and Gomorra, suppressing the Lutheran church and those Lutheran believers.¹⁹⁸ The states of Europe were proving their inability to lead the people spiritually.

The Slovaks saw the intrusion of the Hungarian state increase as the war became in full force. Once the war had started the level of censorship and the difficulty of communicating became more evident. Many Slovak political newspapers were closed. However, the national paper (*Národné Noviny*) and the Church (*Cirkevné listy*) newspapers were still available.¹⁹⁹ It was also a time of hope for the Slovaks as they recognized even early in the war that the destruction of war offered opportunity for a new beginning. The Slovak Lutheran Synod hoped that the war would cause the end of the political control of the Slovak nation. They also dreamed of such restrictions on the Slovak Lutherans, who were in their own Babylonian captivity within the Hungarian Lutheran Church.²⁰⁰ Laws in Hungary were allowing for the free exercise of their

vidíme zretedlne v Uhorsku, kde cirkev i štát stoja nad prepaš'ou zahuby.”

¹⁹⁶ “Myšlienky o vojne,” *Svedok* 8, no. 21 (September 15, 1914): 301. “Pre tie samé hriechy Boží súd a trest, hroznou vojnou, prišiel na národy europské.”

¹⁹⁷ “Myšlienky o vojne,” 301. “Teraz panuje v Nemecku socialismus, racionalismus, neverectvo, odpadlictvo a nemravnosť.”

¹⁹⁸ “Myšlienky o vojne,” 301–302.

¹⁹⁹ “Zprávy zahraničné,” *Svedok*, 8, no. 21 (September 15, 1914): 307.

²⁰⁰ “Zprávy zahraničné,” 307.

faith—to a degree. Other laws required people to pay what amounted to a church tax. Those kinds of laws were not extant in America.²⁰¹ The Slovak Lutheran Synod asserted that autonomy of the Hungarian Lutheran Church was an illusion. The church did not have any freedom, independence or self-governance. They cited another example of a teacher in Brezová who was teaching the children to sing and read in Slovak, and how he was denied his position because of his work in the Slovak language.²⁰² In America, the problems of Europe were relieved. The war had shown them the sins of Europe and the hope of America.

Although written in wartime, the stance of the Slovak Lutheran Synod concerning nationalism and patriotism was clear: they felt that nationalism was acceptable in the context of its role in service of the Gospel.²⁰³ In the midst of the war, when questions of allegiances were swirling about, Vojtko delineated between one's allegiance to God and to a nation. In fact, "no nation under heaven is Christian."²⁰⁴ He continued by arguing that Germany was not a Christian country; it was rather a country that had many faiths, including Islam and Buddhism as well as a legion of other "isms" such as rationalism and socialism that also demand allegiances.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ "Slovenské evanjelictvo v Amerike," *Svedok* 3, no. 18 (August 1, 1909): 274.

²⁰² "Zprávy z Uhorska," *Svedok* 5, no. 4 (January 1, 1911): 58. In a follow up story, *Svedok* claimed that the Nitra seniorat or district was forced to investigate the teacher. See "Zprávy z Uhorska," *Svedok* 5, no. 7 (February 15, 1911): 102. See also Slavomír Michálek, *Brezová Pod Bradlom Osobnosti (Ne)známe*, (Bratislava: Vzdavateľstvo, 1999), 67. According to Michálek, this act was in association with the more severe laws of magyarization instituted by Apponyi in 1907.

²⁰³ "Národovectvo a vlastenectvo," *Svedok* 9, no. 11 (June 1, 1915): 171. "... kresťanstvo a viera donáša ho so sebou." The author continues by quoting from Romans 9:1–3, where Paul professes his love for his people so much that he is willing, for their sake, to be cut off from Christ. But the author remarks Paul did all of this for the sake of the people for their spiritual development and for their salvation ("... aby národu židovskému poslušil tým k duchovnému vzdelaniu a k spaseniu.", 172). Thus, nationalism is appropriate for the sake of the Gospel and its advancement only. Importantly, it is necessary to see all nationalism in light of the Gospel and without the Gospel shining its light, one sits in the dark. See "Národovectvo a vlastenectvo," *Svedok* 9, no. 12 (June 1, 1915): 188. Likewise, see "Národovectvo a vlastenectvo," *Svedok* 9, no. 14 (July 15, 1915): 222. This document shows the distinction that would create the structure for the later decisions of the Slovak Lutheran Synod inasmuch as nationalism is not denied, but the priority of the Gospel over nationalistic interests should always prevail.

²⁰⁴ J.[án] V.[ojtko], "Národ a kresťanstvo," *Svedok* 9, no. 23 (December 1, 1915): 370. "Žiaden národ pod nebom nie je kresťanský... "

²⁰⁵ J.[án] V.[ojtko], "Národ a kresťanstvo," 370.

Likewise, what might normally be called pagan nations could not be classified as such because of the significant number of Christians in those countries—for example, India or China.²⁰⁶ The same was true for the Slovak nation, noting that the “Slovak nation as a whole does not confess the Christian religion.”²⁰⁷ He concluded then that there was a strict distinction between a nation, with its cultural and legal structures, and the Christian religion, which was based on the Bible, and thus international.²⁰⁸ This separation of church and state was continued in the Slovak Lutheran Synod even in wartime. In Slovakia, the church still saw a cooperative role or partnership between the state and the church.²⁰⁹ By the end of the war, the Slovak Lutheran Synod had moved farther away from any loyalty to the old state, was less attached to its nation and culture, and increasingly found its primary identity in its doctrine and faith.

This metamorphosis can be attributed, at least in part, to the American cultural freedoms and new paradigms they were taking advantage of. This change was accelerated by what happened a few years later in the Pelikan Movement. The leaders of the movement found that they had begun the process of decoupling their national identity with their religious identity, making their belief in their understanding of confessional Lutheranism paramount but not exclusive to their love of their culture.

²⁰⁶ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Národ a kresťanstvo,” *Svedok* 9, no. 24 (December 15, 1915): 388.

²⁰⁷ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Národ a kresťanstvo,” 388. “... národ slovenský ako celok nepriznáva sa k náboženstvu kresťanskému.”

²⁰⁸ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Národ a kresťanstvo,” *Svedok* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 1916): 6.

²⁰⁹ Bukovinský, “Naša autonómia a diskrecionálne právo,” *Cirkevné Listy* 28 (May 1914): 140. This view was not uniform within the Slovak Lutheran community in Slovakia. In a series of three short articles, one churchman makes the argument that Lutheranism, and Protestantism in general, is not nationalistic. This argument is more akin to the view of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. However, the argument is much more philosophical and probably a reaction to actual experiences of the war. See L. Ž. Syberénzi, “Protestantismus a nacionalismus, Part 1–3” *Cirkevné Listy* 31 (February 1917): 33–37, L. Ž. Syberénzi, “Protestantismus a nacionalismus, Part 4” *Cirkevné Listy* 31 (June 1917): 137–42, and L. Ž. Syberénzi, “Protestantismus a nacionalismus, Part 5,” *Cirkevné Listy* 31, (July–August 1917): 161–63.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PELIKAN MOVEMENT

By the beginning of the First World War, the Missouri Synod was dedicated to a number of Free Church movements in Europe. It was in fellowship with 36 congregations in traditional Lutheran areas in Germany and Denmark.¹ The Slovak Lutheran Synod did not have such direct international relationships. The Pelikan Movement marked the first effort for the Slovak Lutheran Synod to reach beyond national concerns and to have a personal impact beyond its borders. The Pelikan Movement was the first self-described mission of the Slovak Lutheran Synod.

Although the opportunity for the Pelikan Movement did not come until much later, even by 1912 there was a glimmer of a vision to do mission work in the Kingdom of Hungary. In a long article, *Svedok* described mission work and its importance in the life of the Christian and the Church.² The article also outlined a Biblical basis for missions. Later that year, in his report from the Synodical Conference meeting, Pelikan revealed in his closing comments the necessity to return to his homeland to begin mission work.³ So even though the young synod lacked experience in mission work, the leaders of the synod were aware of the theological imperatives of such work.

¹ Fred W. Meuser, "Facing the Twentieth Century: 1900–1930," in *The Lutherans in North America*, ed. E. Clifford Nelson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 361.

² Lud. J. Karlovský, "O Missii," *Svedok* 6, no. 17 (July 15, 1912): 268–70.

³ Jan Pelikan, "Zpráva vyslanca zo Synodálnej Konferencie," *Svedok* 6, no. 23 (October 15, 1912): 383.

Their theological perspective was growing alongside the changing world scene. In 1915, *Svedok* was increasingly aware of world events. This new awareness was driven in part by the war, as well as a greater sense of the mission of the church, especially cross-cultural missions in America. Highlighted was the work of the many Lutheran mission societies, including the work of the Synodical Conference with African-Americans. The article ended with a call for greater support of the mission work of the Synodical Conference.⁴ Their association with the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference gave the synod exposure to national and international mission work. However, the leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod still desired to return to their homeland to share their understanding of the Gospel and confessional Lutheranism. Later, the synod, as part of the Synodical Conference and eventually as a district of the Missouri Synod, would do mission work in South American and Africa, but this effort in Slovakia was the synod's first attempt to work with a free church outside of the American context, even if the effort was to its mother country and culture. Before Pelikan would leave for Slovakia, they were preparing theologically and organizationally for the events and decisions that would propel them on a journey home.

New State

At the turn of the twentieth century, many Slovak immigrants strongly desired to return to Slovakia. If they could not return, they desired to keep close connections. To do so, Slovaks from all different backgrounds found reasons to maintain those connections. In this spirit of unity and purpose, the first Slovak Congress met in Cleveland on May 26, 1907. At this congress, “the representatives of all the Slovak organizations came to Cleveland and along with them 7,000

⁴ Ján Javorník, “Podporujme pohanskú missiu,” *Svedok* 9, no. 5 (March 1, 1915): 80.

other Slovaks, of all creeds, beliefs and dialects.”⁵ During this historic congress, the Slovak League was formed. From organizations such as the Slovak League, strong and practical bonds were maintained between the immigrants and the Slovaks remaining in the Kingdom of Hungary. For example, by 1908, the Slovak League of America had sent 7,000 dollars to Slovakia, in part to support the widows and orphans.⁶ The Slovak League was one of many organizations that provided the will and the means for Slovak involvement in Czech and Slovak affairs.

On a smaller scale, the Slovak Lutherans in America were equally aware of these movements and worked to stay involved. Nearly a decade after the formation of the Slovak League, *Svedok* in 1916 recognized that the Slovak League in America was active.⁷ Moreover, *Svedok* reported in October 1917 that the Slovak League had met. Such recognition of the Slovak League implied that the readers were interested in the political events in the region. Significantly, they did not report the results of that historic meeting, but instead reported the fact that a Catholic priest led them in prayer. The focus on theological concerns was never far away. Many Lutheran pastors were upset because they felt that such an act of joint prayer was a misunderstanding of the separation of church and state, and it demonstrated unionism.⁸ Even at these critical moments during the formation of the Czechoslovak state, for which the Slovak League was partially responsible, the laser-like focus of the Slovak Lutheran Synod remained steady. They saw these events through their own theological lenses.

⁵ Mary Lucille Blizman, “The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia” (master’s thesis, University of Detroit, 1950), 12.

⁶ Marián Mark Stolárik, “The Role of American Slovaks in the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914–1918,” *Slovak Studies*. Vol. 8. (Cleveland: Slovak Institute, 1968): 19.

⁷ “Zprávy zo sveta,” *Svedok* 10, no. 10 (July 15, 1916): 223

⁸ “Drobničky,” *Svedok* 11, no. 24 (December 15, 1917): 387.

Besides the growing ability of Slovak groups to express their interests in their motherland, Slovaks and Czechs were also working together for common goals. Numerous organizations rose up representing both Slovak and Czech interests. Some of them proved decisive in the organization of a Czech and Slovak state. Two tangible and important results of this cooperation were the Cleveland and Pittsburg agreements. On October 25, 1915, the Slovaks and Czechs in America joined in the Cleveland Agreement, which bound the parties to pursue a federal state. Masaryk established the agreement under his guidance. This agreement was the first major step for a political Czechoslovak state. Masaryk promised that in the future state the Slovaks would have governmental control of their own lands and would be able to use Slovak as their official language.⁹ Shortly thereafter, the Czechoslovak National Council was formed in Paris in February 1916. Štefánik, who was eventually named vice-president and was already by then a hero of the Slovak people, was the council's leader. Masaryk was named President, and Beneš was named secretary. These latter two became the guiding voices for the Republic until the country collapsed under Nazi pressures. This team, though, was able to provide the leadership to guide Slovak-American and Czech-American support during the war years.

Even though the political landscape was changing rapidly, the Slovak Lutheran Synod remained primarily focused on Christian truth. Their first response was to pray. This reaction was certainly a pious one, but it also demonstrated that they felt limited in their ability to directly impact the situation in Central Europe. They viewed the Slovaks as victims of German and Hungarian aggression and pride.¹⁰ Even at the beginning of 1917, *Svedok* focused more on the 400th anniversary of Lutheranism, which was marked by the anniversary of Luther's *Ninety-Five*

⁹ Mary Lucille Blizman, "The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia," 26–27.

¹⁰ "Myšlienky o vojne," *Svedok* 9, no. 2 (January 15, 1915): 29.

Theses in 1517, rather than the world-changing events that engulfed most of Europe in general and Slovakia specifically. Their focus was theological and not political. An example of this was a poem presented in February of 1917 that raised the banner of the gift of the clear Gospel teaching that they inherited from Luther.¹¹ This orientation changed partially when the United States formally declared war and entered the First World War on April 6, 1917. The Slovak Synod Lutherans sensed that the time for change was near and reprinted a speech of President Woodrow Wilson's declaring his concerns.¹² They seemingly were waiting for a signal from American leadership to become more engaged in the events in Europe.

Although the focus was soon to shift to the Slovaks and Czechs in Europe, support from those in America proved useful in the formation of the state. On May 30, 1918, the Pittsburg Pact (or Declaration) was signed under the auspices of the Slovak League and by Masaryk as a declaration of independence for the Czech and Slovak peoples from Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The Pittsburg Pact set the parameters for the new Czechoslovak state, including the rights of the Slovaks to have partial autonomy and linguistic freedom. The founding of the state was only a few months after the signing of this pact: on October 28 in Prague the new state was officially established. American Slovaks, especially within the Slovak League, supported the pact and united into a political front. This pact repeated the promise from the Cleveland Agreement of the political autonomy in a federalist government that many in Slovakia longed for—especially the Catholics. It also promised the clear separation of the church and state. These two promises from Masaryk and others were touchstones for many in America, including those in the Slovak Lutheran Synod. For Slovak Lutherans, the promise of the separation of church and state, a relationship that they learned to treasure in America, was paramount. They focused on this

¹¹ Joz.[ef] Kolarik, "1917," *Svedok* 11, no. 4 (February 15, 1917): 49–50.

promise with the hope that the separation of church and state would be a similar model as found in America and allow the same result, which was a confessional Lutheran Church in Slovakia. Yet, at the very time that the overall American presence in Europe was being felt, the Slovaks and Czechs in the homeland were beginning to assert control of their own destiny.

In some quarters of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, doubts were raised about Masaryk. In time, many Slovaks questioned his political honesty, as the promises of a federalist state and an American-style separation of church and state proved to be elastic. But the concerns of the Slovak Lutheran Synod were not political, but theological. Their analysis of him was that he was not a complete atheist, but was certainly on the side of rationalistic religion.¹³ The hopeful language from documents like the Pittsburg Pact and subsequent denial of that pact by Masaryk created dissonance. This dissonance proved difficult for the Slovak Lutherans in Czechoslovakia.

In the creation of the new Czechoslovak state, those ideals planted during decades of nationalistic fervor became useful. A history was rediscovered to support the *raison d'être* of the new state. Reflecting after the demise of the Czechoslovak Republic to the forces of German Nazism, Edward Beneš, one of the founders of the state and its last President, alluded to the origins of the modern state reanimating the Great Moravian Empire, which dated back 1000 years and before the Hungarians arrival in Central Europe.¹⁴ This assertion of a common history and culture shared by Czechs and Slovaks, which is part historical fact and part nationalistic mythology, helped bind the Czechs and Slovaks together; and this rediscovered history was much different from the Hungarian understanding as Slovaks as part of the Kingdom of Hungary. For this reason Beneš' understanding of history is important to Slovak identity. He and

¹² "Zprávy z Ameriky," *Svedok* 11, no. 7 (April 1, 1917): 110–11.

¹³ P. Rafaj, "Zo svetovej histórie," *Svedok* 12, no. 13 (June 15, 1918): 193–94.

¹⁴ Edvard Benes, *Two Years of German Oppression in Czechoslovakia* (London: Czechoslovak Ministry of

others provided the historical precedent for Czechoslovak nationhood that even predates such people groups as the Hungarians in Europe, who had ruled over the Slovak peoples for 1,000 years. Hungarian magyarization was subverted by a Czechoslovakian historical analysis.

The Slovaks were widely energetic in their support of the new republic. The role of Slovaks in establishing a new state is hard to overestimate. As Kann points out “the Slovak contribution to the establishment of independent statehood in 1918 was equal to that of the Czechs and in regard to support by conationals abroad, particularly in the United States, perhaps superior.”¹⁵ This understanding is one that Czechs often concede. Beneš again:

From 1914 to 1918 the Slovak emigrants had collaborated with the Czechs, both in the political campaign—Štefánik as one of the heads of this campaign together with Masaryk and Beneš—and on the battle-fields in the Czechoslovak Legions. Despite the strong pressure that had been brought to bear upon them, those Slovaks who had remained in Slovakia had never ceased to manifest their desire to found a common State with the Czechs.¹⁶

Thus, the work of Czech and Slovak immigrants in America was important to the overall establishment of the Czechoslovak state. The Czech and Slovak immigrants formed the bond that proved formational in the life of the two nationalities in the new republic.

This hope and historical vision changed as soon as the Slovaks living in Slovakia gained their own vision for their future. On October 30, 1918, just two days after the allies in Prague declared the new Czechoslovak Republic, Slovak leaders of the indigenous Slovak National Council in Turčianský Svätý Martin were granted the right to speak for the Slovak people.¹⁷ This declaration marked the end of Hungarian influence over the Slovaks and the beginning of the

Foreign Affairs, Dept. of Information, 1941), 7.

¹⁵ Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 532.

¹⁶ Beneš, *Two Years of German Oppression in Czechoslovakia*, 17.

¹⁷ Blizman, “The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia,” 36–38.

Czech-Slovak relationship. It was also a sea change marking the growing independence of the Slovaks from the Slovaks in America. Since the two sides of the Atlantic did not have the ability during the war to communicate often or in depth, they were not always aware of their different perspectives concerning the relationship the Slovak nation should have with the Czechoslovak nation. For example, the Slovaks in America were keen for autonomy, as stated in the Pittsburg Pact, while the Slovaks in the old country were amiable to a national parliament. In the early history of the new state, fault lines existed in the foundations of the transatlantic relationship between Slovak immigrants and the Slovaks in Slovakia.

On February 5, 1920, in an official communication with the President of the Slovak Ministry, Masaryk repudiated the Pittsburg Pact, saying in effect that the Slovaks in America had no legal right to make decisions about the state of Czechoslovakia.¹⁸ These events marked the end of any hopes the Slovaks had for autonomy. This change in direction was especially true for Father Hlinka, who was a famous Slovak nationalist and representative of Catholic interests. His fame dates back to the Černova tragedy. He continued throughout his life to be in conflict with Masaryk. His People's Party remained a strong voice for autonomy. Even though it was not obvious at that time, this change in policy also marked the future failure of the Slovak Lutheran Synod's work in Slovakia. The Slovak Americans were hoping, and not without reason, that an American-style religious freedom from state interference would be in force in the new republic; in fact, when they returned to Slovakia, they found that many of the old customs and laws were to remain. The Czechoslovakian state would find its own expression of church and state relations, making the American experience less relevant to the realities to Lutheranism in Slovakia.

¹⁸ Blizman, "The Slovak Position and American Collaboration in the Formation of Czechoslovakia," 50–51.

When the war ended, the Slovaks in America had hope of a new beginning for Slovakia, the Czechoslovak state, and the Lutheran Church. They had hoped that the Slovaks would have freedom for themselves and their language. They also had hope that they would have freedom for their “dear church” from their Babylonian captivity under the Hungarian Lutheran Church.¹⁹ But it was also hoped that there would be a separation of church and state, granting freedom for all expressions of faith.²⁰ The American-style separation of church and state was one of the crucial expectations for the new state. The Slovak Lutheran Synod considered this separation the most treasured American freedom. This freedom was considered a necessity for a confessional Lutheran witness in the new Czechoslovak state.²¹ But although this hope was clearly ebbing, the Pelikan Movement held onto it throughout the mission work in Slovakia.

Even though the political realities were changing rapidly and the perspectives on the future were diverging, the ties between the Slovaks and the Slovak immigrants were still strong after the war. As the war ended, the Slovak Lutheran Synod focused on human care. Even as late as 1919, the synod was funding its mission among the Czech and Slovak soldiers. They reported in 1919 having money set aside for both the “war mission” and the “mission between the soldiers.”²² Juraj Gona made a plea for a fund for widows and orphans who were in Slovakia.²³ They were eager to provide human care for the war victims.

At this time, the Slovak Lutheran Synod was sure of its identity and the direction of its future. Although they suffered no trauma as severe as war, they had weathered conflicts within their synod as well as within the Slovak Lutheran community in America. They stated that they

¹⁹ “Zprávy z Ameriky,” *Svedok* 12, no. 23 (December 1, 1918): 390.

²⁰ “Zprávy z Ameriky,” 391.

²¹ T. B., “Náboženstvo v Česko-Slovensku,” *Svedok* 12, no. 24 (December 15, 1918): 404.

²² “Zápisica v. Zasadnutia,” *Zápisnica*, 1919, 22.

were a unique combination of Slovak culture and confessional Lutheran theology. As one observer noted: “Our Synod is one complete whole. It is pure Slovak, pure Lutheran, and the pure, theologically complete church.”²⁴ Some wondered if they should continue to do mission work, considering the fact that the church was considered so complete. Pelikan rejected this view.²⁵ Rather, in support of growth and change, Pelikan went on to support the role of a traveling missionary within America.²⁶ In defense of his view and in a prophetic allusion to the work in Slovakia, Pelikan added that it was God’s desire to send out missionaries and God would provide for the work. He also noted that there was a time when mission work had to happen. Quoting John 9:4, he reminded the reader that the night comes, when no one will have the power to work more.²⁷ Even though many within the Slovak Lutheran Synod felt some triumphalism because of their success in America, many also saw a theological imperative to continue in the mission work of the Gospel.

Even though Pelikan and others desired to continue with the Biblical mandate for mission, some already considered the primary work of the Slovak Lutheran Synod to be in America. This perspective would grow after the failure of the Pelikan Movement. However, the question was being asked: “Whether we in America do not have a responsibility towards the Lutheran church in Czechoslovakia?”²⁸ This question was posed after the war and before the new state was formed. It was the next big challenge for Slovak Lutherans in America, and it reflected the

²³ “Zápisica v. Zasadnutia,” *Zápisnica*, 1919, 27.

²⁴ T. B. “S kým sa máme spojiť,” *Svedok* 12, no. 9 (May 1, 1918): 136. “A naša Synoda je jeden kompaktný celok. Je čisto-slovenská, čisto-luteránska, čisto-náboženská celocirkev.”

²⁵ Ján Pelikán, “Slovo k otázke vnútorno-missijnej,” *Svedok* 12, no. 11 (June 1, 1918): 167–69. See also T. B., “Jaká veľká potreba je na vnútorného missionára,” *Svedok* 12, no. 12 (June 15, 1918): 187–88.

²⁶ Ján Pelikán, “Slovo k otázke vnútorno-missijnej,” *Svedok* 12, no. 11 (June 1, 1918): 169.

²⁷ Ján Pelikán, “Slovo k otázke vnútorno-missijnej,” 169.

²⁸ T. B., “Náboženstvo v Česko-Slovensku,” *Svedok* 12, no. 24 (December 15, 1918): 405.

tension with their mission in America and their responsibilities as immigrants to their homeland. This question and tension played out through the Pelikan Movement.

The Tipping Point: Coming Home

If economics created a reason to leave the Kingdom of Hungary, the new Czechoslovak Republic, founded on the nationalistic ideas of self-determination, called the Slovak Americans back. With a government that was no longer pro-Catholic or for magyarization, Slovaks hoped to fulfill the desire of a thousand years and to realize their nation as a political entity. Not since the Great Moravian Empire did Czechs and Slovaks have this much political control over their own destiny and their own national identity. They could create a state where Slovaks could be identified and exist as a culturally independent people in a political state. Slovak Lutherans, who had suffered twice—once for being Slovak in an ethnically Hungarian state and once for being Lutheran in a Catholic society—could now build the church they wanted. These events suggested to those in the Slovak Lutheran Synod that a true orthodox Lutheran church might be reborn in Slovakia. A Slovak Lutheran Church with the theology of its sixteenth-century forefathers and the cultural and ideological mix of its nineteenth-century leaders was now possible in the twentieth century. The Slovak Lutheran Synod saw that the time was ripe for a reassertion of confessional, orthodox Lutheranism, based on strict adherence to the Book of Concord, in one of the most storied Lutheran lands in Europe.

The synod was looking forward to a new era for the Slovak people. But concerns were also on the horizon. In a far ranging essay that was published in 1919, the author outlined the concerns about the new Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia. But as the nation united into a union of primarily Czechs and Slovaks, but also Germans, Hungarians and others, the author saw

the risk of being under a similar situation as the Slovaks in Hungary.²⁹ The new state would mix Slovaks with other nationalities, which were not of their own ethnicity or theological persuasion. The Slovak Lutherans in the new state should then break not only from the Hungarians, but from any state interference or control.³⁰ As proof, the experiences with Bishop Raffay's visits demonstrated how his work was politically motivated and not in the best interest of the church.³¹ The concern was also shared that without the strict separation of church and state the Catholic Church would have an opportunity to influence the situation in Czechoslovakia.³² The American experience was lauded as the example of the proper relationship of the church and state and the standard that Czechoslovakia should support.³³ Thus, the Hungarian experience of state control and the American experience of the separation of church and state informed the leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod to be against any new Lutheran Church in Slovakia whose relationship was too close to the state. A close relationship with the state would look dangerously familiar to their experience with the Hungarians. The three concerns of chauvinism, liberalism, and unionism were concerns again.

Secondly, the Slovak Lutheran Synod argued that the new church within Czechoslovakia should embrace a democratic church polity—no bishops, like the Catholic Church, and no Presbyterian approaches to church organization either.³⁴ Rather they saw the future for the Slovak Lutheran Church in terms of a congregational polity. This recommendation is almost certainly due, at least in part, to the Slovak Lutheran Synod's relationship with the Missouri

²⁹ "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," *Svedok* 13, no. 2 (January 15, 1919): 26–27.

³⁰ "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," *Svedok* 13, no. 3 (February 1, 1919): 42.

³¹ "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," *Svedok* 13, no. 4 (February 15, 1919): 61.

³² "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," *Svedok* 13, no. 6 (March 15, 1919): 98–100.

³³ "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," *Svedok* 13, no. 5 (March 1, 1919): 81–82.

³⁴ "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," *Svedok* 13, no. 8 (April 15, 1919): 139.

Synod. This democratic church polity was fundamental to the organization of the Missouri Synod as this German-immigrant church attempted to find its own way in the American context.³⁵ In a nod to their own tradition, however, Hurban, the Slovak confessional writer, rather than Walter or another Missouri Synod theologian, was used to defend this approach, adding that such independence does diminish the role of the bishops.³⁶ Importantly, according to Pelikan, a congregational church polity would have formed a healthier church. For example, he cited the control over the placement of pastors from the theological schools in the Kingdom of Hungary. He noted that congregations were, in essence, forced to accept pastors trained in rationalism and unbelief (“*otravovali ich mladé srdcia racionalizmom a neverou*”).³⁷ This false teaching led to cooperation with the Calvinists.³⁸ With this democratic polity, the congregation and the church were best able to proclaim the pure Word of God, which the author defended from the Formula of Concord and various passages of scripture.³⁹ Pelikan felt that through a separation of church and state as well as through a congregational and democratic church polity, a church could best share the Word of God in its purity.

Thirdly, the Slovak Lutheran Synod wanted the new church in the new state to be an “orthodox Lutheran church.”⁴⁰ The example of what this new church could be would come from

³⁵ For descriptions of the Missouri Synod’s view on congregational polity, see John M. Drickamer, “Walther on Church and Ministry,” in *C. F. W. Walther: The American Luther*, ed. Arthur H. Drevlow, John M. Drickamer, and Glenn E. Reichwald (Freeman, SD: Pine Hill Press, 1987), 69–82; August R. Sueflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C. F. W. Walther* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 126–28, 162–67; and August R. Sueflow, “The Missouri Synod Organized,” *Moving Frontiers*, ed. Carl Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 164–66.

³⁶ “Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu,” *Svedok* 13, no. 8 (April 15, 1919): 141; “Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu,” *Svedok* 13, no. 11 (June 1, 1919): 201–202.

³⁷ “Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu,” *Svedok* 13, no. 9 (May 1, 1919): 161.

³⁸ “Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu,” 161.

³⁹ “Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu,” *Svedok* 13, no. 10 (May 15, 1919): 180.

⁴⁰ “Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu,” *Svedok* 13, no. 12 (June 15, 1919): 221.

the era of Kollár, Kuzmáň, and Hurban.⁴¹ For the Slovak Lutheran Synod and for Pelikan, the nineteenth century is important for their vision of the future. During this time, Slovak Lutheran orthodoxy was championed. For example, the issue of the Lord's Supper was vital, and the spirit and text of Hurban was summoned to combat any unionistic activity concerning the practice of the Lord's Supper.⁴² Such teachings were confessed in opposition to the Reformed and liberal theologies in the nineteenth century and during Pelikan's time.

The goal was the revitalization of the Lutheran Church in Slovakia. To achieve this revitalization, the church would be solidly orthodox, have a congregational polity, and maintain a clear separation of church and state. They saw the old laws and statutes as a "rusty buckets" (*hrdyavé okovy*).⁴³ They were no longer useful in this new era. They saw the answers as not coming from academia, but with the power of Christ's name.⁴⁴ They saw a coming conflict, as they would become like soldiers who would return to Slovakia to fight for a free Lutheran church.⁴⁵ The new church looked largely like them.

Perhaps the greatest perceived danger was unionism; however, this time the fear of unionism was with the Czechs. As if inspired by Kollár and Šafárik, soon after the founding of the new state, discussions about a union of Czech and Slovak Protestants began. The Slovak Lutheran Synod saw yet another example of Slovak Lutheranism, in their orthodox form, under attack.⁴⁶ This news from Czechoslovakia about the possibility of a new union caused the

⁴¹ "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," 222.

⁴² "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," *Svedok* 13, no. 13 (July 1, 1919): 242. For a larger description in the same article of Hurban's contribution during the nineteenth century, see "Naše povinnosti naproti luteránskej cirkvi v Československu," *Svedok* 13, no. 22 (November 15, 1919): 425–26.

⁴³ J. V., "Doslov ku zpráve z našej cirkvi na Slovensku," *Svedok* 13, no. 18 (September 15, 1919): 342.

⁴⁴ J. V., "Doslov ku zpráve z našej cirkvi na Slovensku," 342.

⁴⁵ J. V., "Doslov ku zpráve z našej cirkvi na Slovensku," 343.

⁴⁶ [Ján Pelikán], "Lutherá cirkvi v Česko-Slovensku hrozí veľké nebezpečenstvo," *Svedok* 13, no. 23 (December 1, 1919): 466–9. For a more developed understanding of Pelikan's concerns and the difference he saw

resurgence of a fear that defined much of Pelikan's ministry. Not only did he fight unionism and liberalism in Hungary and America, the new state now faced similar compromises in theology. Those who were considering union between Czech Protestants and Slovak Lutherans traced the Protestant heritage from Hus⁴⁷ through Komenský⁴⁸ to Tranovský.⁴⁹ Pelikan rather saw the Lutheran confession passed from Luther through Tranovský to Hurban.⁵⁰ Thus, their view of church history supported their vision for its future. For Pelikan and his followers, the danger of union meant the loss of the confessional Lutheran identity. In its place, a Czech-Slovak protestant identity based on the Hus tradition was offered. Pelikan resisted this course of action. This conflict set the stage for the Pelikan Movement's attempt to save orthodox Lutheranism in the Luther-Tranovský-Hurban tradition.

Slovaks Lutherans in Slovakia React

On October 28, 1918, the Slovak Lutheran Church dissolved its association with the Hungarian Lutheran Church. In September, 1920, they convened a synod that lasted through

between Czech Protestants and Slovak Lutherans, which he views as the influences of Zwingli, Calvin and modern dogma, see [Ján] P.[elik]án, "Na Nepravej Ceste," *Svedok* 14, no. 6 (March 15, 1920): 128–31.

⁴⁷ Jan Hus (1370–1415) was a Czech reformer and martyr of the fifteenth century, a century before Luther. He resisted the authority of the medieval Catholic Church where it went against his conscience, and is often compared to Luther. He provided Czech and Moravian Protestants with a Reformer from their own ethnicity. The criticism of Hus as a foe of the true faith was strong near the time of the Pelikan Movement. Concerned about a possible union with the Czech Protestants, Hus was labeled as a liberal. See J. V., "Slobodomyslným Čechom na Uváženie," *Svedok* 14, no. 1 (January 1, 1920): 15–16.

⁴⁸ Ján Komenský (1592–1670) or John Amos Comenius was a famous theologian, scientist and educator from Moravia from the Brethren faith tradition (*Jednota bratská*). For a short description of his impact on Slovak Lutherans, see Peter Kónya, "Dejiny ECAV na Slovensku v rokoch 1610–1791," In *Evanjelici v Dejinách Slovenskej Kultúry*, ed. Pavel Uhorskai (Liptovský Mikuláš: Tranoscius, 2002), 37–38.

⁴⁹ Juraj Tranovský (1592–1637) was a pastor and hymn writer from the Czech regions, who worked extensively also in Slovakia. He is often referred to as the "Luther of the Slavs" for his work in maintaining the Lutheran faith during a difficult time of persecution.

⁵⁰ [Ján Pelik]án, "Lutherá cirkvi v Česko-Slovensku hrozí veľké nebezpečenstvo," *Svedok* 13, no. 24 (December 15, 1919): 473–5. This anti-unionism argument, seeing the history of Slovak Lutheranism through a Luther-Hurban heritage, was kept alive during the time of the Pelikan Movement. For an example of similar argument, including the ad homonym attacks against such evils as Calvinism, Hussitism, rationalism, and so on, see, Ladislav Zgúth, "Prečo nemôžeme súhlasiť s uniou?," *Svedok* 15, no. 9 (May 1, 1921): 182–83.

November to decide the organization of the new church. By January 18, 1921, after receiving the support of the new Czechoslovak government, the new Slovak Lutheran Church was born.⁵¹

Thus, in a few short years, the Slovak Lutheran Church for the first time in modern history had independence. Like the Slovak Lutheran Synod, the Lutheran Church in Slovakia had a similar hope of creating a church for and by Slovaks.

Since the establishment of the independent state, the Slovak Lutherans were no longer concerned about the influence of the Hungarians in terms of the Reformed bias and their magyarization policies. They recognized the two strains of thinking within their church: the first was a more liberal tendency, including the desire for cooperation, and the second was a conservative, more traditional approach. They saw their status within the new administration as secure, because the Reformed wanted peace as well. They foresaw living side-by-side with the Reformed, as in Erlangen, which was a strong center of Lutheran teaching. As one author notes, Lutherans in Slovakia would not join (unionism) because the Lutherans did not join with the reformed Hungarians under the care of Zay, Radvánszký, and Prónay, and would not join with the Reformed at that time as well.⁵² But the author added that the faith would not grow until this history was forgotten and they could move on from the burdens of the past. It was more important to be concerned about the spiritual life than with certain principles, he added.⁵³ The idea was that the new country created an opportunity for a new relationship. This relationship would not be burdened with its recent history, but free to maintain the church's Lutheran identity and peaceful relations with others.

⁵¹ "Prvá synoda cirkve evanjelickej a. v.," *Tranovský Evanjelický Kalendár*, (Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš: Nákladom kníhkup. a Vydav. Účast Spolku "Tranoscus", 1922), 85–89.

⁵² Julius Bodnár, "Úkoly cirkve evanjelickej a. v. slovenskej v československej republike," *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 1–2 (January-February 1920): 2.

⁵³ Julius Bodnár, "Úkoly cirkve evanjelickej a. v. slovenskej v československej republike," 2.

As if echoing Hegel and Herder, the author also stated that the church should not be concerned with the principles of a certain age or a particular nation, but the spirit of the people.⁵⁴ Ruppeldt's journey to Great Britain in 1920 showed this spirit. During his visits, he learned about being involved in ecumenical groups and events, such as World Conference on Faith and Order⁵⁵ and the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches.⁵⁶ He reflected that the church should have the same task of pietistic living so that it might be known as the church of clear teaching, virtuous strengths, evangelical zeal, *which should give the nation a strong Christian character* (his emphasis).⁵⁷ Thus, the pietistic emphasis on good works and cooperation led to an ecumenical focus. Through the activity of Ruppeldt and others, the Slovak Lutherans were reaching out to these ecumenical organizations; they admired them and they wanted to find their new place in Christendom. They were also confident of maintaining their identity in the context of these new relationships. A significant element within the church in Slovakia was not interested in unionism. However, they would not stand in the way of cooperation, if it meant the growth of the church in its piety and witness.

⁵⁴ Julius Bodnár, "Úkoly cirkve evanglickej a. v. slovenskej v československej republike," 6.

⁵⁵ For a more detailed account of the church's experience with the Faith and Order work, see Fedor Ruppeldt, "Štyri prípravné otázky Konferencie Viery a Správy," *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 8–9 (August–September 1921): 189–94.

⁵⁶ Fedor Ruppeldt, "Naša cirkev a zahraničie," *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 1–3 (January–March 1921): 8–16. This article is a description of Ruppeldt's experience at on conference of the World Alliance in Berne, Switzerland in August of 1920. He went with a Czechoslovak delegation, including a representative from the theological faculty in Prague. See also Ruppeldt's report of another conference to this organization in August of 1922 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Fedor Ruppeldt, "Cirkevné konferencie v Kodani," *Cirkevné Listy* 36, no. 21 (1 November 1922): 330–33, Fedor Ruppeldt, "Cirkevné konferencie v Kodani," *Cirkevné Listy* 36, no. 22 (15 November 1922): 347–51, and Fedor Ruppeldt, "Cirkevné konferencie v Kodani," *Cirkevné Listy* 36, no. 23 (1 December 1922): 364–67. By 1923, Ruppeldt had an article in each of the issues of *Cirkevné Listy* on events and relationships from around the world, including the United States. He continued to be the key representative of the church in ecumenical and international relations through the 20s. Thus, the ecumenical activity of the church was emphasized positively throughout the period of the Pelikan Movement within the church and its main organ, *Cirkevné Listy*. Of course, those in the Pelikan Movement did not approve of such activity and saw his work in particular as part of the problem of unionism with the Slovak Lutheran Church. See J. V., "Magna Carta alebo Všeobecné zásadné ustanovenia synody v starej vlasti," *Pravda* 1, no. 10 (October 15, 1921): 325.

⁵⁷ Fedor Ruppeldt, "Naša cirkev a zahraničie," *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 11 (November 1920): 254.

On the other hand, the Missouri Synod was not as graciously appreciated. For example, in a short article, which praised the support and cooperation of Lutheran groups in American, in particular, the National Lutheran Council, the editor of the main organ of the Slovak Lutheran Church mentioned the Missouri Synod, but offhandedly, said “the Missouri Synod, to which also Pelikan with his synod belongs, stands alone.”⁵⁸ What might have been seen as great praise from some, who would admire such tenacity as to stand alone for the truth, was a poor witness to the ecumenical Slovaks. The Slovaks defined their Lutheran identity in a more liberal and pietistic tradition that did not coincide with the Slovak Lutheran Synod and its partner, the Missouri Synod. They felt they were fully Lutheran; and yet, they were unsure what these confessional synods from America truly were.

The state was significantly involved in the activities of the Slovak Lutheran Church. In addition to the rhetorical displays of collaboration, support from the state was tangible. In 1920, the Slovak Lutheran Church had secured over four million crowns in support.⁵⁹ This support is one reason why the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia were very concerned to maintain good relations with the state and to remain the sole representative of Slovak Lutheranism in the new Republic. The church felt it should cooperate with the state during these formative days. While quoting Romans 13, a *Cirkevné Listy* author understood their new relationship with the Czechoslovak state as similar to France or America, but not immediately. Only by small steps were they moving in that direction.⁶⁰ The Slovak Lutheran Church was supportive of a strong separation of church and state, viewing various models as possibilities, but the church was not eager to move too quickly in this direction. They viewed the church as contributing to the culture

⁵⁸ “Rozhlady,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 8–9 (August–September 1921): 218.

⁵⁹ “Štátna podpora evanjelickej a. v. cirkvi na Slovensku,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 1–2 (January–February 1920): 29–32.

of the nation and the stability of a Czechoslovak state. They also saw their focus primarily on Slovakia—but not just the Slovaks. In reflecting on the role of the Slovak Lutheran Church in the state, one observer asserted that the program of the church was to build a Lutheran church to the service of the person, but not just Slovaks, but “to all people, the whole nation.”⁶¹ Thus, the Slovak Lutheran Church wanted to contribute to the success of the new state and multinational nation. The mutual support between the church and state reflected the new realities of Czechoslovakia.

To find common ground with their new compatriots, this support was evident in their openness to the Czech Protestants. Relieved of the burden of Hungarian domination, the Slovak Lutherans were eager to move towards the Czechs. In the spirit of finding a new historical basis for Slovak Lutheranism and, thus, Protestantism, they rediscovered a mutual history. They revived a historical tradition that asserted that the Slovaks and Czechs had a common religious heritage in Hus, the same historic translation of the Bible, similar religious services and worship guides, and a spirit of unity with each other.⁶² For example, Ruppeltd defended the cooperation between the Slovak and Czech Protestants based on this common heritage in Hus.⁶³ In the November, 1920 issue of *Cirkevné Listy*, a number of articles were written in remembrance of major historical events. These events were important Lutheran events such as Luther’s burning of the Papal Bull. The events surrounding the Battle of White Mountain, when the forces of the Counter Reformation crushed the Czech Protestants in the early seventeenth century, were also

⁶⁰ Ján Drobný, “Niekoľko myšlienok o správe cirkevnej,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 3 (March 1920): 51.

⁶¹ Ján Ďurovič, “Evanjelická cirkev a politika na Slovensku,” *Cirkevné Listy* 37, no. 5–6 (March 1923): 111. “... a to celého ľudu, celého národa (his emphasis).”

⁶² “Evanjelická a. v. cirkev v bývalom Uhorsku a v terajšej Československej republike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 1–2 (January-February 1920): 38.

⁶³ This tracing of a common Protestant history through Hus was a point of contention with those supporting the Pelikan Movement. Rather than Hus and that tradition, the Pelikan Movement focused on the Lutheran leaders that

included. Moreover, important Czech Protestant leaders, such as Komenský, who was a famous education reformer in the Czech Brethren tradition, were put side-by-side with Lutheran heroes of the faith. Juxtaposing these influences on Slovak Lutherans demonstrated the desire to find a connection between the two nations and a broader protestant tradition.⁶⁴

The challenges to this perspective were twofold. The first was that orthodox Lutherans challenged this view of church history. As suggested by those in the Pelikan Movement, the course of Slovak Lutheranism ran through Tranovský and Hurban and not Hus. Secondly, this version of history all but ignored the true ethnicity of the new state, in that many in the country were neither Czech nor Slovak. Only 67% of the country claimed to be part of this Slavic union. The Slovak Lutheran Church reflected this diversity. At the time of the Pelikan Movement, Slovakia had 410,000 Lutherans—50,000 Germans, 10,000 Hungarians, and 350,000 Slovaks.⁶⁵ The suggestion of a Hussite legacy for Slovak Lutheranism did not include significant minorities.

What was more important for Ruppeldt and others in the Slovak Lutheran Church than an historical basis for unity was the need to cooperate. Cooperation was viewed as a moral mandate after the First World War. This desire for partners mirrored Czechoslovakia's need for an alliance, which created the Little Entente. This alliance was an attempt to create a defensive league against Hungary, and to secure relationships with much larger states, such as Great Britain and France. By the end of the 1930s, this effort at security through treaties proved less than successful. Smaller nations—and churches—felt the need to find partners to not only survive but also thrive. The Slovak Lutherans who lived through the war felt the need for irenic church relationships. The Slovaks in America did not have the same experience during the war.

lead to and in many ways culminated with Hurban.

⁶⁴ “Naše pamätné dni,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 11 (November 1920): 233–35.

⁶⁵ “Evanjelická a. v. cirkev v bývalom Uhorsku a v terajšej Československej republike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no.

Moreover, for the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia cooperation rather than conflict with others was a defense against the historic and negative influence of the Hungarian Protestants—certainly the Reformed, but also the Lutherans.⁶⁶ Ruppeltdt saw safety and security, and even survivability, in broader relations between nationalities and other Protestants in Europe.

The Slovak Lutheran Church was heterogeneous ethnically and theologically. Not all were satisfied with the move towards a broader cooperation with other confessions. Some looked at the Czechs and saw a lack of morals. They connected the Czech's unionism or ecumenicalism with the decline in morals. One Slovak author argued that interconfessional faith is doused in atheism and leads to bolshevism. The lack of good morals also leads to actions without the guilt of sin. The author called the reader to return to a true heart towards Christ. The plea was for a more pious faith that could only be found in confessionalism.⁶⁷ Although ecumenical work was important to the Slovak Lutheran Church, some called for reform in the church and a return to focusing on God's Word and their Lutheran heritage.

At its genesis, the Slovak Lutheran Church determined the enemies of Slovak Lutheranism. The primary enemy was not the same as it was for the Pelikan Movement. The Pelikan Movement dealt with the enemies from within, meaning the loss of a confessional Lutheran identity. Rather the Slovak Lutheran Church was more concerned with the enemies from without, philosophical enemies, which included the rising tide of atheism and bolshevism, and all the antireligious enemies—namely, the antichrists.⁶⁸ The result was not primarily a call to the confessions or Lutheran orthodoxy, but a call to a piety that could resist these modern influences

1–2 (January-February 1920): 39.

⁶⁶ Fedor Ruppeltdt, “Naša cirkev a zahraničie,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 8–9 (August-September 1920): 153–56.

⁶⁷ “Čisté mravy,” *Cirkevné Listy* 37, no. 7 (15 April 1923): 142–43.

⁶⁸ L. Bazovský, “Potrebujeme novú reformáciu,” *Cirkevné Listy* 37, no. 20 (31 October 1923): 402–404.

and the divisions they could cause. The question was how does a Lutheran solve the tension between the need for cooperation and the need for greater piety? This concern is a different emphasis on the Lutheran experience than what the Pelikan Movement suggested in terms of Lutheran identity.

The Formation of the Slovak Lutheran Church

During the Pelikan Movement, the Slovak Lutheran Church was building its own new church body. Even as Pelikan and his coworkers were planting a Free Lutheran Church in the East of Slovakia, the Slovak Lutheran Church was building its own structure and finding its own voice after many years under Hungarian domination. Part of the strong reaction against Pelikanism was that the Slovak Lutheran Church had not yet fully discussed or discovered what independent Slovak Lutheranism would look like in the twentieth century. The fact that some locations were underserved or that some held conflicting views of Lutheranism was due in part to the chaotic nature of this new beginning.

The Slovak Lutheran Church compared this new beginning to two other significant dates in their history. The first was the Žilina Synod of 1610, where the Formula and the Book of Concord were first accepted. The second is the Edit of Toleration of 1791, where the Lutherans were granted a measure of freedom from the intense persecution of Counter Reformation. Likewise, the Czechoslovakian state on January 30, 1919 granted new freedoms of worship in the new state.⁶⁹ Thus, the establishment of a Slovak Lutheran church in the new state was a historical occasion, making the formation of the church one of the major watershed events in Slovak Lutheran history.

⁶⁹ Milan Ivanka and Jur Janoška, "Pred synodou," *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 12 (December 1920): 266–9. For similar associations see, Jur Janoška, "Pri otvorení prvej synody cirkve evanj. a. v. na Slovensku," *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 1–3 (January-March, 1921): 1.

The new Slovak Lutheran Church asked similar questions as the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Just as the immigrant Slovak Lutheran Synod wondered how their American church should develop, the leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Church asked questions on the mission of the church in the Czechoslovak state. They were no longer concerned with living with the legacy of Hungarians—magyarization, liberalism, unionism—but they were concerned with the radicalism of the Czech and the clericalism of the Moravians.⁷⁰ They were troubled by their new Czechoslovak culture, with an emphasis on their neighbors in Bohemia and Moravia, and not their past, Hungarian culture. As their cultural milieu changed, they changed their concerns; however, even as their relationships changed, they intended to maintain their Lutheran identity, that is, their association with the Word of God and the Confessions.⁷¹ Their church was, in their estimation, what it meant to be a Slovak Lutheran in Czechoslovakia. Considering the daunting task of creating a new church organization and finding their own mission, the Slovak Lutherans in this new state pleaded for unity. In fact, to achieve this goal, it was felt the most important aspect was solidarity.⁷²

The Slovak Lutheran Church sought out alliances with the Czechs and the ecumenical organizations for a number of reasons, including to establish links with their new countrymen and to achieve legitimacy within the new nation. Perhaps most importantly, they did so to resist continued Hungarian influence. For their relationship with the Czechs, they recreated a common cultural history so that they could argue not for unity in all things but a common, working bond

⁷⁰ Julius Bodnár, “Úkoly cirkve evanglickej a. v. slovenskej v československej republike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 1–2 (January-February 1920): 1. This concern for clericalism was not a new experience that occurred after the establishment of Czechoslovakia. For this historic concern, including Czech clericalism, see “Sjazd českých evanelikov,” *Cirkevné Listy* 17, no. 11 (November 1903): 344–48.

⁷¹ Julius Bodnár, “Úkoly cirkve evanglickej a. v. slovenskej v československej republike,” 1.

⁷² Julius Bodnár, “Úkoly cirkve evanglickej a. v. slovenskej v československej republike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 1–2 (January-February 1920): 5.

that would give the nation legitimacy. To achieve this goal on an ecclesiastical level, they found similarities in language, through a common Bible and a common religious language and history, such as Hussitism. These are bonds they never had or shared with the Hungarians.⁷³ Moreover, they were thankful for their new state. Notably, the new state gave them, by law, autonomy (*samospravovania*).⁷⁴ Through the work of Ruppeltdt and others, they were able to make many international contacts, giving them legitimacy beyond their borders. If an international organization recognized them as a bona fide, independent church, then Hungarian propaganda, which would argue they were not Slovaks but really still Hungarians, was neutralized by international recognition. Thus, they were able, through their connections with the Czechs and international agencies, to secure their place in the world and ensure that the Hungarian hegemony that dominated their lives for hundreds of years would not return. Even though the international relationships were a way of protecting themselves from a perceived Hungarian threat, the Slovaks feared the growth of sects, especially as the sects were establishing themselves in the Czech lands and coming from England.⁷⁵ The situation in this new land was not unlike the denominational situation in American. They had to balance those concerns, which they shared with the Pelikan Movement and the others, with the cultural and political realities of Czechoslovakia in the 1920s.

The Slovaks were concerned about unionism. A greater concern was the spiritual health and welfare of the people. More than doctrinal alignment, they were concerned with the

⁷³ “Evanjelická a. v. cirkev v bývalom Uhorsku a v terajšej Československej republike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 1–2 (January-February 1920): 38.

⁷⁴ “Evanjelická a. v. cirkev v bývalom Uhorsku a v terajšej Československej republike,” 38–39.

⁷⁵ Julius Bodnár, “Úkoly cirkve evanglickej a. v. slovenskej v československej republike,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 1–2 (January-February 1920): 6.

destructive attitudes that could envelop the church.⁷⁶ They were aware of their own historical conflict with the Hungarians and the Calvinists.⁷⁷ Considering the continued propaganda by the Hungarians against the Slovaks, working closely with the Czechs seemed the best choice for the church.⁷⁸ The political landscape, both in terms of nationalities and churches, compelled the Slovaks to seek alliances with the Czechs, even if these might appear to be too close to some.

They were equally interested in the separation of church and state. Their perspective differed from their American counterparts. They saw that the state would embrace a separation of church and state in the form of France or America, but they also saw that it would not happen overnight.⁷⁹ They had the same goal, but their sense of urgency was much less. They valued the continued cooperation and gradual change towards a separation of church and state. They did not support revolutionary change. Theological concerns compelled them to consider the separation of church and state, but the realities of establishing a new country and new church equally required them to consider the multivalent concerns of the nation. This basic difference in approach to the new situation in the Czechoslovak Republic would characterize the conflict between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Church.

Pelikan Prepares to Return

As soon as Pelikan ascended to the presidency of the synod for the second time, he reasserted his personality and his dedication to confessional Lutheranism. At the Slovak Lutheran Synod's convention in Akron, Ohio on August 27 to September 2, 1919, Pelikan was elected President; at the same convention, Pelikan, Sr. was accepted officially into the Slovak

⁷⁶ Julius Bodnár, "Úkoly cirkve evanglickej a. v. slovenskej v československej republike," 2.

⁷⁷ "Evanjelická a. v. cirkev v bývalom Uhorsku a v terajšej Československej republike," *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 1–2 (January-February 1920): 34–40.

⁷⁸ "Evanjelická a. v. cirkev v bývalom Uhorsku a v terajšej Československej republike," 38–39.

Lutheran Synod.⁸⁰ Pelikan had become such a focus of the Slovak Lutheran Synod that his presidency was a sign to many of his dominance over the synod. This accusation was rejected by representatives of the Slovak Lutheran Synod (probably his coworker from Pelikan's days in Slovakia, Theodore Bálent), who argued forcefully that Christ through His Word was the real authority in the Slovak Lutheran Synod.⁸¹ Pelikan and the synod's dedication to its theology were influential in the establishment of the Pelikan Movement.

The synod felt that the time was right to act quickly in sharing that perspective with their mother church in Slovakia. At the convention in 1919, they decided that the synod would send a representative to Slovakia. The three candidates were Pelikan, Joseph Kuchárik, and Ľudovít Engler.⁸² At that time, it was not clear that Pelikan would be elected to represent the Slovak Lutheran Synod. In a letter to the Synod's archivist, Pelikan reported that he was second in the voting with 11 votes, while Kuchárik received the most votes at 13. Engler received only 8.⁸³ Pelikan did not even receive a majority of the votes. In subsequent ballots, the synod elected him, and thus he began his preparations for his journey and his role as representative of the Slovak Lutheran Synod to the Slovak Lutheran Church.

One act of preparation was a letter of introduction sent to the Slovak Lutheran Church. Pelikan sent a letter to the Church in Slovakia notifying them of his intention to visit Slovakia and his desire to share with them the clear teachings of the Evangelical-Lutheran tradition. To this end, Pelikan shared a litany of goals, all of which revolved around boldly sharing the one

⁷⁹ Ján Drobný, "Niekoľko myšlienok o správe cirkevnej," *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 3 (March 1920): 51–52.

⁸⁰ "Naše synodálne shromaždenie," *Svedok* 13, no. 17 (August 30, 1919): 317.

⁸¹ "Poľutovaniahodná neznámosť," *Svedok* 13, no. 17 (August 30, 1919): 324.

⁸² George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 109n22.

⁸³ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, September 24, 1919, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

gift that the Slovak Lutheran Synod could give; that is, that the Lutherans in Slovakia “would remain faithful to this more precious heritage and always steadfastly next to this teaching.”⁸⁴

Their reaction to Pelikan was to state that the church in Slovakia did not always agree with him, but that all should welcome him as a brother. They admonished those that would close their door to him, indicating that they would be sowing discord. In this way, they accepted him into their fellowship, hoping that by warmly receiving him, better relationships would form between the two churches. At the same time, the church in Slovakia had some early concerns about the goals of Pelikan and this initial visit. An announcement of Pelikan’s initial trip was also printed in *Svedok*, on March 1, 1920.⁸⁵

The relationship between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Church was not the only important relationship for either church body. In contrast to Pelikan’s visit, the relationship of the Slovak Lutheran Church with the ULCA was strong and calm. The Slovak Lutheran Church admired the union of Lutherans from 13 different nationalities, which may have been a more useable model for their multi-ethnic union in the Czechoslovak Republic. They noted how these American Lutherans had joined together in English, because that was the only practical language. Even though they were modifying their church practice to fit the American context, these American Lutherans were still faithful to the Lutheran teachings from their mother country, but also had a broader, more inclusive understanding of Lutheranism.⁸⁶ The values of the ULCA match more closely with the goals of the Slovak Lutherans. They were very interested, as a small church within a small nation, to find a home within the context of world Lutheranism, whereby they could have the best of both worlds: they could remain faithful

⁸⁴ “Poznam redakcie Cirkevných Listov,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 8–9 (August-September 1920): 198. “... aby ste i Vy zostali verní tomuto najdrahšiemu dedictvu a pevne stáli pri tomto učení ...”

⁸⁵ J.[án] Pelikán, “Príhovor Vyslanca do Česko-Slovenska,” *Svedok* 14, no. 3 (March 1, 1920): 114.

Lutherans, but they would also expand their horizons by learning from other Lutherans around the world and the examples of how they cooperated. In this sense, they were much more ecumenical (in a pan-Lutheran sense) than members of the Slovak Lutheran Synod.

Pelikan Leaves for His Spiritual Home

Pelikan reported that he left New York on June 22, 1920.⁸⁷ While traveling to France by boat, he shared the difficult circumstances of his trip—bad air, sick people and rough seas, as well as the inability to get much work done.⁸⁸ While seemingly foreshadowing the future conflicted situations he would encounter, he already anticipated his work as a “very difficult task” and a “formidable obstacle.”⁸⁹ Yet he also had great confidence that God had given him this important task.⁹⁰ He seemed steeled for the inevitable confrontation he would have presenting his confessional Lutheran approach. He had honed this approach in America. In an impassioned declaration and prayer, Pelikan was sent off to the old country with great hopes. He was to be the true representative of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. As one observer noted, Pelikan would be in Slovakia to “speak, write, preach, propagate, teach, proclaim, defend, advocate, explain, fight, drag, suffer, work *in Your name and on Your behalf*.”⁹¹ Thus, Pelikan began his

⁸⁶ Fedor Ruppeldt, “Naša cirkev a zahraničie,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 10 (October 1920): 203.

⁸⁷ J.[án] Pelikán, “Slovo na rozlúčenie,” *Svedok* 14, no. 14 (July 15, 1920): 321. Taking into account that he left on a boat from New York on June 22, 1920, I can find no acknowledgement in *The Lutheran Witness* that the Missouri Synod was aware of his efforts to return to Slovakia.

⁸⁸ Jan Pelikan, letter, June 30, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

⁸⁹ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, June 30, 1919, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

⁹⁰ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, June 30, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

⁹¹ J. V., “Modlime sa za nášho poslanca,” *Svedok* 14, no. 12 (June 15, 1920): 261.

journey sensing he was a representative of God to the Slovak peoples—at least that was his hope and the hope of the Slovak Lutheran Synod.⁹²

At the same time, some in the Slovak Lutheran Synod were apprehensive about Pelikan's adventure. The Americanized Slovaks were concerned that the Slovaks in Slovakia saw them as rich and ripe to help fix buildings and schools.⁹³ Also limiting some of the excitement about this overseas mission were the concerns at home. As one of the leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Synod noted, they would always favor the work at home first, foreshadowing a viewpoint that would become more and more dominant: the first goal was to build the church in America and not fix the church in Slovakia. In addition, they saw their confessionalism as the source of their success in America. Only as the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia adhered to proper teaching and piety would they be able to grow as well as the church in America.⁹⁴ With this hope, Pelikan went to Slovakia so that the Slovaks in Slovakia would grow in a confessional understanding of the faith. He did not go to repair buildings, but he went there for the clear proclamation of the word of God and the true administration of the sacraments.⁹⁵ In a letter printed in *Stráž na Sione*, whose editor Pelikan also visited during his visit to Slovakia, Pelikan laid out the following reasons for his visit. He came, first of all, to explain the situation of the Slovak Lutherans in America, in particular, the character of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and its teaching and practice, which was confessional.⁹⁶ The second goal was to help the church in Slovakia have the same kind of fruit or success as the church in America.⁹⁷ He felt that he had experienced and learned what a

⁹² J. V., "Modlime sa za nášho poslanca," 263.

⁹³ J. V., "Starokrajové prosby o podporu," *Svedok* 14, no. 12 (June 15, 1920): 268–70.

⁹⁴ J. V., "Starokrajové prosby o podporu," 270.

⁹⁵ J. V., "Starokrajové prosby o podporu," 270.

⁹⁶ Ján Pelikán, "Vysvetlenie ohľadom môjho príchodu a môjho úkolu," *Stráž na Sione* 28, no. 15 (1920): 110.

⁹⁷ Ján Pelikán, "Vysvetlenie ohľadom môjho príchodu a môjho úkolu," 111.

confessional Slovak Lutheran Church could become. He did not recognize, however, the extent of his exposure to American and American Lutheran culture.

Pelikan Arrives

Once in Slovakia, Pelikan stayed true to his message of confessional Lutheranism, orthodox piety and pride for the success of the Slovak Lutheran Synod in America. In a lecture that he gave in Slovakia, and which was printed in *Svedok*, Pelikan stated that the main task of the Slovak Lutheran Synod was to offer the spiritual treasure that they had experienced in America.⁹⁸ Pelikan saw the Slovak Lutheran Synod as the confessional Slovak Lutheran standard. The spirit of the Slovak Lutheran Synod should be an example and not only in its richness but also in its freedom.⁹⁹ He wanted to provide proper spiritual guidance and teaching as a true Lutheran. The Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia were to decide whether they were willing to receive the teaching he wanted to give them.¹⁰⁰ Pelikan shared the same sentiment in an open letter to the Slovak Lutheran Church. He made the point numerous times that he and his church were bringing the true, clear teachings of Lutheranism.¹⁰¹ He offered the Slovak Lutheran Church the opportunity to hear him lecture about this teaching.¹⁰² As he began his special ministry of reaching out with confessional Lutheranism to the Slovak Lutheran Church, he also mentioned that his main location in Slovakia would be a town he knew well: Brezová.¹⁰³ Like so many

⁹⁸ Ján Pelikán, “Dielo našej Synody v záujme oslobodenia evanjelicko-luteránskej cirkvi v našom národe československom,” *Svedok* 14, no. 14 (July 15, 1920): 312.

⁹⁹ Ján Pelikán, “Dielo našej Synody v záujme oslobodenia evanjelicko-luteránskej cirkvi v našom národe československom,” 313.

¹⁰⁰ Ján Pelikán, “Dielo našej Synody v záujme oslobodenia evanjelicko-luteránskej cirkvi v našom národe československom,” 315.

¹⁰¹ Ján Pelikán, “Prívet a výzva,” *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 8–9 (August-September 1920): 197.

¹⁰² Ján Pelikán, “Prívet a výzva,” 197.

¹⁰³ Ján Pelikán, “Prívet a výzva,” 197, and Ján Pelikán, “Vysvetlenie ohľadom môjho príchodu a môjho úkolu,” *Stráž na Sione*, 28 no. 15 (1920): 110.

spiritual pilgrims, he was returning to his own home church to begin his journey and his pilgrimage of spiritual awakening.

Pelikan reported some of his early experiences to the church in America. Those experiences were generally positive; he related that he was initially well received.¹⁰⁴ He noted that he met pastors who were reading *Svedok* and who were sympathetic to the confessional approach of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. He also had some kind words from a church official on the help that was received from America, especially concerning their freedoms and the hope of cooperation in the future. Finally, he mentioned his extensive plans to lecture, including at the pastor's conference in Revúca in August. At the same time, he recognized that many were not of the same spirit as the Slovak Lutheran Synod and were not supporting the work of a confessional church. Thus, even at this early date, having only been in Slovakia a few weeks, Pelikan suggested, through *Svedok*, that they consider funding a truly free Lutheran Church in Slovakia, starting with 8,000 dollars.¹⁰⁵

In July, writing from Brezová, where he served as Leška's assistant, he reported that after meeting with Bishop Zoch and Dr. Lány in Bratislava, he was eager to have a lecture in Bratislava about the Slovak Lutheran Synod and that *Svedok* was well-known in that region.¹⁰⁶ Dolak reports that he made this presentation about 25 times.¹⁰⁷ He also found that as he presented he had many conversations with Slovak pastors who were sympathetic to his understanding of

¹⁰⁴ Ján Pelikán, "Prívet, zpráva a prosba vyslanca," *Svedok* 14, no. 19 (October 1, 1920): 411–13. For a list of the many parishes that Pelikan visited, see J.[án] Vojtko, "Čo píše náš poslanec zo starej vlasti?," *Svedok* 14, no. 19 (October 1, 1920): 422–24.

¹⁰⁵ Ján Pelikán, "Prívet, zpráva a prosba vyslanca," 413.

¹⁰⁶ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, July 12, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹⁰⁷ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 110.

the separation of church and state, communion practices, and church polity.¹⁰⁸ He was not the only Slovak from America interacting with the church; in his conversation with Zoch, he learned that the ULCA had given a substantial sum of money (390,000 Czechoslovak Crowns). Upon reflection, Pelikan added that the Slovak Lutheran Synod had money to give as well, but cautiously, for those who were willing to use it for the Kingdom of God.¹⁰⁹ The Slovak Lutheran Synod was resisting the temptation only to fund the reconstruction; the synod was more interested in funding the church's mission of remaining faithful, as they saw it, to the truth in the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

Pelikan continued his work, lecturing and debating with church officials about the order of the new church, including a stop in Modra, where he had previously served as a pastor, to view an ordination ceremony.¹¹⁰ The liberal teachings of the Slovak Lutheran Church were becoming clearer to Pelikan. He related a conversation he had with Professor Osuský and another pastor where each presented their positions on the church, including views on the Scriptures as the Word of God. The Slovak church officials felt, however, that the Scriptures also contained subjective opinions of people and some errors, that the confessions include many incorrect and imperfect statements, which must be corrected, and that Luther carried out the Reformation for his time, but that they needed a new one now.¹¹¹ Pelikan was amazed at the liberalism, and he

¹⁰⁸ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, July 12, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹⁰⁹ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, July 12, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹¹⁰ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, July 20, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹¹¹ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, July 20, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

was anticipating a difficult experience with Bishop Janoška.¹¹² Pelikan sensed that Slovakia was not as ripe for a confessional reawakening as he had hoped.

By August, Pelikan reported that he had given a lecture at the theological faculty in Bratislava and that the lecture had been received well.¹¹³ He was planning on returning in December, whereby he had hoped a new pastor would come and continue the work that he had begun.¹¹⁴ Yet, by August 28, despite the positive beginnings, this exploratory trip had proven a failure. After a conference in Turčiansky Svätý Martin, Pelikan, who felt slighted by the Slovaks, began to see not hope, but despair, and the plans for cooperation were quickly turning into plans for a new voice in Slovakia.¹¹⁵ His first manifesto on the ills of the church and his growing conflict with the church leadership appeared in an article in *Svedok*, where he outlined these growing points of conflict and the failure of the pastors' conference in Martin.¹¹⁶ His basic complaint was that the leadership was not eager to listen to him, but was more interested in listening to false prophets, Czech Protestants, and representatives from Britain.¹¹⁷ The goal of the Slovak Lutheran Church to engage in irenic ecumenical relations was confronting Pelikan's desire for a pure, orthodox Slovak Lutheran Church. From Pelikan's perspective, the Slovaks had

¹¹² Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, July 20, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹¹³ J.[án] Gona, "Potešiteľná zpráva od nášho poslanca na Slov," *Svedok* 14, no. 6 (August 15, 1920): 367.

¹¹⁴ J.[án] Vojtko, "Čo píše náš poslancen zo starej vlasti?," *Svedok* 14, no. 19 (October 1, 1920): 424.

¹¹⁵ Záhorský, "Pohostinnosť," *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 133. Here the author noted Pelikan's rejection by the pastors at the conference. This report was about eight months after the conference and reported in *Pravda*. By this time, Pelikan's rejection at that pastor's conference had become a rejection of the true witness of the Gospel as understood by his orthodox Lutheran perspective. Also, Bishop Janoška was held accountable for this leading of the church in a false direction. The dissemination of Pelikan's experience at the conference had penetrated his congregation in Velká.

¹¹⁶ [Ján Pelikán], "Smutné a pohoršlivé zjavy v lone cirkve evang. a. v. na Slovensku," *Svedok* 15, no. 2 (January 15, 1921): 32–36.

¹¹⁷ [Ján Pelikán], "Smutné a pohoršlivé zjavy v lone cirkve evang. a. v. na Slovensku," 34.

rejected the truth and, hence also, a relationship with the Slovak Lutheran Synod in favor of ecumenical relationships.

Perhaps the most vivid account of such perceived shortcomings in the Slovak Lutheran Church was seen in his visit to a pastor's conference in Martin, where a host of errors were evident to Pelikan, including the following of German theologians (presumably liberal) and the praising of the Czech protestants.¹¹⁸ In short, by end of Pelikan's visit to Slovakia, he had found what he considered all of the worst features of the church—unionism, modernism, rationalism, and state influence—alive in the Slovak Lutheran Church. All that he had seen that was injurious to the church in the Kingdom of Hungary and all that he had experienced in multi-denominational landscape in America was again repeating itself in the new state of Czechoslovakia and the Lutheran Church in Slovakia. He asserted that,

Today we must truly already serve them with something complete different, something new, and adapt towards their thinking and conception. Those, who dare to defend the clear teaching and stand strongly against union with false believers, are considered reactionaries and are looked down upon with regret.¹¹⁹

He argued that the church in America should join with those in the old country who are brave enough to speak the truth and to remain true Lutherans. He concluded that they should do so in the tradition of Luther, Tranovský, Hurban, and all those who had suffered for their confession.¹²⁰

During the middle of his visit, Pelikan continued to find many ills in the church and the country. He noted that there were many enemies of the true church, including representatives

¹¹⁸ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, October 20, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹¹⁹ [Ján Pelikán], "K čomu sa máme spojiť?," *Svedok* 14, no. 23 (December 1, 1920): 488. "Dnes vraj musíme im podať už niečo celkom iného, niečo nového a prispôsobniť sa k ich myšlienkam a predstavám. Tí, ktorí sa opovážia hájiť isté učenie a stavať sa zjavne proti únii s falošne veriacimi, považovaní sú za zpiatočníkov a hľadí sa na nich s poľutovaním."

¹²⁰ [Ján Pelikán], "K čomu sa máme spojiť?," 488.

from many sects, Baptists, Calvinists, and unbelievers.¹²¹ He also noted the influence of these many factors on the leaders and teachers of the Slovak Lutheran Church.¹²² This heterodox atmosphere was encouraging conversations between those who said they were Lutheran, and the church in Slovakia was moving in the direction of unionism with others, including the Czech Calvinists.¹²³ Moreover, he saw the Lutheran pastors adhering to the Hus-Komenský theological pattern, and he heard the leaders of church give support for the liberal theology from Germany, linking Kollár and Štúr with Hegelianism as the heirs of Luther.¹²⁴ Even Masaryk, the President of the Czechoslovakia, was criticized for his support of a broader Czechoslovak Protestant church.¹²⁵ Overall, Pelikan felt that the pastors and theologians saw the confessions as antiquated and obsolete.¹²⁶

In reaction to the perceived degradation of the church in Slovakia, Pelikan began looking for a group of Lutherans dedicated to confessional Lutheranism. He found such a group near the town of Poprad and the Tatra Mountains. On October 17, 1920 the congregation in Velká, Saint Trinity was born. The Slovak Lutheran Synod established the beachhead of the first free orthodox Lutheran Church congregation in Slovakia.¹²⁷ The Slovak Lutheran Synod's efforts changed from a church relations ministry to a mission of establishing a free Lutheran church. This new congregation was just the beginning of a larger goal. Pelikan reported in the same

¹²¹ [Ján Pelikán], "K čomu sa máme spojiť?," 486.

¹²² [Ján Pelikán], "K čomu sa máme spojiť?," 486.

¹²³ [Ján Pelikán], "K čomu sa máme spojiť?," 486–87. These sentiments and others were confirmed in a personal letter sent months before this article. See Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, July 20, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹²⁴ [Ján Pelikán], "K čomu sa máme spojiť?," 487.

¹²⁵ [Ján Pelikán], "K čomu sa máme spojiť?," 488.

¹²⁶ [Ján Pelikán], "K čomu sa máme spojiť?," 488.

¹²⁷ "Prvá slobodná slovenská lutheránska cirkev na Slovensku," *Svedok*, 1 December 1920, 508.

month that he had plans to visit the counties of Novohrad, Gemer, and Spiš.¹²⁸ This birth was a theological event to Pelikan. He saw this birth as the continued struggle of Slovak Lutherans to find a pure and unified expression of orthodox Lutheranism. Despairing of a wider solution involving the Slovak Lutheran Church and assuming that the church was beyond reformation, or perhaps reprimand, he chose to pursue the faithful few and build upon that mission and ministry in the foothills of the mountains.

Why Velká?

An article was published in *Svedok*, just weeks after Pelikan's arrival in Slovakia and months before the establishment of the mission, arguing for spiritual care for the people of Velká. The key problem discussed in the article was that a number of Slovak Lutheran families, around 300, were not receiving spiritual care because the pastor was German,¹²⁹ and only spoke German and Hungarian.¹³⁰ Since the local pastor did not speak Slovak and the people could not understand German, the pastor had difficulty in relating to the parishioners. The parishioners were not able to get the proper spiritual food and drink from the nearby congregation in Poprad.¹³¹ The cry was that the Slovaks needed proper pastoral care in their national language.¹³²

¹²⁸ Jan Pelikan to Archivist, letter, October 20, 1920, SELC District Archives, Box 2, Folder 111.4-2/13-09-19/00-06, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹²⁹ Pelikan witness this himself upon his arrival and reported the lack of spiritual care. See [Ján Pelikán], "Dopis z Veľkej, župy Spišskej, Slovensko," *Svedok* 15, no. 5 (March 1, 1921): 98.

¹³⁰ The name of the pastor at that time was Tobias Fischer (or Tobiáš Fischl). See "Prvá slobodná slovenská lutheránska cirkev na Slovensku," *Svedok* 14, no. 24 (December 1, 1920): 509, "Soznam sborov a farárov evanj. a. v. cirkve na Slovensku (Stav v Septembri 1921)," *Tranovský Evanjelický Kalendár*, (Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš: Nákladom kníhku. a. Vydav. Účast Spolku "Tranoscius", 1922), 121, V. Bruckner, "Die Pelikansche Bewegung und die organisation der 'Slowakischen ev. Freikirche A. B.'," *Gedenkbuch anlässlich der 400-jährigen Jahreswende der Confessio Augustana*, (Leipzig: Kommissionsverlag von Bernh, 1930), 139. For early conditions in Velká, including the ability of the German pastor to minister to the parishioners in Slovak, which he could not do, see "Zprávy a dopisy," *Pravda* 1, no. 5 (May 15, 1921): 173.

¹³¹ M., "Starosť o cirkev na Slovensku," *Svedok* 14, no. 14 (July 15, 1920): 318.

¹³² M., "Starosť o cirkev na Slovensku," 318. When the church was finally formed in October, the lack of a Slovak pastor who could speak and preach in Slovak was one of reasons given for beginning in Velká. See "Prvá slobodná slovenská lutheránska cirkev na Slovensku," *Svedok* 14, no. 24 (December 1, 1920): 508.

The author was concerned that they would not be properly cared for spiritually and that other sects might influence them instead.¹³³ The solution would be to find a confessional Slovak pastor to minister to the needs of these Slovak Lutherans. The location was a part of the internal dialog of the Slovak Lutheran Synod well before it was actually established as a mission site. The appeal was primarily for pastoral support. But the appeal was also understood as a missional opportunity.

This first article was a reaction to a letter from the old country describing the plight of these Slovak Lutherans. The author of the letter had visited Velká often and had even contacted the current bishop in Slovakia, Juraj Janoška, about his effort to minister to these people; the bishop replied that at that time it was difficult to find pastors to start such a mission station.¹³⁴ The conditions in the village were presented as a bleak picture of Slovak Lutherans not being cared for spiritually. Later, when the congregation was formed, much concern was expressed about the spiritual conditions vis-à-vis the Catholic Church, who ran the local schools, and the many sects that were influential.¹³⁵ The Slovak Lutherans in this village had gone to Bishop Janoška for two years, begging him for help; he was unable to help because of the limited resources at his disposal.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, through the help of the Americans—presumably Pelikan—they were able to form a church with an initial membership of 19 voting members.¹³⁷ In the chaotic beginning of the Slovak Lutheran Church, it proved too difficult for the Slovaks to

¹³³ M., “Starosť o cirkev na Slovensku,” 318.

¹³⁴ M., “Starosť o cirkev na Slovensku,” 319.

¹³⁵ “Prvá slobodná slovenská lutheránska cirkev na Slovensku,” *Svedok* 14, no. 24 (December 1, 1920): 508.

¹³⁶ “Prvá slobodná slovenská lutheránska cirkev na Slovensku,” 508.

¹³⁷ “Prvá slobodná slovenská lutheránska cirkev na Slovensku,” 509. The officers were: Michal Blišťan, President; J. Stanček and Michal Dindoš, curators; Michal Krajniak, Church Worker or Sexton, and temporary accountant; J. Staňo, Michal Ilavský and J. Paľko, Trustees; J. Chladoň, Secretary; J. Stanček and M. Blišťan, readers. J. Križana performed the services each Sunday. At the beginning of this congregation, then, there was no official involvement of Pelikan.

find the resources for that mission; in contrast, it was just the right opportunity for the Slovak Lutheran Synod to find its place in the new republic.

The reaction of the German pastor was that this new group of Free Lutherans was really a sect, and he hesitated to let them use the church building. But as he knew the group better, he consented willingly.¹³⁸ Eventually his attitude would change. He would not support the work of the Pelikan Movement, and the confessional Slovak Lutherans who joined with the Pelikan Movement could no longer use the church for worship.¹³⁹ The restrictions on this Slovak congregation were the beginning of the resistance of the Slovak Lutheran Church to the Pelikan Movement. Initially, the congregation struggled as they had no assets to speak of, but they were eager to work with the Slovaks from America and become partners with them in ministry.¹⁴⁰ At the close of their convention, they did not want to be in union with others in deeds, but they wanted to have union within the context of principles, just like the Slovak Lutheran Synod.¹⁴¹ This small group of Lutherans had found in Pelikan and the Slovak Lutheran Synod simpatico believers. This alliance was not a matter of convenience or the transfer of wealth, but a theological union.

In 1921, Pelikan reported that this location was ideal for the new mission work: the region was beautiful, had a healthy climate—it was a noted area for vacations and sanitariums—was full of open country, and was in a good location for travel; and thousands of people came in the

¹³⁸ “Prvá slobodná slovenská lutheránska cirkev na Slovensku,” 509. For an example of the Germans perceiving the Slovaks as a sect, a view which they reverted to in 1921 as a result, it was believed, of the prodding of Bishop Janoška, see Kolárik, “Sekta,” *Pravda* 1 no. 10 (October 15, 1921): 333.

¹³⁹ [Ján Pelikán], “Dopis z Veľkej, župy Spišskej, Slovensko,” *Svedok* 15, no. 5 (March 1, 1921): 99. Pelikan wondered if Bishop Janoška did not make it impossible to use the German Lutheran church building. But they could worship there if the pastor was sent by the Bishop.

¹⁴⁰ “Prvá slobodná slovenská luteránska cirkev na Slovensku,” *Svedok* 14, no. 24 (December 1, 1920): 509–510.

¹⁴¹ “Uzavretia a Pravidlá,” *Svedok* 14, no. 24 (December 1, 1920): 508.

summer for holiday. All of this was in addition to the possibilities and the “big future” (s veľkou budúcnosťou) that he felt the mission had.¹⁴² The joy of finding a home for confessional Slovak Lutheranism was mutual. Many felt a great need for spiritual care in Velká. Secondly, the Slovak Lutherans were eager to have pastoral support from one of their own. Lastly, Pelikan was looking for a place within Slovakia that would accept his vision for a Slovak Lutheran church. For these reasons, Velká seemed like a good choice for the mission of the Slovak Lutheran Synod.

The Pelikan Movement’s Rise and Fall

The call for the church in Slovakia to rise and claim its orthodox Lutheran heritage came in the birth of the church newspaper, *Pravda*. *Pravda* was the official church journal for the Pelikan mission. As proclaimed in *Svedok*, this new periodical, which was produced and published in Slovakia, was an attempt to usher in a new era (*tešte sa novej dobe!*) and bring comfort to the leaders of the Slovak Lutheran Church, who had a confessional Lutheran understanding.¹⁴³ In the first issues of *Pravda*, the topics were presented and the themes were similar, if not completely consistent, with the themes that were expressed by Pelikan and the Slovak Lutheran Synod during the previous 20 years in *Svedok*. Pelikan and his long-time collaborator, Bálent,¹⁴⁴ who was then serving as an army chaplain in the Czechoslovak Army, joined to make their case to the Slovak Lutherans in the new Czechoslovak state. In particular, they began by arguing for the Bible and its place as the vessel of truth.¹⁴⁵ The confessions, or Symbolic books (The Book of

¹⁴² Ján Pelikan to the Synod, letter, March 23, 1921, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 54, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

¹⁴³ Ján Vojtko, “Nový časopis ‘Pravda’,” *Svedok* 15, no. 4 (February 15, 1921): 77.

¹⁴⁴ In 1906, Bálent was also the first editor of *Svedok*.

¹⁴⁵ Záhorský, “Ako sme Bibliou svätou?,” *Pravda* 1 no. 2 (February 15, 1921): 4–9 and T.[heodore] B.[álent], “Slová Lutherove farárom a bohoslovcom, ako majú študovať bohoslovie,” *Pravda* 1 no. 2 (February 15, 1921): 9–11.

Concord), were equally trumpeted as the way to understand the truths of the Bible and to resist error and false doctrine.¹⁴⁶ They also staked out the key issue relative to the survival of the new Free Lutheran Church in Slovakia, which was the hoped-for separation of church and state, which they argued was possible for both the Catholic and Reformed churches as well.¹⁴⁷

They viewed the separation of church and state as a Biblical issue; moreover, they felt that in America the example of this separation was proven to work ideally.¹⁴⁸ In this way, the editors of *Pravda* differentiated their mission and church in two ways. The first way was that of all the churches, they were the church most closely aligned with the pure teachings of the Bible, which also meant that they were true orthodox Lutherans, especially in terms of church and state relations. This assertion was core to their identity as Slovak Lutherans and gave them a reason to contrast themselves not only against the other major confessions, such as the Catholic and Reformed churches, but also to the much larger Slovak Lutheran Church. They were willing to embrace this understanding of Lutheran and Biblical truth in spite of the contention that the Lutheran faith contained German cultural baggage.¹⁴⁹ Luther rather was not only a leader to the Germans but also was given to the entire world.¹⁵⁰ This view of orthodox Lutheranism as the only true understanding of Scripture, which was void of cultural influences, was also asserted back in America. It was simply the truth—not German, not Slovak, and not American.

Secondly, having a theological justification, being the one Lutheran church that was pure in its teaching, they needed the actual political means to achieve their new church body. They needed a political realization of the concept of the separation of church and state that would

¹⁴⁶ Záhorský, “Symbolické knihy,” *Pravda* 1 no. 3 (March 15, 1921): 63.

¹⁴⁷ Toriský, “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1 no. 2 (February 15, 1921): 11–14.

¹⁴⁸ Toriský, “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1 no. 3 (March 15, 1921): 66–69.

¹⁴⁹ “Luteránska povinnosť,” *Pravda* 1 no. 11 (November 15, 1921): 339.

allow them to pursue their goal of creating this Slovak Lutheran identity in the Czechoslovak state. This much was not only deducible from the content of *Pravda*, but was stated in a report of the activity in Velká. The first was to be able to proclaim the teachings of the Word of God and the confessions, and the second was to pursue the goal of church independence (*cirkevne osamostania*) with the understanding of the strict separation of church and state.¹⁵¹ They wanted what they thought Luther would have wanted: the heavenly kingdom here on earth and expanding over the earth.¹⁵² They desired that the truth be freely expressed in the new marketplace of ideas that was, in their preferred future, the modern Czechoslovak state.

The constant foe of these two goals was the perceived threat of unionism. The combatants were different from those in the Kingdom of Hungary. No longer were the Hungarians and the Reformed the dangers. Referencing Luther and Hurban, *Pravda* came out strongly against any union, instructing their readers of its risks and seeing not the Hungarians as a foe (or the Americans). Rather the new enemy was the possibility of a union of the Czech and Slovak Protestants.¹⁵³ In particular, the recent union of the Czech and Moravian Lutherans with the Calvinists in 1918 loomed large in their considerations.¹⁵⁴ Unionism threatened the identity of the nascent church. The combatants were the Hungarians, and now they were the primarily Czechs.¹⁵⁵ For the Slovak Lutheran Synod and its free church in Slovakia, unionism in Slovakia remained a concern.

¹⁵⁰ “Luteránska povinnosť,” *Pravda* 1 no. 11 (November 15, 1921): 339.

¹⁵¹ “Dopis a zpráva z Veľkej v Spiši,” *Pravda* 1 no. 2 (February 15, 1921): 25–26. The letter that was published in *Pravda* was unattributed, but it is probably from Pelikan.

¹⁵² “Luteránska povinnosť,” *Pravda* 1, no. 11 (November 15, 1921): 341.

¹⁵³ Ľadislav Zgúth, “Prečo nemôžeme súhlasiť úniou?,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 109–111 and “Smutné následky násilnej únie v Česku,” *Pravda* 1, no. 11 (November 15, 1921): 345–46.

¹⁵⁴ J. V., “Magna Carta alebo Všeobecné zásadné ustanovenia synody v starej vlasti,” *Pravda* 1, no. 11 (November 15, 1921): 347.

¹⁵⁵ “To nie je unionizmus?,” *Pravda* 2, no. 4 (April 15, 1922): 87–89.

Both in America and in Slovakia, a rising chorus of detractors was criticizing Pelikan and the new mission effort, even though the initial news from Velká was positive. Pelikan reported that the early experience was both significant and memorable. He also noted that the task ahead of them was resisted by the devil.¹⁵⁶ The problems were legion. For example, it was felt that the German Lutherans were unable and unwilling to serve the Slovaks. They also had problems with the Slovak Lutherans, who were woefully educated in the faith. They were forced to worship in a private residence, locked out from the use of the church, making it difficult to do the acts of the church, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Finally, they found it difficult to disenthral the people of the power of the bishop so that they could send a pastor. Unionistic activities were also a concern, such as the Iliašovce congregation having a Roman Catholic teacher.¹⁵⁷ The Czech "flight from Rome" was no solution as the Czechs embraced in their own Hussite and atheistic traditions.¹⁵⁸ The more opposition he felt, the stronger his resolve to resist the perceived power behind it. Through all the challenges, Pelikan reported progress in overcoming these obstacles. By the time of an open letter printed in 1921, the free church was serving 80 to 100 people (souls) and singing without an organ but with their copy of the Tranoscius hymnal.¹⁵⁹

Although steeped in conflict, the Pelikan Movement resisted the Slovak bishop's accusation that the movement was divisive. In the pages of *Pravda*, they argued the opposite.

¹⁵⁶ [Ján Pelikán], "Dopis z Veľkej, župy Spišskej, Slovensko," *Svedok* 15, no. 5 (March 1, 1921): 97. See also "Jednotné vedenie a cirkevný bolševizmus," *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 138, where the author, most likely Pelikan shares these same concerns about the support the Slovaks received from the German pastor and his congregation in Velká.

¹⁵⁷ "Niečo o 'rozháraných pomeroch v poniektorých spišských sboroch'," *Pravda* 1, no. 11 (November 15, 1921): 352–53.

¹⁵⁸ Ladislav Zgúth, "Čo je to?," *Pravda* 1 no. 11 (November 15, 1921): 355–58.

¹⁵⁹ [Ján Pelikán], "Dopis z Veľkej, župy Spišskej, Slovensko," *Svedok* 15, no. 5 (March 1, 1921): 99. In Slovakia, they challenged the view that only they were using the proper texts with a Lutheran piety. They demanded that the writers of *Pravda* look and see that most churches in Slovakia had the same books and in their pulpits, there was clear preaching of the Gospel. See Juraj Hurtay, "Pilátva pravda," *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 5–6 (May-June 1921): 132–33.

Rather than being the force of division and sectarianism, they were very much concerned with the unity of the church—“one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one thinking, that is, Christ’s.”¹⁶⁰ True unity was agreement on the truth of the Bible and the Lutheran confessions, and not on an ecclesiastical unity forced from bishops. In fact, Pelikan and the others relied on the assumption that the Word of God could be understood easily and clearly. They should follow the Word of God alone and not the insights or commands of anyone else, including Pelikan himself.¹⁶¹ They wanted unity, true unity, based on theological principles; they were not going to settle for an organizational or cultural unity without the strict adherence to the Lutheran Confessions.

The Slovak Lutheran Church placed the responsibility of the conflict and schism on Pelikan, who was seen as the catalyst of these new free Lutheran congregations. In fact, Bishop Janoška placed responsibility firmly on Pelikan in particular.¹⁶² Yet, to those who might think of Pelikan’s work in Slovakia as an invasion or intervention in Slovak Lutheran church life, another rebuttal was offered. Rather than being an outside agent, at least some in Velká felt Pelikan was quite at home in this new community: “In the year 1920, a guest visited us, who was a bone of our bones, a flesh of our flesh, our brother and according to faith, the native faith, Ján Pelikán, Lutheran pastor and president of the orthodox Lutheran Slovak Synod in the United States in America.”¹⁶³ The community received him not as an interloper but as a brother and with joy.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Klimentov, “Rozkol musí byť,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 117.

¹⁶¹ Záhorský, “O čo ide ‘Pravde’,” *Pravda* 1, no. 5 (July 15, 1921): 172.

¹⁶² “Niečo o ‘rozháraných pomeroch v poniektorých spišských sboroch,’” *Pravda* 1, no. 11 (November 15, 1921): 351.

¹⁶³ Záhorský, “Pohostinnosť,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 132. “Roku 1920 zavítal k nám hosť, ktorý je kosť z našej kosti, telo z tela nášho, náš brat i dľa viery, domáci viery Ján Pelikán, ev. a. v. farár a predseda pravovernej luteránske synody slovenskej v Spojených Štátoch v Amerika.”

¹⁶⁴ Kolárik, “Pelikán zutekal,” *Pravda* 1, no. 9 (September 15, 1921): 309.

They credited Pelikan for providing the grace and good will that the Slovak Lutheran Church could not or did not provide. The Slovak Lutheran Church was viewed, at least by some, in respect to its character as indifferent, colorless, unprincipled in its unionistic practices, and errant.¹⁶⁵ Thus, Pelikan was received as beneficial to those with a hunger for his understanding of Lutheran faith and practice. Some were concerned that Pelikan was buying his way into the hearts of the people in Slovakia. They accused him of influencing the towns of Velká and Iľašovce with financial support. Of course, it was not as if the Slovak Lutheran Church was not being impacted from gifts from the States as well.¹⁶⁶ Both sides did receive support from America. The financial support was not the primary reason for the support for Pelikan from Velká.

Theological concerns were more important to this small congregation than financial support. The people from the Spiš region denied the accusation that Pelikan was an agitator, who put thoughts of orthodox Lutheranism into the heads of the people. They argued that they had always believed in a confessional Lutheran faith; and if one went into their homes and churches, and saw they had copies of the Bible, the Confessions and the *Tranoscius* hymnal as well as sermons and prayer books, it would be obvious that they were orthodox Lutherans.¹⁶⁷ It is probable that there was a segment in the Slovak Lutheran Church, and in particular, in this region, that was looking for leadership to affirm the more traditional orthodox Lutheran beliefs and practices. It is not so much that Pelikan found the community as that they found each other.

¹⁶⁵ Záhorský, "Pohostinnost'," *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 132.

¹⁶⁶ Záhorský, "Pohostinnost'," *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 135.

¹⁶⁷ "Hurtayova pravda," *Pravda* 1, no. 9 (September 15, 1921): 303–304. This article was completed by the editor; at this time Pelikan had returned to America and the editor was probably the administrator of the church newspaper, M. Hlaváč.

Besides being labeled as an agitator, the Slovak Lutheran Church saw his work of creating church outside the Slovak Lutheran Church as sectarian. They understood that the Slovak Lutheran Synod was not really a Slovak Lutheran church in that the Americanized Slovaks had absorbed foreign influences (that is, the Missouri Synod German-American polity and practices). The new mission had to defend itself from the growing attacks of sectarian behavior. They defended themselves, arguing that they did not overturn the Gospel of Christ, but were in fact adhering to it properly.¹⁶⁸ They were not in error; rather it was the Bishop and the church that were in error.¹⁶⁹ Rather than being labeled and discarded, they demanded that if the Bishop and the Slovak Lutheran Church were to make such a claim, they needed to show in the Word of God that they were indeed sectarian.¹⁷⁰ Being confident that they were not sectarian, they saw themselves as the true expression of the Lutheran faith, whereas the Slovak Lutheran Church was not.

Closely related to the challenges they saw in the state church was the question of church polity. In terms of polity, the Slovak Lutheran Church remained hierarchical. The Slovak Lutheran Church did not embrace the congregational polity that was adopted by the Slovak Lutheran Synod from their American context. In this respect, the new Free Lutheran Church was appreciably different from the Slovak Lutheran Church. Because of the hierarchical church polity of the Slovak Lutheran Church, the Pelikan Movement labeled them Roman Catholic, and linked their polity to the Hungarian Lutheran Church.¹⁷¹ At the same time, the Slovak Lutheran Synod differentiated itself from the polity of sects, such as the Salvation Army, because sects did

¹⁶⁸ Kolárik, "Sekta," *Pravda* 1, no. 10 (October 15, 1921): 333.

¹⁶⁹ Kolárik, "Sekta," 334.

¹⁷⁰ Kolárik, "Sekta," 335.

¹⁷¹ "Jednotné vedenie a cirkevný bolševizmus," *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 136–37.

not follow the pure teaching of Christian faith.¹⁷² The Pelikan Movement separated and differentiated itself from the Slovak Lutheran Church's polity while not accepting the accusation that that these differences made them a sect.

Likewise, since Pelikan and his coworkers saw links in the Slovak Lutheran Church to Hungarian influences, they also saw the continued influence of liberal theology. From Velká, they continued to lament that the liberal teachings of such thinkers as Hegel, Schelling, Renan, and Strauss still demanded the attention and formed the theology of the churches in Slovakia.¹⁷³ When the Slovak Lutheran Church came out with its own identity statement, called the *Magna Carta* in the pages of *Cirkvené Listy*, the Pelikan Movement's response was to question the church's identity. They thought that the Slovak Lutheran Church did not represent true Lutheranism, but rationalism and false German teachings.¹⁷⁴ The church became the supporter of these dangerous theological ideas that were affecting the ministry of the congregations. These teachings were viewed as an extension of what was very wrong about the liberal Hungarian domination of the Slovak church. They also linked the activity to church bolshevism, which limited the witness of the church through hierarchies and such.¹⁷⁵ Only God could command in his own words.¹⁷⁶ In contrast, the Free Lutheran Church, founded by Pelikan, wanted to pursue freedom, so that they might preach and teach the true teaching and condemn the false as well as a

¹⁷² "Armáda Spásy a strážni evanjelického Siona," *Pravda* 1, no. 7 (July 15, 1921): 267.

¹⁷³ "Jednotné vedenie a cirkevný bolševizmus," *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 137.

¹⁷⁴ J. V., "Magna Carta alebo Všeobecné zásadné ustanovenia synody v starej vlasti," *Pravda* 1, no. 10 (October 15, 1921): 322–23.

¹⁷⁵ "Jednotné vedenie a cirkevný bolševizmus," *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 138.

¹⁷⁶ "Jednotné vedenie a cirkevný bolševizmus," *Pravda* 1, no. 5 (May 15, 1921): 171. "... lebo to sám Pán Boh tak prikazuje v svojom slove."

myriad of other freedoms that would allow them to express their understanding of orthodox Lutheranism in Slovakia.¹⁷⁷

When Janoška eventually came to the Spiš region, he came, according to *Pravda*, at the request of the Hungarian and the German Lutherans. Here Pelikan, who was most likely the author in the response, raised the issue that the local German clergy were underserving the Slovaks. He implied that the church leaders themselves were not interested in serving the Slovak Lutherans in the area.¹⁷⁸ Likewise, Janoška was reported in a Hungarian magazine to have said Pelikan was an agitator and troublemaker.¹⁷⁹ When Janoška visited Iliašovce, he did so with a German pastor from Nový Ves, a town about seven kilometers from Iliašovce.¹⁸⁰ One of the chief complaints against Pelikan was that he was dangerous politically because he did not help to establish the Slovak Lutheran Church in the new state.¹⁸¹ Pelikan and his followers would not have agreed that they were against the state. However, they supported neither the close relationship of the state to the church nor the close relationship of the church to the minority German and Hungarian Lutheran populations. Pelikan was a strong Slovak nationalist in the tradition of Štúr and Hurban. He would have wanted a more pure Slovak Lutheran expression than Janoška was willing or able to pursue as the bishop of the church body that was multiethnic. As an example of such a perfect blend of national witness and Lutheran faith, the Slovak Lutheran Synod was offered as the example of what is possible for Slovak Lutherans.¹⁸² In an

¹⁷⁷ “Jednotné vedenie a cirkevný bolševizmus,” *Pravda* 1, no. 5 (May 15, 1921): 167–69.

¹⁷⁸ “Kronika pozoruhodných udalostí,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 142.

¹⁷⁹ “Jednotné vedenie a cirkevný bolševizmus,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 144.

¹⁸⁰ “Zprávy a dopisy,” *Pravda* 1, no. 5 (May 15, 1921): 172.

¹⁸¹ “Jednotné vedenie a cirkevný bolševizmus,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 145.

¹⁸² “Jednotné vedenie a cirkevný bolševizmus,” *Pravda* 1, no. 5 (May 15, 1921): 170–71.

elegant summary of Pelikan's intent and view of the situation, one of the movement's interpreters shared in *Pravda* that:

[Pelikan] came freely as a brother to a free brother in this hope, that when this unnatural union between Slovak Lutherans and Hungarians was split, that our brothers will want to establish for themselves, organize in a free state as a free church, so that it would not be possible to repeat what had developed previously in Hungary, when the church ... became the maid of the state and must do things, which our Slovak Lutherans in the former government found difficult to bear.¹⁸³

In this way, Pelikan was understood in the way he intended. He saw himself as liberating the Slovaks from their past entanglements with the Hungarians and the state, and implicitly with false teaching that both represented. Pelikan's challenge was that the Slovak Lutheran Church did not see the need for liberation.

By the summer of 1921, Pelikan had returned to America. He did not run away as some in the Slovak Lutheran Church had suggested. Rather he had returned to continue with his other tasks, including his own ministry and congregation as well as his family.¹⁸⁴ The mission did not end with Pelikan's departure. His son continued the ministry and the Pelikan Movement. On November 21, 1921 with Pelikan Sr. arriving in the region with two other missionaries a new church constitution was created and signed.¹⁸⁵

Pelikan, Sr. was a naturally born Slovak. He was born in Záriečie in 1898. He immigrated to America in 1902 with his father.¹⁸⁶ Although he was born in Slovakia, his formative years were in America. He graduated from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 1919 and served in

¹⁸³ Kolárik, "Pelikán zutekal," *Pravda* 1, no. 9 (September 15, 1921): 309. "Prišiel slobodne ako brat k slobodným bratom v tej nádeji, že keď bol roztrhnutý ten neprirodzený sväzok medzi slovenskými luteránmi a Maďarmi, že naši bratia budú sa chcieť sriadiť, zorganizovať v slobodnom štáte v slobodnú cirkev, aby sa nemohlo viacej opakovať, čo sa dialo v bývalom Maďarsku, kde cirkev ... štátnej stala sa služkou štátu a musela konať veci, ktoré naši slovenskí luteráni za bývalej vlády veľmi ťažko niesli."

¹⁸⁴ Kolárik, "Pelikán zutekal," *Pravda* 1, no. 9 (September 15, 1921): 311.

¹⁸⁵ Ústava Slobodnej Evanjelicko-Luteránskej Synody v Československej Republike, document, November 21, 1921, SELC District Archives, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

Pleasant City and Coalbridge until he went to Slovakia from 1921–1923.¹⁸⁷ He was married to Anna Buzekova on September 5, 1921. His first son was born in Slovakia, but died shortly after birth.¹⁸⁸ He returned from Slovakia and began his ministry in 1923 in Akron, Ohio at the congregation of Ján Krstiteľ. In Ohio, his three children were born, Jaroslav Ján, Jr. in 1923, Teodor Pavel in 1925, and Anna in 1926.

On the American side of the Atlantic, in terms of the Pelikan Movement, Pelikan was the most famous member of the family. Yet, in the history of Slovakia from a Slovak perspective, Pelikan Sr. proved to be the last great voice within Slovakia from the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Even in communist Slovakia, they remembered him for his mission work and for his orthodox beliefs. It was asserted inaccurately, convoluting the biographies of the father and the son, that Pelikan, Sr. was President of the Synod, but it was understood from the Slovak Lutheran Church perspective that he was (as was his father) divisive and strongly orthodox.¹⁸⁹

By 1922, *Pravda*, now under the leadership of Pelikan, Sr., was continuing to argue for religious freedom and the separation of the church and state,¹⁹⁰ knowing well that its very survival was dependent on the establishment of this principle in Czechoslovakia. Without the support of the state and this definition of religious freedom, they lacked the cultural and legal support for their nascent church body to survive under the pressure from the Slovak Lutheran Church.

¹⁸⁶ *Slovenský Biblický Slovník*, s. v. Pelikán, Ján Jaroslav.

¹⁸⁷ *Slovenský Biblický Slovník*, s. v. Pelikán, Ján Jaroslav.

¹⁸⁸ The Congregation of Holy Trinity, Chicago, *Dejiny* (Chicago: The Mally Press, 1943), 81.

¹⁸⁹ *Slovenský Biblický Slovník*, s. v. Pelikán, Ján Jaroslav. “Predseda slov. Ev. Synody amer., 1921–1923 je vyslanec na Slovensku, kde vyvolal polarizáciu slov. ev. Cirkvi tým, že jej časť získal pre ortodoxnejší náboženský program.”

¹⁹⁰ “Náboženska sloboda,” *Pravda* 2, no. 1 (January 15, 1921): 10–13.

The conflict went beyond Church journals and newspapers. Both sides began publishing position papers outlining their view and legal positions. In January of 1922, the Slovak Lutheran Synod responded to criticism of its actions in Slovakia officially through the document, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej-Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*. The synod was answering a charge made by the leadership of the Slovak Lutheran Church that the Slovak Lutheran Synod was a force of division and not unity.¹⁹¹ They rejected the accusation that they were heretics and resisted the temptation to join in the name calling, which they claimed included the desire of their opponents to see them sent to hell.¹⁹² The Slovak Lutheran Church defended the multiethnic nature of the Slovak church, arguing that the Hungarian pastors in their midst were indeed good pastors, who also embraced the freedoms of the new Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia.¹⁹³ At the time, it was perhaps hard to imagine an ethnic Hungarian choosing to live in a Slavic state, but the Slovak Lutheran Church rejected Pelikan's and his follower's view, which was that the church was somehow less effective because it was not purely Slovak. The Slovak Lutheran Church argued that their expression of Lutheranism was more inclusive than those of the Slovak Lutheran Synod as it continued to integrate different nationalities into its church structure. These efforts of cooperation may have looked like unionism to Pelikan and his followers, but the Slovak Lutheran Church embraced them. They recognized their faults and their weaknesses, but also recognized that they were a church in process and reconstruction.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve Na Slovensku* (Pittsburg, Tlačou Československej Tlačiarne, 1922), 4. This comment is taken from a copy of the original "Ohlas" article published by the Slovak Lutheran Church and signed by Eudevít Šimko, Jur. Janoška, and Vladimír Čobrda.

¹⁹² Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 6.

¹⁹³ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 6.

¹⁹⁴ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 7.

The Slovak Lutheran Synod rejected this reconstruction of the Lutheran Church in Slovakia and the inclusive attitude towards other ethnic groups within the church. They saw the church in Slovakia as being concerned about money and not the spiritual care of the people.¹⁹⁵ Evidence toward this case was presented in its continued allegiance to unionism and rationalism—as well as indifferentism and Darwinism—and that the church did not fight for the clear teachings of Scripture.¹⁹⁶ The concern was not, as the Slovak Lutheran Church framed it, on proper churchman-like behavior. Rather the focus was the health of the church as expressed in proper teaching and understanding.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, if the Slovak Lutheran Church wanted to speak of brotherly and Christian love, they should have looked to their own behavior in the Špiš region, where the members were unable to obtain proper pastoral care for many years.¹⁹⁸ This conflict with Janoška was understood to have been growing since before the war.¹⁹⁹ The conclusion was often that the two churches were of a “different spirit,”²⁰⁰ an assertion that both sides could have agreed upon. In light of all the heresy and false teaching, which trump any human attempts at concord without first having agreement in teaching, the result was according to the Slovak Lutheran Synod: “We have to establish and build up a bulwark of our dear Zion in Slovakia!”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 12.

¹⁹⁶ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 12, 32.

¹⁹⁷ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 13.

¹⁹⁸ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 16.

¹⁹⁹ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 24.

²⁰⁰ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 32.

²⁰¹ Slov. Ev. Nezm. A. V. Synody v Spoj. Št. Amerických, *Odpoved' na Ohlas Generálnej Rady Ev. Aug. Vyz. Cirkve na Slovensku*, 41. “... máme stavať a budovať hradby nášho drahého Siona na Slovensku!”

Likewise *Pravda* came out against the *Ohlas* article. It added similar condemnations and highlighted the cooperation between the Slovak Lutheran Church and the ULCA while defending Pelikan. It rejected the view that Pelikan fomented conflict and was thus sent away.²⁰² His followers understood Pelikan to have returned to take care of his church back in America.²⁰³ He came only to teach and give advice.²⁰⁴ He also provided help, contrary to the opinion of many of those who accused him not being concerned for the people.²⁰⁵

Back home, this mission effort was viewed positively also by the Missouri Synod. Dolak comments that Pastors Willkomm and Reuter visited the mission as well as Dr. F. Brandt, who was the first vice-president. Willkomm and Reuter came to help with the theological curriculum.²⁰⁶ Brandt's report to the Synodical Convention of 1922 (August 30 to September 5) was also described in *Svedok*. He shared with the convention that he "met our brethren, rev. Kolárik, rev. Pelikán[. Sr.] and prof. Kuchárik at Veľka. In a vivid manner he described to us the work these pioneers are doing for the Slovak Lutheran Synod."²⁰⁷ The Slovak Lutheran Synod's struggle for orthodoxy in Slovakia was understood as a noble effort in a difficult environment by its sister synod.

This activity marks the highpoint of the mission. The movement soon collapsed. By the end of the Pelikan Movement, just a few months later, virtually no news about the mission and the

²⁰² "Ohlas Generálnej Rady cirkve ev. a. v. na Slovensku slovenským evanjelikom a. v. v Amerika alebo Neúprimnosť a falošnosť Generálej rady ev. a. v. na Slovensku," *Pravda* 2, no. 2 (February 15, 1922): 34.

²⁰³ "Ohlas Generálnej Rady cirkve ev. a. v. na Slovensku slovenským evanjelikom a. v. v Amerika alebo Neúprimnosť a falošnosť Generálej rady ev. a. v. na Slovensku," 34.

²⁰⁴ "Ohlas Generálnej Rady cirkve ev. a. v. na Slovensku slovenským evanjelikom a. v. v Amerika alebo Neúprimnosť a falošnosť Generálej rady ev. a. v. na Slovensku," 34.

²⁰⁵ "Ohlas Generálnej Rady cirkve ev. a. v. na Slovensku slovenským evanjelikom a. v. v Amerika alebo Neúprimnosť a falošnosť Generálej rady ev. a. v. na Slovensku," 36–37

²⁰⁶ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 123.

²⁰⁷ P. J. R., "The Watch Tower," *Svedok* 16, no. 20 (October 15, 1922): 466.

work in Slovakia was relayed through *Svedok*. Except for a few lingering attacks against the Slovak Lutheran Church for its liberal and unionistic ways²⁰⁸ and the continued recognition of donations to the mission, very little was said about the situation in Slovakia in *Svedok*. Rather the articles became much more theological and pastoral and much less political. Even the diatribes against the SEU and the Zion Synod abated.²⁰⁹ It was as if the previous conflicts were no longer relevant to the current situation of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. The mission seemed to have lost some of its focus and energy back in America. Also towards the end, in *Pravda*, the majority of the content was reprinted from other sources, usually from America. Rather than continuing to focus on issues in Slovakia, the last few issues of *Pravda* recounted the history of the Missouri Synod, which was celebrating its 75th anniversary.²¹⁰ It is difficult to understand the intended audience for such articles in Slovakia. The end was bitter, as demonstrated by one of the last articles in *Pravda*, presumably by Pelikan, Sr., which recounts the numerous lies and accusations associated with his father by the Slovak Lutheran Church.²¹¹ With words this strong on both sides, there was no going back to the hope that accompanied Pelikan's arrival. The opportunities for cooperation and the reconessionalization of the Slovak Lutheran Church were over.

²⁰⁸ Many articles follow the same pattern of reporting on events as recorded in the *Cirkevné Listy*, while providing commentary. For example, in reaction to a homily in the church newspaper, the comment was that the direction and spirit were, among other things, the old, liberal, colorless, vague, compromised, unionistic ways that were foreign to the words of God, the confessions and true Lutheranism. See "Zprávy z Československa," *Svedok* 17, no. 6 (March 15, 1923): 139. Another example is an article reacting to a lecture supporting union between a Czech Protestant church (Českobratrská Církev Evanjelická) and the Slovak Lutheran Church. See "Zprávy z Československa," *Svedok* 17, no. 7 (April 1, 1923): 160–61 and "Zprávy z Československa," *Svedok* 17, no. 9 (May 1, 1923): 212–13.

²⁰⁹ They still published such articles from time to time. For an example, see "Aké sny majú ktorísi slovenskí evanjelici," *Svedok* 17, no. 20 (October 1, 1923): 460–64.

²¹⁰ For example, see J. Kolárik, "75-ročné jubileum luteránov spojený v slobodnej ev. nez. Aug. vyznania Synode Missouri, Ohio a iných štátov," *Pravda* 2, no. 9 (July 15, 1922): 203–207.

²¹¹ J. Pelikán, "Zúmyselné zavádzanie a klamstvo pod kepienkou vlastenectva a národovectva," *Pravda* 2, no. 10 (October 15, 1922): 235–38.

In the 1920s, there were still calls for mission work in Slovakia from the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Using the Missouri Synod as an example, who had 60 missionaries in Germany, France, and Denmark, some in the synod felt that they should once again return to Slovakia, especially considering the crisis of the faith in the old country.²¹² By September of 1923, however, that hope was also gone. The three missionaries who replaced Pelikan had also returned home, and all the personal work in Slovakia had in effect come to a complete stop.²¹³

The synod began a process of self-reflection about the failure of the Pelikan Movement. For example, in 1923, the Synod remarked that the theological seminary activity was premature.²¹⁴ However, these comments did not get to the heart of the failure. Much later, Pelikan, Sr. shared that even though they were united in the task, they found two factors caused the premature end of the mission. The first was the relationships in Czechoslovakia and the second was the finances.²¹⁵ The first issue was evident in the pages of *Pravda*, especially towards the end of Pelikan Movement. Although the source of the failure was the poor relationship between the Slovak Lutheran Church and the Slovak Lutheran Synod, the tool to end the Pelikan Movement was the close relationship between the church and the state.

²¹² Ján K...r, "Naše dielo na Slovensku," *Svedok* 20, no. 8 (April 15, 1926): 178.

²¹³ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 124.

²¹⁴ Jaroslav Pelikan, "Tohoročné synodálne shromaždenie," *Svedok* 17, no. 17 (September 1, 1923): 388. The Slovak Lutheran Church would have added that it was also unnecessary. Moreover, the church asked why the Slovak Lutheran Synod chose to start a seminary in Slovakia instead of starting one in their own country, America. See Andrej Rolik, "'Prečo na Slovensku a nie v Amerike theol. ústav?'," *Cirkevné Listy* 36, no. 5 (1 March 1922): 68–72.

²¹⁵ Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr., "An Attempt to Establish a 'Free' Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (April 1960): 1–11.

Slovak Lutheran Church Reaction to Pelikanism

In the end, the poor relationship between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Church was the catalyst for the failure of the Pelikan Movement to plant a new church body in Slovakia. From the beginning of Pelikan's proposed activity in Slovakia, their understanding of the intentions of the Slovak Lutheran Synod were not positive:

In the magazine 'Svedok,' the official organ of the Slovak Lutheran Synod they publish sharp diatribes against our Lutheran Church in Slovakia and its current stewardship, how the church should be and how it abandoned its confession, betrayed and sold out to the Czechs, when they truly joined with the Czech Brethren Church. The famous Pastor Pelikan withdrew from us, with the result that he would rescue Lutheranism from its opponents.²¹⁶

This comment at the end demonstrated that even before Pelikan arrived, he was not viewed well in the Slovak Lutheran Church. At the same time as they were disparaging Pelikan, they welcomed the representative of The Lutheran National Council, Prof. D. J. Morehead, who was visiting Lutherans in post-war Europe to seek opportunities to help them. He represented all but the Missouri Synod and their partners.²¹⁷ At its beginning, the Pelikan Movement in Slovakia had significant relationship hurdles to overcome.

Perhaps missed initially, but later rediscovered, the editor of *Cirkevné Listy* took note of an article Pelikan wrote in *Svedok*, in which he said he was coming to Slovakia to set the Slovak Lutherans free.²¹⁸ To that, the editor responded by asking from what was Pelikan freeing them? Then they recounted from their perspective the conflict Pelikan had with the Slovak Lutherans when he lectured in Martin, after his arrival. This view shows the perception of Pelikan as

²¹⁶ "Rozhľady," *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 4-5 (April-May 1920): 113. "V časopise 'Svedok,' úradnom orgáne Slovenskej evanj. a.v. synody uverejňujú ostré výpady proti našej evanj. A. v. cirkvi na Slovensku a jej terajším správcom, ako by boli cirkev a jej vyznanie opustili, zradili a predali – Čechom, keď sa vraj spojili s evanj. Cirkvou československou. Známý pán farár Pelikán vybral sa preto k nám, aby vraj ratoval luteránstvo proti jeho protivníkom."

²¹⁷ "Rozhľady," *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 4-5 (April-May 1920): 113.

²¹⁸ The article in question is Ján Pelikán, "Prívet, zpráva a prosba vyslanca," *Svedok* 14, no. 19 (October 1,

someone seeking conflict and control. This perception was especially true after he was given a limited amount of time to lecture. Pelikan also expressed regret about the division.²¹⁹ But they each looked at the conflict differently. Pelikan, as shown, and his supporters always framed the conflict in theological terms. The Slovak Lutheran Church saw the conflict primarily as personal and a product of Pelikan's ill will.

The Slovak Lutheran Church recognized that Pelikan, through the work of the synod's newspapers, presumably both *Svedok* and *Pravda*, had worked diligently as a guest to stir up his own followers in an unchristian and unloving way.²²⁰ They accused him of taking the place at the head of the table, which was inappropriate for a guest. In fact, they viewed Pelikan's hubris as so severe that they accused him of wanting to be Bishop of Slovakia.²²¹ Moreover, they said that he started his own congregations based on his own will and according to the pattern of the Missouri Synod.²²² Those in the Pelikan Movement saw themselves as Slovaks returning home to help their land. The Slovaks saw Pelikan and his followers at best as guests, not native sons. The help from Pelikan was considered to be from a foreign element or spirit.

The Slovak Lutheran Church had concerns other than the combative personality of Pelikan. One was the introduction of new church traditions and practices mainly from Pelikan's experiences in America. In terms of practice, for example, they were concerned with the policy of having people register before communion, which was a practice that Pelikan was introducing

1920): 411-13.

²¹⁹ "Rozhľady," *Cirkevné Listy* 34, no. 11 (November 1920): 260.

²²⁰ "Z pomerov našej ev. a. v. cirkve v Amerike," *Evanjelický Posol Zpod Tatier*, 12 no. 3 (March 1922): 54–55.

²²¹ "Z pomerov našej ev. a. v. cirkve v Amerike," *Evanjelický Posol Zpod Tatier*, 12 no. 3 (March 1922): 55. Accusations such as these flew both ways. Bishop Janoška was also accused of wanting to be the Pope of the Slovak Lutheran Church. See Jaroslav Pelikán, "Pánovi Bibzovi," *Svedok* 16, no. 11 (June 1, 1922): 239–42.

²²² "Z pomerov našej ev. a. v. cirkve v Amerike," *Evanjelický Posol Zpod Tatier*, 12 no. 3 (March 1922): 55.

to Slovakia, and which was viewed as a unique form devised by him.²²³ This concern harkened to Pelikan's initial communion crisis in Chicago 15 years earlier. Pelikan and his followers had chosen different traditions since immigrating to America. These new practices were viewed as theological decisions by Pelikan, but cultural and practical innovations imported from America by the Slovak Lutheran Church.

The different Lutheran traditions also played a part in the division. As discussed before, the Slovak Lutheran Synod accused the Slovak Lutheran Church of being "leaven of false teaching, unionism, sectarianism, unbelief, religious indifference, shallowness... ." ²²⁴ When the new Slovak Lutheran Church formed, *Pravda* condemned the gathering as missing the spirit of not only Luther, but also the spirit of the Slovaks such as Tranovský, Krman, and Hurban, who were usually associated with the more conservative orthodox understanding of Slovak Lutheranism.²²⁵ For anyone considering union with any aspect of Czech Protestantism, which was at fever pitch at the time as the Czechs embraced the "Away from Rome" movement, the memory of Hurban was called forth, so that the Slovak Lutherans might be reminded that they resisted the same unionistic spirit that characterized the Hungarian Lutheran Church.²²⁶ The two churches, the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Church, were relying on different theological traditions.

Mocking *Pravda*'s intent to speak the truth in a confessional Lutheran manner, some of the authors of the Slovak Lutheran Church's competing church newspaper ridiculed the intent and

²²³ "Z pomerov našej ev. a. v. cirkve v Amerike," *Evanjelický Posol Zpod Tatier*, 12 no. 2 (February 1922): 31–34. For the reaction against this article, see J. V., "Jako niektorí pánovia na Slovensku falšujú históriu," *Svedok* 16, no. 8 (April 15, 1922): 168–72.

²²⁴ "Zo zákonodarnej činnosti úradnej evanjelickej a. v. cirkve," *Pravda* 1, no. 3 (March 15, 1921): 79. "... kvas falošného učenia, unionizmu, sektárstva, nevery, náboženského indiferentizmu, povrchného" The author is not attributed, but he is probably Pelikan.

²²⁵ "Zo zákonodarnej činnosti úradnej evanjelickej a. v. cirkve," 80.

the facts of the inaugural issue.²²⁷ They also challenged the view that they were unionists.²²⁸ Rather, they were determined to be Lutheran and have good relations with other Christians. In a direct response to Pelikan and his coworkers, the Slovak Lutheran Church declared it was determined to remain true to Lutheran doctrine and its own heritage; and the church was determined to have friendly relations with other Protestants in the Czechoslovak Republic, including German Lutherans, Czech Brethren, and the Reformed.²²⁹ In fact, it was not unionism but brotherly duty (*povinnosť*) to be in communication and relationship with these other Christians.²³⁰ In Slovakia, many voices were certainly against unionism. At the same time, they wanted a comity-like relationship whereby they could coexist as friends and not steal each others' members.²³¹ Fighting unionism (and rationalism) was a voice heard in Slovak Lutheranism, independent of the Pelikan Movement, and long after it had left.²³² The Slovak Lutheran Church was trying to achieve a balance between cooperation and maintaining its Lutheran identity; they argued that they not were unionists or rationalists, but the true expression of Lutheranism in Slovakia.

The Slovak Lutheran Church also saw its contribution to the success of the nation, which was shown through cooperation in September of 1923 at a congress of Czech and Slovak Protestants.²³³ At this conference, the participants agreed that the church was not a state within a

²²⁶ "Náradná struna," *Pravda* 1, no. 3 (March 15, 1912): 89.

²²⁷ Ján Drobný, "Povedzme si pravdu!," *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 1–3 (January–March 1921): 22–25.

²²⁸ "Povedzme si pravdu!," *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 1–3 (January–March 1921): 25–26.

²²⁹ "Všeobecné zásadné ustanovenia synody," *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 1–3 (January–March 1921): 31–33.

²³⁰ Martin Rázus, "O 'Pravde' pre pravdu," *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 4 (April 1921): 69.

²³¹ Sám. Št. Osuský, "Tiež dojem z pražského sjazdu čl. evanjelikov," *Cirkevné Listy* 37, no.22 (30 November 1923): 446.

²³² "Luteranizmus – kalvinizmus," *Cirkevné Listy* 38, no. 3 (15 February 1924): 42–43.

²³³ "Sjazd čl. evanjelikov v Prahe," *Cirkevné Listy* 37, no.19 (15 October 1923): 369–72, "Sjazd čl. evanjelikov v Prahe," *Cirkevné Listy* 37, no.20 (31 October 1923): 392–96, and "Sjazd čl. evanjelikov v Prahe,"

state and was not political in that way. Practically, this relationship meant that there had to be a separation of church and state.²³⁴ At the same time, they felt a church in a Christian state had to support that state and the society that it represented. This unity, founded in Hus and the other panslavic reformers, bound the Protestants together in faith.²³⁵ The need for cooperation with the state during this time of epic change proved a higher value than the need for clear-cut doctrinal division between confessions. The Slovak Lutheran Church was not giving ground to the Pelikan Movement that they were any less confessional, even though they often referred to the panslavic tradition and not the Hurban tradition in their discussions with the Czech Protestants.

The reaction of the Slovak Lutheran Church was to condemn Pelikan, his actions and teachings, and to hopefully isolate him from the life of the church in Slovakia. To do so, they found a new label, Pelikanism.²³⁶ Pelikanism came to represent an expression of orthodox Lutheranism that was theologically exclusive and culturally limited to Slovaks. It had hints of sectarianism. In an open letter to Bishop Zoch, the Slovak Lutheran Synod argued that, in essence, Pelikanism did not exist. What they were calling Pelikanism was really the true teachings of the Holy Scripture and the Confessions.²³⁷ Moreover, they were not alone in this effort, but were joined with all those not necessarily by family or national ties but by this

Cirkevné Listy 37, no.21 (15 November 1923): 421–27.

²³⁴ “Sjazzd čsl. evanjelikov v Prahe,” *Cirkevné Listy* 37, no.19 (15 October 1923): 370.

²³⁵ During this congress, they celebrated Šafárik and Kollár, who were panslavists and saw a future in a wider Czech and Slovak cooperation. Not on the agenda was Hurban and Štúr, who were better known for their Slovak nationalism. During a speech by Bishop Janoška, he specifically cites Šafárik. Likewise, Klimo, who was noted for his legal defense of having only one Lutheran Church in Slovakia, said what held the Protestants together was not their language or nation, but their faith, which is rooted in Hus. See “Sjazzd čsl. evanjelikov v Prahe,” *Cirkevné Listy* 37, no.19 (15 October 1923): 370–72.

²³⁶ For example, see “Klimovstvo a pravda,” *Pravda* 2, no. 5 (May 15, 1922): 105–112, which is a direct response to the Klíma article. The original article is Bohuslav Klimo, “Pelikánstvo,” *Cirkevné Listy* 36, no.7 (1 April 1922): 97–100. This article is probably the first occurrence of the concept of Pelikanism.

²³⁷ “Otvorený List,” *Svedok* 15, no. 4 (February 15, 1921): 75.

common apostolic teaching.²³⁸ Moreover, the Slovak Lutheran Synod was in contrast to the Zion Synod a true Lutheran church.²³⁹ The Slovak Lutheran Church, by attaching the label of Pelikanism, placed the movement in a sectarian light.

The labeling of the movement as Pelikanism proved to be a legal concern as well as a theological one. Dr. Bohuslav Klimo, a church superintendent, wrote an article on Pelikanism, which appeared in *Cirkevné Listy*. In the article, Klima argued a free Lutheran church was impossible because of state law. Secondly, he continued to argue that no difference existed between the churches confessionally. Lastly, the Pelikan Movement was taking advantage of the unstable situation in the government.²⁴⁰ In terms of the state law, he made an important distinction. Recalling laws from the time of Hungarian rule (1868 and 1895) and with nothing new from the Czechoslovak government, freedom of religion was defined by the ability of a person to change confession or choose no confession from the already existing church bodies.²⁴¹ For a person to leave the Slovak Lutheran Church was, in effect, to choose to be without a religion.²⁴² The implication was that if one would leave the Slovak Lutheran Church for Pelikan's Free Church, they would legally be choosing to have no confession. Moreover, in Czechoslovakia, state law allowed only one church of the Augsburg Confession so the government should have no other choice but to deny the proposed free Lutheran church the right to exist.²⁴³ This opinion was the end of the Pelikan Movement as a viable, alternative expression of the Lutheran faith. The Free Lutheran Church was eventually denied by the government in

²³⁸ "Otvorený List," 75.

²³⁹ "Otvorený List," 75.

²⁴⁰ "Klimovstvo a pravda," *Pravda* 2, no. 5 (May 15, 1922): 106.

²⁴¹ Bohuslav Klimo, "Pelikánstvo," *Cirkevné Listy* 36, no.7 (1 April 1922): 98.

²⁴² Bohuslav Klimo, "Pelikánstvo," *Cirkevné Listy* 36, no.7 (1 April 1922): 99.

²⁴³ Bohuslav Klimo, "Pelikánstvo," *Cirkevné Listy* 36, no.7 (1 April 1922): 99–100.

Prague the right to exist as a second Lutheran church.²⁴⁴ Thus, the close relationship between the church and state became a tool for the Slovak Lutheran Church to use against the Pelikan Movement; and the fact that Pelikanism was existing outside of the main Slovak Lutheran Church was the legal tool needed to deny the Free Lutheran Church the legal right to exist.

The reaction to that article was firmly negative: “This article surely was very saddening for every true Lutheran. Every argument, every line of this article is the most rabid thought on Lutheranism, on the Symbolic books, on the Augsburg Confession of faith.”²⁴⁵ For the Slovak Lutheran Synod, the fight was still theological, whereby the author questioned that Klimo had even read the Augsburg Confession or had an inkling of its contents.²⁴⁶ Nor is it clear to the author whether the bishops of the Church in Slovakia had any idea of the content and meaning of the Gospel.²⁴⁷ In short, if Klima wanted to argue about Christian truth, he found a synod that was a more than willing interlocutor. *Pravda* came out equally against Klimo, arguing against his legal argument and even that the two churches held the same confession.²⁴⁸ To the challenge of having the Prague government decide, the author of the article in *Pravda* challenged the Slovak Lutheran Church to run to Prague, that is, Pontius Pilate, for a decision. In fact, they should run

²⁴⁴ This is the view that was widely disseminated within the Slovak Lutheran Synod for many years. For example, in an article in the *Lutheran Beacon*, Joseph Kucharik, who was one of the missionaries to Slovakia, reported that “the Slovak Synod sent him to Czechoslovakia in September of 1921 to organize a Free Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia. The undertaking did not materialize. The state Laws of Czechoslovakia governing the church-state relationship would not permit the existence of two church of the same denomination.” See John J. Kucharik, ed. “Springfield Seminary Confers D.D. Degree on Pastor Kucharik,” *The Lutheran Beacon* 18, no. 5 (May 1961): 73.

²⁴⁵ Joz.[ef] B. Krčméry, “‘Palit’ máte hořkou závist, a dráždění v srdci svém nechlubte se a neklamejte proti pravdě,” *Svedok* 16, no. 14 (July 15, 1922): 311–12. “Tento článok iste veľmi zarmútil každého opravdivého luterána. Každý dôvod, každý riadok toho článku je ten najzúrivejší nápad na luteranizmus, na symbolické knihy, na augsburgské vyznanie viery.”

²⁴⁶ Joz.[ef] B. Krčméry, “‘Palit’ máte hořkou závist, a dráždění v srdci svém nechlubte se a neklamejte proti pravdě,” 314.

²⁴⁷ Joz.[ef] B. Krčméry, “‘Palit’ máte hořkou závist, a dráždění v srdci svém nechlubte se a neklamejte proti pravdě,” 314.

²⁴⁸ “Klimovstvo a pravda,” *Pravda* 2, no. 5 (May 15, 1922): 108–109.

to all the churches, including the pastors and leaders. They should run to all the authorities; but in the end, he was sure of victory—the victory of truth, that is, *pravda*.²⁴⁹ In the end, the government in Prague did decide, and “truth” did not win. Neither the theological nor the legal arguments argued by the Pelikanites proved persuasive.

The last concern of the Slovak Lutheran Church about Pelikanism was its association with the Missouri Synod. The Slovak Lutheran Synod was a member of a much larger Lutheran movement in America, joined together by the Synodical Conference. The Missouri Synod, which had the same spirit as the Slovak Lutheran Synod, was their partner and a great example to them of how a true Lutheran Church believed and practiced their faith: “Our Missouri Synod is big, but we know to value its size still better, when we reveal that ... no worldly or synodical laws drive its members.”²⁵⁰ The Slovak Lutheran Synod was not only part of a bigger movement, but it had its freedom as well. It was a member of one of the fastest growing denominations in America,²⁵¹ but it also was not a puppet of another church. It was a synod uniquely situated, in its view, as a true Lutheran Church, bound to others by their theological agreement, but free to act as it pleased. Because of this association, which the Slovak Lutheran Synod eagerly embraced, Pelikanism was viewed as a having a “German Spirit.”²⁵² This label is one that the Slovak Lutheran Synod would agree with inasmuch as it means in the spirit of Luther and the confessional teachings of the Missouri Synod.

²⁴⁹ “Klimovstvo a pravda,” *Pravda* 2, no. 5 (May 15, 1922): 112.

²⁵⁰ Joz.[ef] B. Krčméry, “‘Palit’ máte hořkou závist, a dráždění v srdci svém nechlubte se a neklamejte proti pravdě,” *Svedok* 16, no. 15 (August 1, 1922): 331. “Velká je tá naša Missourská Synoda, ale jej veľkosť vieme ešte lepšie oceniť, keď si vyjavíme, že ... žiadne svetské ani synodálne zákony nenahňajú členov.”

²⁵¹ There are many examples of the triumphalism associated with the being a member of the Missouri Synod. It was often noted that the Missouri Synod was the largest Lutheran denomination as well as the fastest growing Protestant denomination in the last 30 years. For examples of the pride the Slovak Lutherans had in their partner Synod, see “English Page,” *Svedok* 16, no. 11 (June 1, 1922): 251 and “English Page,” *Svedok* 16, no. 14 (July 15, 1922): 322.

²⁵² “‘Ovocie’ nášho diela na Slovensku,” *Svedok* 16, no. 24 (December 15, 1922): 555.

This “German Spirit” led the Slovak Lutheran Synod to fail to understand what post-war Slovakia was like. Pelikan, who was understood to have had a similar spirit to the German clergy who fought the war “with a weapon in hand,” was aligned with those who chose to fight.²⁵³ Rather the proper response to a post-war Slovakia, according to the Slovaks who experienced the war, was to pursue peace: “The Church has during calm to build peace. In war, her task is charity.”²⁵⁴ The Pelikan Movement, it was argued, needed heretics to fight to exist.²⁵⁵ The question then becomes whether the Slovak Lutherans in America had truly thought through the ramifications of the use of God’s resources for “destructive practice” (*na deštruktívnu prácu*) of the Pelikan Synod.²⁵⁶ The combative association of the Slovak Lutheran Synod to the Missouri Synod proved yet one more reason to see the Pelikan Movement as something foreign to the culture and practice of the Slovak Lutheran Church.

By the 1930s, the relationship of the Missouri Synod to the Slovak Lutheran Church was clearly strained. One observer from Slovakia of the American scene in the 1930s was able to sum up, in part at least, the reputation that developed in the proceeding decades. The author, a Slovak pastor and church official, Ruppeldt, who was visiting the Slovak Lutherans in many of the church bodies in America, saw the Missouri Synod as a peculiar church body, which was understood almost as a sect, with its own spirit and its own understanding of orthodox Lutheranism.²⁵⁷ The Pelikan Movement was the embodiment of this spirit and orthodox

²⁵³ Martin Rázus, “O ‘Pravde’pre pravdu,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 7 (July 1921): 149.

²⁵⁴ Martin Rázus, “O ‘Pravde’pre pravdu,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 7 (July 1921): 149. “Cirkev má v pokoji budovať mier. Vo vojne jej úloha je charitatívna.”

²⁵⁵ Martin Rázus, “O ‘Pravde’pre pravdu,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 7 (July 1921): 150.

²⁵⁶ Martin Rázus, “O ‘Pravde’pre pravdu,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 7 (July 1921): 151.

²⁵⁷ Fedor Ruppeldt, *Slovenskí Evanjelici v Amerike* (Ružomberk: Cirkev evanj. a. v. na Slovensku, 1932), 50. “Meno Missurskej synody znamená zvláštny zjav luteranizmu, osobitnú cirkev či sektu, ktorá má zvláštneho ducha a pokladá sa za jedine pravoverný luteranizmus.”

Lutheranism in Slovakia in the 1920s. The Slovak Lutheran Church rejected this spirit and its messenger.

Church, State, and the End

By the end of the Pelikan Movement, the relationship between the churches was at best poor. However, legally and officially, the movement ended because of the failure to realize an American style separation of church and state. Pelikan, Sr. asserted that the different viewpoints of what constituted the separation of church and state was a deciding factor in the breakdown of the relationship between the leaders of the Pelikan Movement and the Slovak Lutheran Church.²⁵⁸ From the perspective of the Slovak Lutherans in America, this assertion was true. They felt that they were best suited to teach how a free Lutheran church should behave. They said that “our megalomaniacs in Slovakia should come to America to learn the true concepts about the freedom of religion, and also about the freedom of politics, society and national economics, etc.”²⁵⁹ They felt that the Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia were not in a position to comment on how to run a free church in a free society, having never really experienced such a relationship. Only churches formed in the crucible of the American political and religious system were capable of having the knowledge of what a free church really was. This confidence in the American idea of the separation of church and state propelled the Pelikan Movement onward and eventually caused its defeat.

While in Velká, the representatives of the Pelikan Movement were strong advocates of the separation of church and state, commenting often on its necessity. The ideal of the freedom of religious speech was strong in the Americanized Slovaks. They saw this freedom as the “dearest

²⁵⁸ Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr., "An Attempt to Establish a 'Free' Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia," 3–4.

²⁵⁹ J.[án] V.[ojtko], “Či v Česko-Slovensku je náboženská sloboda?,” *Svedok* 15, no. 6 (March 15, 1921): 124. “Naši velikáši na Slovensku mali by prísť do Americky naučiť sa pravým ‘pojmom’ o náboženskej slobode, jako aj

freedom,” which they interpreted as the “freedom of witnessing and confessing.”²⁶⁰ Their experience in America was formational and exemplary.²⁶¹ They also understood this freedom from the Czechoslovak Constitution as promised as a right.²⁶² They feared that many, some of which the Catholics were chief offenders, were decidedly against this freedom.²⁶³

Not only were the Catholics to blame. The evangelicals were also engaged in restricting this freedom. Even though they recognized that the Slovak Lutheran Church was for the separation of church and state in principle, they also recognized that it did not want such a clear distinction because it felt it needed continued state support.²⁶⁴ This both/and approach to the issue appeared to those publishing *Pravda* to be against the Word of God, which explicitly supported such a separation.²⁶⁵ In this way, however, the Lutherans in Slovakia were seen as giving more support to non-Lutherans, through the state’s actions of supporting the different church bodies (namely, the Catholics and the Jews), rather than the true sharing of the Gospel through their own evangelical witness.²⁶⁶ The Pelikanites rejected any concerns about sects overrunning the nation or the break between the historic relationships between the church and state. They saw America as an example of how the freedom of religion can function in such a way that all are content.²⁶⁷ Ultimately, the Word of God and the Confessions support this separation. The “true

o slobode politickej, spoločenskej, narodo-hospodárskj atď.”

²⁶⁰ T. B., “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 120. Probably Theodor Bálent.

²⁶¹ T. B., “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 122.

²⁶² T. B., “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 123. The author is able to quote a number of paragraphs from the constitution in which he understands that the rights of religious freedom are guaranteed.

²⁶³ T. B., “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1, no. 4 (April 15, 1921): 124.

²⁶⁴ T. B., “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1, no. 5 (May 15, 1921): 162–63.

²⁶⁵ T. B., “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1, no. 5 (May 15, 1921): 163.

²⁶⁶ T. B., “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1, no. 5 (May 15, 1921): 163.

²⁶⁷ T. B., “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1, no. 7 (July 15, 1921): 246–47.

teaching and position according to the Word of God and our confession” dictates the need for the proper separation of church and state; according to the Pelikan Movement, this dictate went unknown or unpracticed in the new Czechoslovak state.²⁶⁸

The Slovak Lutheran Church saw the role of pastor in the new state differently than those in the Pelikan Movement. Whereas the Pelikan Movement was focused on the separation of church and state for its survival and for the clear teaching and preaching of the Gospel, the Slovak Lutheran pastors were focused on supporting the state. Ideally, they argued that the pastor would only work on his profession.²⁶⁹ But the demands of their role, which included a political element and the need for financial support, demanded a broader role than the one envisioned by Pelikan.²⁷⁰ The Slovaks in Slovakia reminded and admonished those in the Pelikan Movement that they were not in America.²⁷¹ American ideals of the role of a pastor did not apply. Historically, pastors in Slovakia had always been involved in national politics. Hurban and Kollár were invoked to support the historical role of pastors in the Slovak nation.²⁷² Slovak pastors had been and were expected to play a major role in the nation; they were not expected to retreat from the public arena. No sense of the separation of church and state would be supported if it would change this fundamental characteristic of a Lutheran pastor’s role in the life of the Slovak nation.

Despite this argument for the cultural concerns of Slovaks in Czechoslovakia and the sense that the Pelikan Movement was seemingly unaware of how American they had become, towards

²⁶⁸ T. B., “Rozluka cirkve od štátu,” *Pravda* 1, no. 10 (October 15, 1921): 330.

²⁶⁹ Martin Rázus, “O ‘Pravde’ pre pravdu,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 4 (April 1921): 70.

²⁷⁰ Martin Rázus, “O ‘Pravde’ pre pravdu,” 70.

²⁷¹ Martin Rázus, “O ‘Pravde’ pre pravdu,” 70.

²⁷² Ján Ďurovič, “Evanjelictvo a národ slovenský,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no. 8–9 (August-September 1921): 182.

the end of the Pelikan Movement, the position of the Slovak Lutheran Synod on the separation of church and state remained as fervent. They stated that,

The Church should not meddle in and interfere with matters of the State. The Church as such is concerned about nothing else than preaching the Gospel. Its members as citizens individually, are concerned about the social, political and economic welfare of the nation, but the Church itself should not be thus active and should not introduce such matters into its work. These two domains are to be kept absolutely separate. ...That is Lutheranism, that is Americanism.²⁷³

It was still clear to them that the separation of church and state was as much a Lutheran dogma as it was an American principle found in the constitution.²⁷⁴ In Slovakia, Pelikan, Sr. started to despair of change, noting that the state and the church were not separated, only seemingly so. Because of the financial and societal ties, such as the support of the state for church schools, there was no real separation of church and state.²⁷⁵ Perhaps more importantly, he could find no sign of change towards separation. Ironically, even though they feared the Czechs as possible partners in unionism, the Slovak Lutheran Synod credited the Czechs for pursuing and fighting for the separation of church and state.²⁷⁶ By 1923, they were eager to see such a change so that they could have an opportunity to express their faith freely in Czechoslovakia. Their best hope was, perhaps, the Czechs, who were better known for their secular tendencies rather than their confessional fidelity.

More than any legal argument or any concern regarding the proper role of the state and the church, Pelikan was rejected, as well as his movement, because he did not come as a friend but

²⁷³ P. J. R., "The Watch Tower," *Svedok* 16, no. 21 (November 1, 1922): 491.

²⁷⁴ "Lutherans Uphold United States Constitution," *Svedok* 17, no. 17 (September 1, 1923): 404. "[Lutherans] threefold hold to be wrong for any Church to play politics and to meddle with public affairs, just as it would be wrong for the State to interfere with any Church's religion."

²⁷⁵ Jaroslav Pelikán, "Hlasy o rozluke cirkvi a štátu," *Pravda* 2, no. 4 (April 15, 1922): 89–90.

²⁷⁶ "Jako vřahujú slovenskí autonomisti cirkevné veci do politického boja," *Svedok* 17, no. 17 (September 1, 1923): 400–402.

as an “emperor” (*imperátor*).²⁷⁷ His help was not the kind of help that the Slovak Lutheran Church felt they needed or wanted. But the actual demise of the Pelikan Movement was the state’s intervention in church affairs. After the main effort of the Pelikan Movement was over, the Slovak Lutheran Synod still wrote articles lamenting the involvement of the Czechoslovak government’s restrictions on the freedom of religion.²⁷⁸ They still had some hope of maintaining their relationships in Slovakia.²⁷⁹ At the time, *Svedok* also repeated the key issue of the mission as the separation of church and state. In fact, it was the most important issue for the church in Czechoslovakia.²⁸⁰ They felt that the spiritual care of the people should be more important than the potential loss of support from the state. Choosing the state support over spiritual health was, to the author, dangerous. Remembering the early promises almost a decade earlier, the Slovak Lutheran Synod felt betrayed by the Czechoslovak state and by President Masaryk. They were particularly concerned about the reliance on old Hungarian Laws to support the connection between church and state.²⁸¹ This concern proved real, as the Free Lutheran Church in Slovakia was denied the right to exist legally because of laws that would allow only one expression of a confession (i.e. there could not be two Lutheran churches in Slovakia).²⁸² Even though the cause

²⁷⁷ Juraj Hurtaĵ, “To americké posolstvo,” *Cirkevné Listy* 35, no.11–12 (November-December 1921): 288–91.

²⁷⁸ M. “Naša povinnosť, pomáhať bratom k nám volajúcim i na Slovensku,” *Svedok* 17, no. 18 (September 15, 1923): 418–19.

²⁷⁹ M. “Naša povinnosť, pomáhať bratom k nám volajúcim i na Slovensku,” 420.

²⁸⁰ T. B., “Čímže sa dá skôr zahrávať, dušiami ľudu Božieho, či životom a majetkom farárov?,” *Svedok* 15, no. 14 (July 15, 1921): 299–300.

²⁸¹ “Maďarské zákony a P. Dr. B. Klimo,” *Svedok* 16, no. 11 (June 1, 1922): 248. Pelikan Sr. expands on this topic, referring to the “Hungarian Law of 1895,” which outlined the rules and regulations between the church and state. See Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr., “An Attempt to Establish a ‘Free’ Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia,” 4.

²⁸² Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr., “An Attempt to Establish a ‘Free’ Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia,” 10–11. Yet, the Slovaks in America did wonder aloud why is it that the German and Hungarian Lutherans could consider a separate Lutheran Church body (the Germans in particular were trying to organize one) and why were the other sects allowed to organize. In a free society, they should be able to organize their own church body. See J. V. “Či v ČSR. panuje náboženská sloboda?,” *Svedok* 16, no. 15 (August 1, 1922): 335–37.

was the difficult relationship between the two competing church bodies, the result was the church and the state worked together to upend the mission work of the Pelikan Movement.

The Somora Era

Even though the mission failed to find a legal foothold in the new Czechoslovak Republic and their relationships were in disarray, the Slovak Lutheran Synod still wanted to work with the two congregations in Velká and Iliašovice. To renew the work, they thought they would send another candidate over. Four names were considered: Ján Somora, Pavel Rafaj, Jaroslav Pelikán, and Ján Pelikán.²⁸³ Somora was the choice to renew the ministry in Slovakia.²⁸⁴

He was born in 1876,²⁸⁵ being one of nine children in the family. He studied in Bystrice, Štiavnice, Sopron in Hungary, and Rostock in Germany.²⁸⁶ He had served as a professor in Budapest and Kremnica. By the time he was almost 30 years old, he came to the United States because of the call he received to Trinity Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chicago in 1905. Here he was remembered as a great teacher, but difficult to understand because of the complexity of his communication.²⁸⁷ In 1906, a communion controversy erupted as Somora stated that each person must announce before communing, which was the practice that Pelikan pursued at his congregation, Sts. Peter and Paul, also in Chicago. In 1908, refusing to bend to the will of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and its President Pelikan and accept this practice, this conflict

²⁸³ Jaroslav Pelikan, "Tohoročné synodálne shromaždenie," *Svedok* 17, no. 17 (September 1, 1923): 388–89.

²⁸⁴ Jaroslav Pelikán, "Verejná Výzva a Prosba," *Svedok* 18, no. 7 (April 1, 1924): 200.

²⁸⁵ Dolak reports that he was born in 1877, but a visit to Somora's grave site indicates that he was actually born in 1876. Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 170. Somora's own account has him born in June 4, 1876 (v Mošovcach (Turč. St.)); see Ján Somora to [Theodor Bálent], letter, October 16, 1905, SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 200.19-15-13-15-18-01, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁸⁶ Ján Somora to [Theodor Bálent], letter, October 16, 1905, SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 200.19-15-13-15-18-01, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁸⁷ The Congregation of Holy Trinity, Chicago, *Dejiny* (Chicago: The Mally Press, 1943), 32.

caused the congregation to leave the Synod it joined in 1902. They blamed Pelikan for causing the conflict.²⁸⁸ Somora remained at Trinity until 1909. By unanimous vote, the congregation asked him to vacate the parsonage, and he was officially terminated.²⁸⁹ In that same year, he became the pastor to Zion, which included members from Trinity, who were loyal to him.²⁹⁰ He married Pauline Jarmek in 1911, who was a teacher, while on a visit to Slovakia. He served in many roles until 1924, including a short time as President from 1921 to 1922, at the beginning of the Pelikan Movement.²⁹¹ He was a consistent contributor to *Svedok* and in all ways seemed involved in the life of the Slovak Lutheran Synod.

His return to Slovakia marked a change in tone for the mission. Long gone were the conflictual days of the Pelikans. Somora, by Pelikan, Sr.'s own admission, was always a Slovak and never quite adjusted to American life. He was more attuned to European sensibilities.²⁹² Even in 1914, Somora showed that he had some sympathies to the conditions of the Slovaks, remarking in a private letter that he doubted whether Pelikan or anyone could really know what is going on in Slovakia.²⁹³ He even tried to write letters to the bishops and leaders (Janoška and Bodnár) back in Slovakia, which were not answered.²⁹⁴ He seemed to have had some sympathies

²⁸⁸ The Guest-Host', church newsletter, Special Issue, November? 1965, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 15, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁸⁹ The Guest-Host', church newsletter, Special Issue, November? 1965, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 15, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁹⁰ The Guest-Host' article, church newsletter, December, 1962, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 12, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis. Pelikan, Sr. notes that Somora was part of the split that proved to be a bitter split. Relations remained strained between the two congregations.

²⁹¹ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 170. Dolak's source for this short history of Somora was from J. Bajus, *Pamänik ev. a. v. cirkvi Božieho Siona, Chicago, 1909–1944* (Chicago: Mally Press), 9, 10.

²⁹² Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr., "An Attempt to Establish a 'Free' Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia," 11.

²⁹³ Ján Somora, letter, February 5, 1914, SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 200.19-15-13-15-18-01, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁹⁴ Ján Somora, letter, April 1, 1914, SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 200.19-15-13-15-18-01, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

towards their plight and some restraint in the polemic against the Slovak Lutheran Church. Thus, his reintegration into Slovak life was easier than Pelikan's.

Meanwhile, during this time of transition from the three previous missionaries to Somora, there was a visit from Pastor Michal Gotthardt in 1923, who served as a missionary there while recovering from illness. Gotthardt had great hopes for the mission and the mission in Velká as a treasure; however, little more was said about his mission as he soon died.²⁹⁵ The evaluation of the situation in Slovakia in general was that the church life there was near death.²⁹⁶ The church was viewed as being without a Lutheran spirit and meaning; it had become a church more about politics than being the vineyard of the Lord.²⁹⁷

In 1924, the flow of information about the mission in Slovakia was slowing. For example, an article appeared in *Svedok* asking the question of what was going on in the mission.²⁹⁸ Articles against the church in Slovakia still appeared, especially against the liberal and unionistic practice of the church.²⁹⁹ The same was true of the SEU³⁰⁰ and the Zion Synod. Little was said about the mission, until the financial crisis forced some revelations about its progress. In response to the financial concerns, Pelikan, Sr. in a passionate plea for support of the mission admitted that little had been shared about the mission.³⁰¹ Yet, they needed a new infusion of support to send Somora

²⁹⁵ "Zprávy z Československa," *Svedok* 17, no. 21 (November 1, 1923): 499–500. For information on his death, see "Náš misiónár dvct. Mich. Gotthardt zosnul," *Svedok* 18, no. 7 (April 1, 1924): 208–10. For Gotthardt's last thoughts before his death, see also M. Gotthardt to Jan Pelikan, letter, February 28, 1924?, SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 200.07-15-20-08-01-04/1, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, and for his wife's recollection of his death, Žofia Gotthardt, letter, 1924?, SELC District Archives, Box 8, Folder 200.07-15-20-08-01-04/1, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁹⁶ M. "Či je chorá cirkev ev. luteránska na Slovensku," *Svedok* 17, no. 22 (November 15, 1923): 510.

²⁹⁷ M. "Či je chorá cirkev ev. luteránska na Slovensku," 512.

²⁹⁸ Št. Jurkovič, "Čo je s našou misiou na Slovensku?," *Svedok* 18, no. 4 (February 15, 1924): 103–105.

²⁹⁹ "Zprávy z Československa," *Svedok* 18, no. 5 (March 1, 1924): 149–51.

³⁰⁰ "Smer Slovenského Hlásnika, orgánu Slov. Ev. Jednoty," *Svedok* 18, no. 5 (March 1, 1924): 137–40.

³⁰¹ Jaroslav Pelikán, "Verejná Výzva a Prošba," *Svedok* 18, no. 7 (April 1, 1924): 200.

back to Slovakia and to continue to support the mission and those congregations. By June of 1924, Somora had arrived in Velká and began his work immediately.³⁰² On the June 15, the congregations in Slovakia met and subsequently wrote a letter, thanking the Slovak Lutheran Synod for sending Somora.³⁰³ At the Synodical Conference in Streator, Illinois in late-August and early September, the Slovak Lutheran Synod agreed to continue the work in Slovakia, but at the same time the financial difficulties were growing and the Synod asked the church to give a “big sum” for the sake of the mission.³⁰⁴ Reports from the field were still coming in and there was discussion of the addition of an extra chaplain (*kaplán*) joining the ministry team in Slovakia.³⁰⁵ Efforts to raise funds continued for the mission.³⁰⁶

Somora began his pastoral ministry and found many of the same concerns as Pelikan did a few years earlier. Dolak reported that Somora found that the people were uneducated in the confessional Lutheran faith and that they found it difficult to understand what it meant to be a “truly free Lutheran congregation.”³⁰⁷ He also faced logistical struggles. Somora had difficulties with his passport, and needed help from America to secure a new one.³⁰⁸ Even in 1925, the concern coming from Velká was similar in that they were concerned about religious freedom and felt that the state was not executing the laws in support of their right be a confessional Lutheran

³⁰² “Pán farár Somora už vo Veľkej pod Tatrou,” *Svedok* 18, no. 12 (June 15, 1924): 371.

³⁰³ “Zprávy z Československa,” *Svedok* 18, no. 14 (July 15, 1924): 440–41.

³⁰⁴ “Príhovor výboru pre missiu v Československu,” *Svedok* 18, no. 19 (October 1, 1924): 582.

³⁰⁵ “Dopis z Veľkej pod Tatrou na Slovensku,” *Svedok* 18, no. 21 (November 1, 1924): 634–35.

³⁰⁶ “Cirkevní slavnosť a sbierka na cirkev v Iliašovciach,” *Svedok* 18, no. 24 (December 15, 1924): 698–700.

³⁰⁷ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 126.

³⁰⁸ Zpráva Výboru pre Missiu v Starej Vlasti, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis and Ján Somora to Dinda, letter, December 11, 1929, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

church, free to worship as they pleased.³⁰⁹ They still clung to the hope that the state would recognize them, or more specifically, that the state would uphold its own laws on the separation of church and state. They were also being tempted away from the influence and faith of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. In Iliašovce, they reported that the ULCA church had offered money, but they refused the financial support, faithfully led by Somora, and stayed true to the confessional Lutheran cause.³¹⁰

In 1926, the Free Lutheran Church continued to struggle with the Slovak Lutheran Church and the state. They were challenged to catechize their children. The Slovak Lutheran Church felt that catechetical training should only happen under their auspices. They were also challenged about ringing their church bells at a funeral.³¹¹ Both challenges were focused on the fact that they continued to be perceived as a sect. They were also continually tempted by Bishop Janoška to return to the Slovak Lutheran Church. They resisted, standing firm with their brothers in America.³¹²

Pelikan was still involved in fund raising as late as 1927 for the mission in Slovakia.³¹³ The support for a church building in Iliašovce was also requested by the congregation itself, once again reminding the Slovak Lutheran Synod of its roots (if not its responsibilities) to the building project it had begun under Kolárik in 1921.³¹⁴ They also reminded them of the 34 families that still clung to the same faith as they did back in America. Pelikan must have felt that there was

³⁰⁹ Michal Ilavský, “Veľká pod Tatrou na Slovensku,” *Svedok* 19, no. 7 (April 1, 1925): 156–57. In particular, Ilavský was reacting to an article published in *Cirkevné Listy* that asserted the existence of Pelikanism and linked this movement to anarchy.

³¹⁰ “Naša cirkev v Iliašovciach je pokúšaná, ale z milosti Božej stojí,” *Svedok* 19, no. 19 (October 1, 1925): 450–51.

³¹¹ “Povzbudzujúce zprávy o našom diele v Československu,” *Svedok* 20, no. 1 (January 1, 1926): 22–23.

³¹² Jozef Klein, “Iliašovce, Spiš, Slovensko,” *Svedok* 20, no. 4 (February 15, 1926): 88.

³¹³ Ján Pelikán, “Vznešené Cirkve!,” *Svedok* 21, no. 8 (April 15, 1927): 188–89.

³¹⁴ Michal Smyk, “Zo života našich bratov na Slovensku,” *Svedok* 21, no. 16 (August 15, 1927): 371–73.

still some possibility of making a confessional Lutheran witness to the people in the Slovakia. He made an impassioned plea for such a renewed effort as late as 1927, arguing that there was still time for the Slovak Lutheran Synod to proclaim the clear Gospel of Christ.³¹⁵ He reminded the Synod of its commitment to Somora and to Iliašovce. He added that the mission was not about worldly things, but “about the preservation of the clear teachings of the Word of God and our Evangelical-Lutheran church in the bosom of our dear Slovak nation and the preservation of the many souls in that nation.”³¹⁶ Even near the end of his life, he was still passionate about his Lutheran faith and its orthodoxy as well as the mission to the Slovak peoples. He was still living out his confessional Lutheran and Slovak identities. By 1929, financial concerns were still shared between the church in Velká and the Slovak Lutheran Synod as well as construction plans for building on their plot in the village.³¹⁷ Pelikan died in Lakewood, Ohio in 1930.³¹⁸ The voice that championed the mission work to Slovakia was now silenced, and Somora was to soldier on virtually alone for decades.

In 1930, the congregation in Iliašovce sent a letter requesting that Somora could continue to remain as their pastor.³¹⁹ Beyond the continued requests for money, Somora also reported

³¹⁵ [Ján] Pelikán, “Otvorené dvere,” *Svedok* 21, no. 18 (September 15, 1927): 421–44.

³¹⁶ [Ján] Pelikán, “Otvorené dvere,” 424. “... o zachovanie čistého učenia slova Božieho a našej evanjelicko-luteránskej cirkvi v lone nášho milého národa slovenského a o zachovanie mnohých duší v tom národe.”

³¹⁷ Michal Dindoš to Slovak Lutheran Synod, letter, November 25, 1929, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis and Ján Somora, letter, 1929?, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis and. Somora’s letter contains a drawing of the plot where the current building was and where the new building is proposed.

³¹⁸ The Congregation of Holy Trinity, Chicago, *Dejiny* (Chicago: The Mally Press, 1943), 79.

³¹⁹ Somora had two letters sent so that he could get his passport processed; he had one sent from each of the two congregations. See Free Lutheran Church in Iliašovce, Slovakia to Slovak Lutheran Synod, letter, February 23, 1930, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, and Free Lutheran Church in Velká, Slovakia to Slovak Lutheran Synod, letter, March 2, 1930, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis and Ján Somora to Dinda, letter, March 4, 1929, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

continued clashes with the local Church authorities about the church's legitimacy.³²⁰ In 1932, he continued to have passport problems and conflicts with the Bishop's office.³²¹ The Bishop's office was encouraging Somora to liquidate the churches' possessions and threatened to evict them from their property. But he also had plans to renovate a local pharmacy for the work in Velká.³²² In the summer of 1932, there was a resolution to end the mission, sell off the processions, and offer Somora the opportunity to return to America.³²³ Although his work was clearly difficult—never legally recognized, harassed by the government and the Slovak Lutheran Church, and having modest fruit for his labors—Somora's long marathon had in reality just begun.

Even though the mission of the Pelikan Movement continued for many years in the person of Somora, the reality is that the interaction with the Slovak Lutheran Church, the free congregations established by the Pelikan Movement, and Somora's effectiveness all diminished over the years. Moreover, the interest of the Slovak Lutheran Synod in the state of Slovak Lutheranism in Slovakia also decreased. The failure of the Pelikan Movement proved to be the tipping point of the Slovak Lutheran Synod's involvement in Slovakia. The church would no longer be focused on its homeland. The Slovak Lutheran Synod had progressed like many immigrant churches by assimilating into its new immigrant culture—America. The failure in Slovakia began the long process of minimizing its cultural heritage and emphasizing its theological beliefs. No longer did these two identities remain in such tension.

³²⁰ Ján Somora to Dinda, letter, March 4, 1929, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

³²¹ Ján Somora to Mission Board, letter, August 1, 1932, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

³²² Ján Somora to Mission Board, letter, August 1, 1932, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

³²³ Memo from Holy Trinity in Garfield New Jersey to Synodical President Ján Bradáč, July 1932, SELC

Somora's Marathon

The failure to establish a legally recognized Free Lutheran Church marked the end of the Pelikan Movement. The subsequent departure of Pelikan, Sr. and his coworkers in 1923 marked the end of the significant involvement of the Slovak Lutheran Synod in Slovakia. Their departure was the tipping point for this immigrant community; they no longer saw themselves as Slovaks living in America, but as American-Slovaks.

Somora's arrival also represents the end of the Pelikan Movement, but he soldiered on for more than forty years.³²⁴ He not only represented the last missionary sent from the Slovak Lutheran Synod to Slovakia in the 1920s, but he also was the last visible sign of the mission work in the region. The buildings and structures that the mission bought in Velká are all but gone. The only remaining building is his house, which has been enlarged and renovated to the extent that it is nearly completely different from the original. After the other missionaries left the congregations in Velká and Iliášovce, Somora received a combined call from the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the two congregations 1924.³²⁵ His story is the last remnant for the Pelikan Movement.

He never returned to the Slovak Lutheran Church as a pastor. He remained a separate ministry, staying true to the principles of the Pelikan Movement, sharing his faith with his congregations of a few dozen families. After his return to Slovakia, the history of his life is little known. He conducted worship in the German church, which is the church that is standing and in use now. But after the Second World War, his congregation was eventually absorbed into the

District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 64, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

³²⁴ Much of the information about Somora was shared through an interview with Bishop Filo. Bishop Julius Filo, interview by author, Bratislava, Slovakia, April 3, 2008. The Bishop also contacted his mother for some of the information.

³²⁵ Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*,

Slovak Lutheran Church and he moved his worship. The church had no hope of becoming a recognized, legal church body, but the work continued with the faithful few in these two cities. In the larger community, the ministry of Somora took on the character of a sect, often being included with other groups such as the Baptists and the Adventists. They continued to meet in meeting houses in both cities. Somora continued to teach a very strict version of the Lutheran faith, demanding that even the adults would be able to recite the catechism on demand. He continued the practice of announcing for communion. His wife was equally dedicated to the education of the children, though they had no children of their own. Remarkably, Somora and his wife maintained a formal way of communicating, using the formal “you” in the Slovak language.

In 1943, through some donations from America (probably the SELC or Missouri Synod), the members of the Velká congregation began to build a small house for Somora;³²⁶ it was intended as a meeting place and a home for the couple. Since this effort was during the Second World War, when advancing troops came through, those troops took the money so the building process continued but the quality and size were lacking. A greater tragedy happened when Somora’s wife passed away on December 1, 1948 of a heart attack.

It is not clear when exactly they lost control of the use of the land where they originally began, but by 1952 they were worshiping and learning in Somora’s home. During this time, Julius Filo, Sr.,³²⁷ who was the Slovak Lutheran pastor in that town, worked to protect Somora

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³²⁶ In the financial reports associated with the Mission Board, there is no record of any support for Somora. The report for 1941, in reference to the “Home Missions in Czechoslovakia” that there were “no regular payments.” Perhaps this support was from private individuals. See Mission Board Treasury Report August 21, 1941, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 58, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis and Mission Board Treasury Report May 1, 1943 to July 31, 1945, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 52, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

³²⁷ Julius Filo, Sr. served in Velká from 1952 until 1970. In 1970, he became Bishop of the Eastern District and relocated to Košice, Slovakia.

from the authorities so that he would never have problems with the communists. Pastor Filo considered him part of their worshiping community, although he never joined or integrated with Slovak Lutheran Church. Somora was probably more famous for his work as a natural healer, often using herbs and such for his own healthy mixtures. He was very well thought of for this skill. Many considered this role as healer to be his first calling to the community. He offered his medical services for free, living off a small stipend from America as well as donations from the members of his congregations. Yet, he would also often be alone and chose to stay isolated in many ways from the rest of the community. In the last few years before his death, he preferred to be absolutely alone, often hiking into the hills in the night by himself. He stopped serving as a pastor in 1966. Somora was still receiving support from the SELC as late as 1967.³²⁸

Two weeks before his death on December 1, 1968, he stopped eating and drinking, often taking cold baths. He was buried with a full funeral at the local Slovak Lutheran Church by then Pastor Filo. His grave is in the Velká graveyard, next to one of his sisters. His gravestone states that he was a Lutheran pastor.

The community always considered him a very spiritual man, who taught the clear teachings of the Lutheran faith. He was also considered to be a pious man who truly lived out the truths of the Bible in his life. But he was also viewed an odd man, never really integrating with his community. The Pelikan Movement's last remnant ended the way it began, separate and small, but true to its convictions. The confessional Lutheran influences in Slovakia continued, but not from the influence of the Slovak Lutheran Synod. The Slovak Lutheran Church continued to

³²⁸ SELC Mission Board Treasury Report, December 31st, 1967, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folder 53, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis. At that time he received, a total of \$303. SELC Mission Board Treasury Report, August 31st, 1966, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 19, Folder 16, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis. At that time he received, a total of \$100. Synod of Evangelical Luther Churches Mission Board Treasury Auditors' Report, December 31, 1962, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 19, Folder 16, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis. In 1961, he received \$200 and in 1962 he received \$100, but they

honor its confessional heritage, including Hurban and Hodža, even as it also assimilated the many influences of its culture and time. The Slovak Lutheran Church rejected the new hybrid of American-Slovak confessionalism, based on the theology and practice of the Missouri Synod, which found its form in the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Pelikan family. Slovak Lutheranism remained its own, with its own history and path.

Why the Pelikan Movement Failed

Although not rich in study, the Pelikan Movement has caused some to ponder why it never reached the dreams that it embraced. George Dolak, SELC historian, and Pelikan, Sr. both provide accounts of the failure of the Pelikan Movement. Their accounts examine the personal and theological concerns that were important at that time. The details of the events during the almost three years the Pelikan Movement existed on Slovak soil are well-documented in Dolak's text.³²⁹ In Dolak's account, the history of the movement plays like a drama. The movement begins with the initial arrival full of hope, then descends quickly into despair as Pelikan realizes that his worldview clashes mightily with the leadership of the Slovak Lutheran Church. Momentarily hope is revived by the founding of a small church from a remnant of underserved, faithful Lutherans. The Pelikan movement eventually retreats to America as the forces of church and state in Czechoslovakia, working together, overcome the efforts of the movement.

Dolak's account puts the blame on the contentious relationships between Pelikan and the Slovak Lutheran Church's leadership. After Pelikan's arrival, which was marked by some warmth, the relationship quickly turned bitter. As mentioned, the turning point was at a conference in Turčiansky Svätý Martin, where Pelikan was received poorly. Pelikan's reaction to

continued to plan for \$200 each year.

³²⁹ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 106–127.

this rejection was theological. He saw in their rejection an anti-Lutheran and unionistic spirit, which proved to him that the Word of God and the Confession had no place in the Slovak Lutheran Church.³³⁰ After the church in Velká was established and after Pelikan had returned home to report on the progress, urging the Slovak Lutheran Synod to pursue the confessional witness in Velká, the Slovak Lutheran Church came out against Pelikan, seeing him as a sower of discontent.³³¹ Pelikan was viewed as a force of disunity at a time when the Slovak Lutheran Church was desperate for unity.³³² For Dolak, Pelikan and his approach were the cause of the intense conflict between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Church.

Importantly, Dolak notes that the Zion Synod was able to present itself as a positive partner to the Slovak Lutheran Church.³³³ Thus, Dolak hints at the changing relationships between the Slovak Lutheran Church and the two American Lutheran Synods. The Slovak Lutheran Synod soon became an antagonist of the Slovak Lutheran Church; the Slovak Lutheran Church viewed Zion Synod more and more as a partner. By the mid-1920s, only Ján Somora was in Slovakia and faced tremendous odds, including poorly educated parishioners, resistance from the Slovak Lutheran Church, and the resistance from the state.

According to Dolak, the Pelikan Movement was perceived at the time as a theological and pastoral event. They sought to find a way to minister to those willing to adhere to an orthodox Lutheranism that was part of the Slovak Lutheran tradition as well as molded from their experience in America and the Missouri Synod. Failing to engage the Slovak Lutheran Church

³³⁰ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 111.

³³¹ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 112.

³³² George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–1927*, 120–22.

³³³ George Dolak, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902–*

positively, the Slovak Lutheran Synod felt the only way to continue on their mission was to minister independently of the Slovak Lutheran Church.

Pelikan, Sr., upon reflection, sees the failure as a failure of culture and politics, which shows a richer interpretation based on the changing values and abilities of the immigrant community. He notes that by the time the Slovak Americans returned to Slovakia, they still had command of the Slovak language, but they found that they were of a different cultural ilk: “First of all it should be said that the [Slovak Lutheran Synod] and the [Slovak Lutheran Church] spoke the same language, but the words used did not mean the same thing.”³³⁴ Secondly, he opines that it was unrealistic that the Slovak Lutheran Church would reject its Episcopal polity it had since the time of the Reformation.³³⁵ Lastly, he argues that the Slovak Lutheran Church was fearful to lose its historic relationship with the State and could not support itself without State support, even it meant state interference.³³⁶ In this way, the Lutheran Slovaks, both in American and in Slovakia, had in fact already grown apart, never really able to unite again as one ethnic people.

Pelikan Sr.’s view that the failure was, at least in part, one of cultural differences and Dolak’s view that the failure stems primarily from the personal and theological conflict that Pelikan had with the Church in Slovakia both have merit and are well-supported. The Slovak Lutheran Synod grew in its understanding of the Lutheran faith in an American Lutheran context, nurtured by the Missouri Synod. It adopted ideas that were foreign to Slovakia, such as an American-style separation of church and state as well as congregational polity. Pelikan had a

1927, 118.

³³⁴ Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr., "An Attempt to Establish a 'Free' Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia," 7.

³³⁵ Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr., "An Attempt to Establish a 'Free' Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia," 8.

³³⁶ Jaroslav Pelikan, Sr., "An Attempt to Establish a 'Free' Lutheran Church in Czechoslovakia," 8. An example of state interference was the ability of the state to appoint the church’s bishops. But it was certainly financial as well. See Bohuslav Klimo, “Štátna podpora,” *Cirkevné Listy* 36, no.22 (15 November 1922): 359–61.

history of conflict, including conflicts in Slovakia before he immigrated and in America. He was a capable pastor and a visionary, but lacked the acumen of a diplomat. This latter skill proved to be necessary for continued cooperation between the two groups and churches.

However, neither historical recollection fully recognized the theological tradition that Pelikan and his followers pulled upon. Pelikan was a strong adherent to the Luther- Trnovský - Hurban tradition. This tradition was a uniquely Slovak expression of confessional Lutheranism that was specific to the historical circumstances of Slovakia in the Kingdom of Hungary. It was this tradition that made their experience as immigrant Lutherans to America like no other. In America and with the Missouri Synod, Pelikan found a partner that had a similar theological stance. However, the historical foundation for the Missouri Synod was based on a German experience in the nineteenth century. Upon arrival in this new land, he with his fellow Slovak pastors found a theological commonality with the German-based Missouri Synod. This commonality overcame cultural differences. Even though they were not joined as one church body, they joined in ministry and fellowship. They were bound together solely on their understanding of the truths held in the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. Culture, in their estimation, was secondary and impotent as compared to the spiritual realities found in the Word of God. The Bible and the Gospel provided true unity, creating bonds that go far beyond culture. Their own confessional Slovak tradition enabled them to make this adjustment in their immigrant home.

Their adjustment to their new immigrant home was more or less unperceived. It is the failure of Pelikan and others to recognize that their Synod was becoming Americanized that led to their failure to relate properly to their home culture. In this sense, Pelikan, Sr.'s analysis, which noted that the two groups of Slovaks had grown apart culturally, is helpful. Pelikanism then becomes a failure to see the impact of culture on theology; or said another way, Pelikanism

failed because the Slovak Lutheran Church was unable or unwilling to revert to a nineteenth-century confessional Lutheran tradition, and the Slovak church was also unable to adapt to an American (or at least, Slovak-American) Lutheran sensibility. It failed on both accounts: it was unable to turn back the clock to a former era and norm, even if it was a golden era, and it was unable to transfer its new Americanized experience to its previous culture. Cooperation proved impossible, as neither goal was mutual. Their identities were fundamentally different, and perhaps neither the American-Slovaks nor the Slovaks were aware of the extent of the difference.

This difference between the Slovak Lutheran Church and the Slovak Lutheran Synod was also the difference between the Slovak Lutheran Synod and the Zion Synod. After Pelikan had returned from Slovakia, he was again defending the position of the Slovak Lutheran Synod and its relationship, or lack thereof, with the Zion Synod. In response to the question of why the Slovak Lutheran Synod could not join with other Lutherans, he made the consistent argument that he and his synod belonged to the tradition of Athanasius, Hus, Luther, and Hurban, representing a true expression of Lutheranism in teaching and practice.³³⁷ Rather, the other churches were full of false teachings such as rationalism, Tolstoyism, sectarianism, false morality, and humanism, and they were full of sinful unionism and indifferentism.³³⁸ Moreover, it was a shock to the Slovak Lutheran Synod that anyone else could legitimately represent Slovak Lutheranism from America back to Slovakia. The work that the Zion Synod did with its partner, the ULCA, was judged according to the perceived false teaching it brought. The Slovak Lutheran Synod had a concern that the Zion Synod was able to share this teaching with the

³³⁷ [Ján] Pelikán, “Hlásatelia falošnej trpezlivosti,” *Svedok* 15, no. 20 (October 15, 1921): 425.

³³⁸ [Ján] Pelikán, “Hlásatelia falošnej trpezlivosti,” 425–26.

Slovaks Lutheran Church.³³⁹ Both in Slovakia and in America, in teaching and practice, there was no peace.

The Pelikan Movement's failure suggests that as long as an immigrant remains in his adopted country, he cannot go home again. He is restricted by nostalgia, which binds him to an idealized past that does not exist in the contemporary culture. For Pelikan, this nostalgia was the theological conservative Hurban tradition as he experienced the tradition in the nineteenth century. He was also overly confident of his ability to transfer the new teachings and methods he had learned in America. The Slovaks in Slovakia were not as able to cast away the tradition and cultural norms that bound the people together, for the sake of innovations from abroad. In the end, Pelikan, his son, and the church that supported them had also moved on. At the time of the Pelikan Movement, they just were not aware that they had already done so.

³³⁹ J. V., "Veľmi ťažká úloha," *Svedok* 16, no. 9 (May 1, 1922): 189–92.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Because of the failure of the Pelikan Movement, the Slovak Lutheran Synod redoubled its efforts in America. It did not give up its Slovak identity immediately, but strove to carry on as a unique expression of the confessional Slovak Lutheran tradition. As time wore on, they resolved the tension between their immigrant heritage and their contemporary reality. To resolve this tension they began a process of accommodating their new culture and nation. Even if begrudgingly, these immigrants created an American church. Niebuhr remarks that accommodation is necessary, if not inevitable, for an immigrant church:

The choice between accommodation and extinction finally becomes a forced choice. Though churches may delay the moment of their surrender, few elect to perish with their mother tongue. With the adoption of English as the church language other changes inevitably set in ... the change of language is only one aspect of adjustment to the total culture with its democratic spirit, its industrialism, its patriotism. The process of accommodation as a whole gradually transforms the churches of the immigrants into American denominations with marked similarities and with remarkable dissimilarities from the parent churches of Europe.¹

At the time of the Pelikan Movement, the connection between the immigrant Slovak culture and the home country was strong. However, this trend would or could not be sustained. The assimilation of Slovaks in America, and thus their language and culture, occurred at a greater pace than most cultures from Central Europe.²

¹ Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1929), 212–13.

² J. M. Kirschbaum, "The Assimilation Process of American Slovaks," *Slovakia* 21, no. 44 (1971): 79–84.

Niebuhr adds that “after accommodation has set in, after the old language and the old ways have been irretrievably lost, after contacts with native churches have increased, the battle ground of competition changes. Ecclesiastical and doctrinal issues replace the cultural lines of division, and the loyalty of an English-speaking, second generation is fostered by appeal to different motives than were found effective among the immigrants themselves.”³ The two Slovak-American Lutheran churches made this choice. In terms of their identity, the Slovak Lutheran Synod (eventually the SELC) chose to rally around doctrine, aligning themselves ever more closely with the Missouri Synod. The leaders of the Zion Synod focused around ethnicity, accepting a broader definition of Lutheranism as well as maintaining their contacts with the culturally similar Slovak Lutheran Church. Under the guidance of the Missouri Synod, who eventually absorbed the Slovak Lutheran Synod as one of its non-geographic districts (SELC District), these Slovak Lutherans assimilated into American Lutheran culture.

Tale of Two Synods

Throughout the 1920s, many Slovak Lutherans continued to talk of a merger between the church bodies, namely, between the Slovak Lutherans in the Zion Synod and the Slovak Lutheran Synod. Repeatedly the Slovak Lutheran Synod rejected this merger. They continued to perceive significant differences in teaching and in practice.⁴ Personalities certainly played a role. The failure to find unity within Slovak Lutheranism was often leveled at Pelikan.⁵ Whether or not another orthodox, confessional Lutheran leader would have arisen and found a way to unity is purely hypothetical, but unlikely. The chorus of confessional sentiment in the Slovak Lutheran

³ Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, 229.

⁴ Jos.[ef] K.[olárik], “Ešte o tom spojení,” *Svedok* 19, no. 4 (February 15, 1925): 83.

Synod demonstrates that Pelikan was not alone in his sympathies. Moreover, since most pastors of the Slovak Lutheran Synod were educated in Missouri Synod institutions, many of them would have had a similar education and presumably predilections similar to Pelikan's. Although Pelikan was determined to express his understanding of the Lutheran faith under a specific theological and practical rubric, even if it meant jettisoning certain aspects of national unity and alienating potential friends in the faith, it would be saying too much to put the complete burden on him for the division of Slovak Lutheranism. The conflicts were more than personal. They were more than cultural. From the Slovak Lutheran Synod's perspective, they were primarily theological. For Pelikan and others, more important was that the Hurban⁶ tradition remained strong.

The determined resistance to unionism did not stop with Pelikan. The rejection of unionism, either in America or concerning unionistic activity in Slovakia,⁷ continued to be part of the discourse in the Slovak Lutheran Synod. This continued concern about the unionistic activities in Czechoslovakia and the ecumenical activities in Europe demonstrated a connection to the Slovak Lutheran Church after the Pelikan Movement. However, most of these comments

⁵ Jos.[ef] K.[olárik], "Ešte o tom spojení," 84.

⁶ Even in the 1920s, Hurban was being referenced in the pages of *Svedok* with significant regularity. For example, see "Kresťania sa majú strániť tých, ktorí činia rôznice a pohoršenie na odpor čistému učeniu," *Svedok* 19, no. 5 (March 1, 1925): 102.

⁷ The concern over unionistic activities in Slovakia continued into the twenties. For example, see "Vlny zhubného unionismu sa dvíhajú a zaplavujú cirkev ev. a. v. na Slovensku," *Svedok* 19, no. 5 (March 1, 1925): 105–109, "Už sa dohodli," *Svedok* 19, no. 5 (March 1, 1925): 109–112, "Komediantsstvo v úradnej ev. a. v. na Slovensku," *Svedok* 19, no. 9 (May 1, 1925): 201–204, "Či úradná cirkev ev. na Slovensku zamýšľa úniu?," *Svedok* 19, no. 12 (June 15, 1925): 272–73, and "Biskupi Janoška a Zoch vedú len ďalej cirkev ev. a. v. na Slovensku do mora sektárstva," *Svedok* 20, no. 11 (June 1, 1926): 246–49, J.[án] V.[ojtko], "Únia alebo neúnia," *Svedok* 20, no. 17 (September 1, 1926): 389–92, and "Sion kvíli prežalostne, Sion to mesto Boží...!" *Svedok* 21, no. 9 (May 1, 1927): 200–202. These unionistic activities were recognized across the world. See J.[án] V.[ojtko], " 'Church Peace Union,' alebo 'Cirkevná Únia Pokoja'," *Svedok* 19, no. 19 (October 1, 1925): 272–73 and [Ján] Pelikán, "Zradná práca strážcov luteránskeho Siona," *Svedok* 19, no. 20 (October 15, 1925): 466–69.

came from the older pastors, such as Pelikan and Vojtko, those who had fought long and hard for a confessional Lutheran Church in both America and Slovakia.⁸ The pages written in Slovak within *Svedok* remained focused on issues in the old country, but the pages of *The Watch Tower*, the English section of *Svedok*; provided virtually no mention of the events in Slovakia, the conflict with the Zion Synod, or the mission in Velká. Concerns over unionism, chauvinism, and liberalism were less in focus as well. The issues that sparked the Pelikan Movement were fading in the Slovak Lutheran Synod as the Slovak language (and presumably culture) also waned. These changes are signs of the assimilation of the Slovak Lutheran Synod into American culture.

By the 1930s and 1940s, the publications of the Slovak Lutheran Synod rarely mentioned the work in Slovakia. Rather, all mission activity was focused on mission plants within America and Canada as well as new mission work in Argentina. Eventually, their support of mission work would expand into Africa in such places as Nigeria and Ghana in support of the mission work of the Synodical Conference.⁹ Like many American churches, they focused on the much larger questions of world evangelism.

In one of the last attempts to find a way to unite the Slovak immigrant communities, *The Lutheran Beacon* produced an editorial by Jaroslav Vajda that suggested unofficially that the time might be right for a union of the two Slovak Synods, noting that the activity of ULCA weakened “the Lutheran stand on the Lord’s Supper.”¹⁰ Vajda’s concerns were a matter of theological identity. The first was the loss of Lutheran identity, which he felt would happen to

⁸ Pelikan continued concern for the false teaching in Slovakia is evident in the fewer and fewer articles he wrote in *Svedok*. For example, see J.[án] P.[elikán], “Zprávy z Československa,” *Svedok* 20, no. 10 (May 15, 1926): 226–27.

⁹ See Mission Board Reports from 1920–68, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 3, Folders 43–62, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

the Zion Synod if they went forward with their deeper immersion into the polity of the ULCA. As if echoing Niebuhr, Vajda went on to explain that “spokesmen from the Zion Synod [were] historically accurate when they predict[ed] that continual compromises in doctrine for the sake of union with other churches [would] eventually result in liberalism and the loss of the Word.”¹¹ He further warned that if they stayed in the ULCA and remained true to their confessional Lutheran doctrine, they would be “called obstructionists and anachronisms in an age of heedless, headlong unionism.”¹² Later, after a positive response from the editor of *The Zion*, Vajda added with a hint of expectancy and insight into the past conflicts that “excitement over the present proposals betray[ed] a long-buried desire for unity among Lutherans of Slovak ancestry, a desire frustrated in the former negotiations a quarter a century ago.”¹³ Here, Vajda appealed to cultural identity. Although the unity of Slovak Lutherans was desirable, it would not be pursued at all costs. Theological identity was still most important. Rather, “it is our synodical principle, as we have always believed it to be the synodical principle of the Zion Synod, to keep loyalty to the Word”¹⁴ Even 40 years after the Pelikan Movement, the confessional Lutheran priority of the Slovak Lutheran Synod dominated. Unity must be in doctrine and not based on national or cultural ties.

During the next decades, mergers and schisms continued. Merger talks continued between the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Missouri Synod. The Lutheran World Federation

¹⁰ [Jaroslav Vajda], “Hold Fast, Zion Synod!,” *The Lutheran Beacon* 17, no. 11 (1960): 170.

¹¹ [Jaroslav Vajda], “Hold Fast, Zion Synod!,” 171.

¹² [Jaroslav Vajda], “Hold Fast, Zion Synod!,” 171.

¹³ [Jaroslav Vajda], “Further Comments on Proposal to Zion Synod,” *The Lutheran Beacon* 18, no. 1 (1961): 10.

¹⁴ [Vajda], “Further Comments on Proposal to Zion Synod,” 11.

moved forward with its pan-Lutheran agenda. The aftertaste of the breakaway of the Wisconsin Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod from the Synodical Conference lingered. The Slovak Lutherans, heirs of the Slovak Lutheran Synod, joined in the concern about such unions. As one of their pastors noted, in reference to such a pan-Lutheran event held in England, that “as beautiful as this [union] may sound, therein lies the danger. Union without unity in Doctrine, as we mean Doctrine that is Scripturally true and pure, would be a tragedy for the Church, for it would soon destroy the very Church it contemplates to form.”¹⁵ This viewpoint is consistent with those held by the Slovak Lutheran Synod since its inception around 60 years earlier. The heirs of the Slovak Lutheran Synod had in their organizational DNA a desire to remain theologically pure and disenthralled from other churches that they saw as heterodox.

Even though the focus was at home in America, Slovakia was never completely forgotten. After the Pelikan Movement, hopes of a confessional Lutheran Church in Slovakia in the tradition of Hurban were dead. They were, however, still interested in events in Czechoslovakia, such as loosening the binds that tied the Slovaks under communist control.¹⁶ A survey of the *The Lutheran Beacon* shows that the editors would often include short news articles on the events in Slovakia during the 1960s. Likewise, Dr. John Daniel, then the president of the Synodical Conference, visited Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union in the summer of 1963, keeping up personal contacts with the region. He comments about their situation: “... we noted that the hearts of many people are spiritually disturbed and failing as they are almost overwhelmed by the storms of strife and conflict, by the fierce floods of violently opposed propaganda and

¹⁵ Stephen G. Mazak, Sr., “A Thorough Examination of the discussions and conclusions of Lutherans Reached at Cambridge,” *The Lutheran Beacon* 21, no. 4 (1964): 56.

¹⁶ “Door Opened for Assistance to Czechoslovakia,” *The Lutheran Beacon* 21, no. 6 (1964): 90.

opinions, by the threats and fearsome actualities of war and revolution in their own countries and abroad.”¹⁷ In voicing his sympathy, he adds, “we are concerned with the spiritual threat of this godless power which has in certain areas overcome, eliminated, subdued, and subverted the Christian churches in eastern Europe and Asia. In the face of this monstrous threat to the allegiances, faith and fate of men, all Christians must stand together.”¹⁸ The Slovak Lutheran Synod still had a love for its homeland and the people who suffered under communism. They just did not imagine being agents of confessional Lutheranism in Slovakia.

One of the legacies of the Pelikan Movement is the attempt to recover a confessional Lutheran identity in Slovakia. When the country was free from its Hapsburg and Hungarian past, the time felt ripe for such a change. Like so many efforts to reanimate history, the reality was that the country, the people, the nation, and the Lutherans had moved on. Once Slovak Lutherans in Slovakia had traveled through the era with magyarization, liberalism, and unionism, it was difficult to resurrect nineteenth-century confessionalism. America, which enables a community to create a new identity, unburdened by pesky reminders of history, provided a way for Pelikan and the Slovak Lutheran Synod to pursue this goal of recreating their understanding of confessional Lutheranism. However, American freedoms did little to help the Pelikan Movement as it attempted to recreate a confessional Lutheran church in European Slovakia.

In Slovak Lutheran circles, Slovakia is remembered for its early Christian history: “Slovakia became a center of Christianity for many centuries.”¹⁹ Pelikan, his son, and many

¹⁷ John Daniel, “Address and Report of President John Daniel, D.D. to Synodical Conference, Ann Arbor, Mich., at Concordia Lutheran College July 28, 1964,” *The Lutheran Beacon* 21, no. 10 (1964):147–48.

¹⁸ Daniel, “Address and Report of President John Daniel, D.D. to Synodical Conference, Ann Arbor, Mich., at Concordia Lutheran College July 28, 1964,” 148.

¹⁹ George D. Plvan, “Eleven Centuries of Christianity among the Slavs,” *The Lutheran Beacon* 20, no. 7

others tried to create the center of confessional Slovak Lutheranism in the mountains near Poprad. Confessional Lutheranism in Slovakia had moved on; although Hurban remained important, the church was pressed to consider other aspects of the rapidly changing cultural and political context in Europe. For the Pelikan Movement, the last little glimmer of confessional Lutheranism in Slovakia died when Somora ended his ministry. John Somora was still remembered as a pastor of the SELC until 1968.²⁰ At his passing, the last elements of his mission were finally assimilated into the Slovak Lutheran Church; an American immigrant culture assimilated into contemporary Slovak culture.

Back in America, one of the most vocal confessionalists of the Pelikan Movement championed the process of assimilation. Upon his return, Pelikan, Sr. continued his ministry at Emmanuel in Pittsburgh in 1933; he then returned to Chicago in 1936 to begin his ministry at Holy Trinity.²¹ He remained there until he retired from active ministry on June 16, 1963. The congregation was an independent congregation (not a member of the Slovak Lutheran Synod) and remained so even until Pelikan, Sr. retired. His son, Theodore, who also served alongside his father in ministry after returning from African missions, continued at Holy Trinity. Theodore, much like his father and his mother, deplored the independent status of the congregation.²² Ironically, from a man who helped lead a mission movement that was unwilling to integrate

(1963): 101.

²⁰ "Pastors and Churches of the S.E.L.C.," *The Lutheran Beacon* 25, no. 3 (1968): 44.

²¹ The Congregation of Holy Trinity, Chicago, *Dejiny* (Chicago: The Mally Press, 1943), 81–82.

²² For Theodore Pelikan's comments see, *The Guest-Host*, church newsletter, May, June, 1963, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 12, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis. For Anna Pelikan's comments, see *The Guest-Host*, church newsletter, November, 1962, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 12, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

within the Slovak Lutheran Church, his own congregation was never able to integrate into the Slovak Lutheran Synod.

Pelikan, Sr., at the end of his own active ministry reflected on the state of his congregation, and its identity.²³ He noted a number of key “facts.” First, he asserted that the move to English services saved the congregation: “without these serves Trinity would inevitably have become an insignificantly small and foreign little church whose end would have been only a matter of time.”²⁴ Secondly, he remarked that the Slovak immigrants stopped coming, and the church could no longer depend on remaining an immigrant church; moreover, as the second generation became involved and because they did not always marry another Slovak American, the congregation would necessarily have to change. Rather than focus on its Slovak identity, Pelikan quotes himself from 1943, “it is therefore very apparent that if our congregation is to assure its future, it must limit its action to the community in which it is situated and upon this community it must try to make it greatest impact.”²⁵ He noted in 1963 that this was already happening as their second and third generations were transferring their memberships away from Trinity to a church close to them. He concluded that “we must therefore by friendly word and deed prove to all in our community that we are concerned about their spiritual welfare even though they are not of Slovak descent.”²⁶ He argued for the assimilation of his immigrant church into American culture,

²³ The Guest-Host, church newsletter, November, December, 1962, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 12, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁴ The Guest-Host, church newsletter, November, December, 1962, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 12, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁵ The Guest-Host, church newsletter, November, December, 1962, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 12, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

²⁶ The Guest-Host, church newsletter, November, December, 1962, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 12, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

while maintaining what Niebuhr called ecclesiastical and doctrinal issues as the binding agent for the church.

Toward the end of his ministry, he realized that the future of their witness was in America to fellow Americans. If they were to survive, no longer could the Slovak culture be the glue holding them together. They needed to find a ministry to the people that surrounded them. In a sense, his journey and the Pelikan family's journey was the Slovak Synod's journey and, perhaps, the journey of most immigrant peoples in America. Eventually, as the process of immigration deepens, it is necessary for a community to assimilate, as Niebuhr suggests or fall into oblivion. The Slovak Lutheran immigrant, Pelikan, Sr., who fiercely defended both his nation and his theology, assimilated into American Lutheranism, ever remaining strongly loyal to his confessional roots.

Štúr pondered changing his confession after the failure of the Prague Congress of 1848. "As a former vicar of [the] Lutheran faith, Stur supported Orthodoxy as the church of the future imploring the 'mother of Slavs' to return to the tribes placed under Catholic domination: Czechs, Slovaks, Poles and Croats. Once the hated foreign rule ended, so Stur believed, the Orthodox Church was welcomed by its true believers."²⁷ He viewed the religious divisions in Western Europe as part of the problem and the subjection of the Slovaks and Slavs in general. "The Slavic alternative to Western dualism consisted of the monistic system of emporia and Church."²⁸ By uniting as one state with one religion, his goal of panslavism could be realized. In this effort and

²⁷ Josette A. Baer, "National Emancipation, not the Making of Slovakia: Ludovit Stur's Conception of the Slovak Nation," *Centre for Post-Communist Studies at St. Francis Xavier University Occasional Paper no. 2* (2003): 38–39, <http://www.stfx.ca/pinstitutes/cpcs/studies-in-post-communism/Baer2003.pdf> [accessed May 22, 2008].

²⁸ Baer, "National Emancipation, not the Making of Slovakia: Ludovit Stur's Conception of the Slovak Nation."

in concurrence with Herder, he also suggested as a unifying force using Russian as the common language. In essence, his goal of a Slavic nation—his love of his nation and culture—overcame his Lutheran confession.

Pelikan, Jr. resolved the question of Slovak Lutheran identity by becoming Orthodox. From his perspective, the world had changed and he was the one that remained the same: "When the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod became Baptist, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America became Methodist, I became Orthodox."²⁹ Pelikan, Jr., as the Lutheran churches assimilated, adopting considerable cultural and theological cues from American culture, felt that to remain confessional would mean having to change his confession. He too, like his fathers, stood firm in his beliefs so that he would not move with the culture, but remain true to his understanding of historical Christianity. His sense of remaining a confessional Christian in light of the cultural changes of the American Lutheran churches overcame his allegiance to his confessional Lutheran heritage.

It has been said that a person can never go home again. In recounting the ancient tale of Odysseus, Czech author Milan Kundera, the famous Czech immigrant author, who lived most of his adult years in exile, makes that very point when he said: "During the twenty years of Odysseus' absence, the people of Ithaca retained many recollections of him but never felt nostalgia for him. Whereas Odysseus did suffer nostalgia, and remembered almost nothing."³⁰ The risk of any immigrant group is to become nostalgic without remembering really anything.

²⁹ Uwe Siemon-Netto, "Eastern Rite Lures Western Seekers," United Press International, <http://www.orthodox-church.info/eureka/asp/becomingorthodox.asp> (accessed October 21, 2008).

³⁰ Milan Kundera, *Ignorance* (New York, HarperCollins, 2000), 33.

Nostalgia creates an idealized world that never existed and runs counter to the discipline of remembering and of history.

Using *Odysseus*, Kundera tells the story of the immigrant who returns home. Everyone at home thinks he is interested in the events he missed while away for 20 years. No one asked him about what he experienced, what he learned, and what he saw. “For twenty years he had thought about nothing but his return. But once he was back, he was amazed to realize that his life, the very essence of his life, its center, its treasure, was outside Ithaca in the twenty years of his wanderings. And this treasure he had lost, and could retrieve only by telling about it.”³¹ And so he left and ended up in another king’s court. Because there they asked him to tell his story and at home no one ever did.

The immigrant experience as retold by Kundera, who emigrated from Czechoslovakia to France in the 1970s, relates the axiom that one cannot go home again. By trying to go home, the immigrant realizes that his center is now no longer just in the land in which he was born. His center has moved. Because in his home country, no one says, “tell us!” The Pelikan Movement is an immigrant story. They returned after 20 years away from their ancestral home. They desired to create an idealized past of Slovak confessionalism in their home culture and nation. They wanted to tell the story of their great success in America as a free church. The Slovaks in Slovakia did not want to hear their stories. Because they could not tell their story in their homeland to their home culture, the immigrants returned to another “court”—America, where their story proved more vital than did their ministry. From that point on, slowly the leaders understood that the future of an immigrant congregation or a church was not in its ethnic

³¹ Kundera, *Ignorance*, 34.

identity. They can only tell their story as confessional Lutherans at court. The Slovak Lutheran immigrant learned to hold court “one mile in each direction”³² from their local congregation.

³² The Guest-Host, church newsletter, November, December, 1962, SELC District Archives, Supplemental Box 8, Folder 12, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

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