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Women Pastors' Contribution to Peacebuilding in Protestant Churches in
Vojvodina

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Abbreviations: EWI-Ecumenical Women’s Initiative, Omiš, Croatia; UMCSM - United Methodist Church For Serbia – Macedonia; RCC-The Reformed Christian Church; SEC(A.C.) - The Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia; WSR-NGO *”Women’s studies and research”*

Preface

Feminist theology, a discipline closely related to Gender Studies, established its place as a modern scientific interdiscipline in the second half of the 20th century. Women clergy have been a subject within feminist theology from the beginning. Nowadays, it is being studied and lectured at numerous universities in the world. Many research projects are taking place, many international scientific meetings are being organized and many associations are founded. Books on this subject are published and are available in our region translated into BCMS languages (Mernissi, 2005; Schussler Fiorenza, 2011; Wandud, 2014, to mention only a few authors). But, during the second half of the 20th century, this was not the case in Serbia at schools of theology or at other scientific institutes. The only place in the academic community in Serbia, where women clergy issues are discussed is the Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Novi Sad. At the beginning of the 21st century (2003/04 school year), the Centre was established in Novi Sad since NGO "Women's studies and research" and other civil initiatives insisted and promoted it. At the Centre, master and doctoral studies' curriculae include an optional subject "Women and Religion" (taught by Zorica Kuburić). Numerous doctoral dissertations dealing with women in different religions have been defended (Zilka Spahić Šiljak, 2007; Nina Bosankić, 2013; Slobodan Vasić, 2016).

Within the academic community in the Yugoslavian region, the second place where religious studies are introduced in 2010 is the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Sarajevo (headed by Zilka Spahić Šiljak). The master studies include lectures on Feminist Theology. Outside the academic community in the Yugoslavian region, the situation is a bit more optimistic, because the first studies in this scientific discipline date back to the last decade of the previous century. Namely, The Centre for Gender Studies in Zagreb (established in 1997) also included studies of feminist theology in its curriculum (see data in the journal "*Treća*", published in the Centre). At the same time, the NGO "Women's studies and research" was founded in Novi Sad. Since its foundation, that is, in the period of 20 years, the organisation has included this topic in its two-year long study programme. During the two decades of this alternative higher education programme in Zagreb and Novi Sad, significant books and texts have been published. A new generation of women researchers matured and they continued to examine various questions related to women clergy. They also expand the field of research with correlations between women clergy and ecology, peace studies and other disciplines important for building

peace and quality coexistence in the world as well as in the local community. Hereby, I will mention two significant books published in Novi Sad. In the book published at the beginning of the 21st century, *The Feminist Theology* (edited by Svenka Savić, 2002), a few texts are dedicated to women pastors where they talk about themselves (Ana Palik Kunčak from the United Methodist Church for Serbia – Macedonia and Reti Katalin from the Reformed Christian Church). In the book *Gender perspective within the interreligious dialogue in the 21st century* (edited by Svenka Savić and sister Rebeka Jadranka Anić, 2009), published nearly a decade later, a woman pastor Ana Palik Kunčak writes about the sisterhood work in the UMCSM. The text also includes data about women pastors in other religions such as women rabbis in the Jewish religion (about which Jelena Kalderon writes).

The text *Women pastors' contribution to peacebuilding in Protestant churches in Vojvodina* written by Svenka Savić continues the practice of treating opening topics about women theology in the WSR in 2017. It widens the topic about women pastors, this time in the context of the 500-year celebration of the Reformation and 60 years of activities of women clergy in Vojvodina. The author explains conditions under which the practice of women clergy began in Vojvodina. Gender equality was not understood in churches as it was presented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War (1948). The reasons were of political and historical nature. Namely, in Vojvodina, which was previously a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Reformation had already had significant results, above all in three churches: The Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia SEC(A.C.); The Reformed Christian Church, and the United Methodist Church for Serbia – Macedonia. When Yugoslavia was formed (1918), in Vojvodina, these Protestant (and other) churches continued their work until the end of the Second World War. Their members were mostly of Hungarian, Slovak and German nationality. After WW II, the Germans (as losers of the war), together with their pastors and preachers, were banished from Vojvodina (or they died in camps). Churches had no preachers, and also had fewer male and female believers who attended religious services in their mother tongues (Hungarian, Slovak, and German). However, a significant number of believers who remained had to be saved, gathered and expanded. In the absence of sufficient number of ordained male pastors, the only way for believers to feel gathered around a leader was to ordain women, deacons and lay woman preachers from these communities, which was being enabled inside the organization of these churches. In Vojvodina the women who were gathered in

religious communities and who performed religious services with honour did not think they jeopardized life in Vojvodina, stayed, they did not leave even though they came from German or Hungarian national communities – they wanted to stay here. An example was Paula Mojzes from UMCSM who gathered, cherished and further spread the Methodist religious interpretation of the faith. This shows that women pastors have been continuously active in their religious communities for 60 years. They have been gathering adult believers, teaching children and the young the fundamentals of their faith, and developing peacebuilding activities with others.

NGO WSR in Novi Sad (1997), within its optional course “Feminist Theology”, educates about the affirmation of women in various religions. The course was organized in cooperation with the European women's college, Zurich, Switzerland. Then, the course continued its cooperation with women lecturers from other countries, expanding the knowledge about women in various religions in different ways: interpretation of the biblical texts about women (first in the New Testament); presentation of women in religious journals; gender perspective in schoolbooks for religious education in Serbia (Savić, 2017); women’s role in different churches in processes of reconciliation and peacebuilding. Various public lectures and international conferences were dedicated to these topics. It is of great importance that networking and successful cooperation with other civil organizations such as the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization occurred at these events. A long-lasting cooperation in the region with a female Islamic theologian, Zilka Spahić Šiljak, from Sarajevo and a Catholic female theologian, Sister Rebeka Jadranka Anić, from Split also began there. A constant exchange of literature among these centres is especially useful when it comes to peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Two significant books written by authors from Sarajevo are worth mentioning. A book *Shining Humanity: Life Stories of Women Peace Builders in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2013) by Zilka Spahić Šiljak deals with women’s peacebuilding as necessary activities after the war conflicts at the end of the 1990s in the Yugoslavian region. The book *Women Peacemakers* by Alen Kristić (2012) encompasses data about women who contributed to peace in different socio-political situations worldwide and received the Nobel Prize for peace in the period between 1905 and 2015. Both books prove that there is a special need to write about women as peace builders because that is who they have always been, and because their peacebuilding was taken for granted and there was no public appreciation for it. Written in the same manner as the above-

mentioned books, *Women pastors' contribution to peacebuilding in Protestant churches in Vojvodina*, by Svenka Savić (2017), provides data about the continuous presence of women pastors in the religious life of multireligious Vojvodina and also data about their struggle to maintain peace. The book sheds light on the long-lasting women pastors' contribution to the process of peacebuilding in everyday life which represents social tolerance, and especially ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. The book is created to present the existing 60 years long tradition of women clergy in various Protestant churches in Vojvodina, which is not a well-known fact to the wider Yugoslavian public, especially in the academic community where there are no documents, records or other materials on this topic. The author's detailed research shows that information about women pastors is not listed in the existing encyclopaedias (*Srpska enciklopedija*, 2011 (The Serbian encyclopaedia); *Enciklopedija Vojvodine*, 2013 (The encyclopaedia of Vojvodina)), nor in lexicons such as *Srpski Who is Who: 2011-2013* (Serbian Who is Who: 2011-2013 (Gajić, 2013)). Sporadically, materials can be found in some churches (e.g. an issue of the journal "Glas jevandjelja", 2006/4, published by UMCSM in Serbian, is dedicated to the women of this church). There is also a book *SEC(A.C.) in Serbia* (2016) by Ana Petrović which contains information about women pastors in this church (the book is published in Serbian and Slovak). There are also texts about or written by women pastors available in Serbian, and also in other languages (details can be found in the reference list at the end of the paper).

Women pastors have the spiritual power and the necessary high education in theology to lead their religious congregation. They also speak languages of the national communities in Vojvodina as well as foreign languages. This enables them to communicate both with the world and their local community. Women pastors have many significant religious roles. The experience they gain as pastors spreading peace and cooperative dialogue should help better understanding of ecumenical and interreligious cooperation among the public; it should also change the awareness especially about the significance of ecumenical dialogue and diminish prejudices towards the gender roles in spreading spirituality.

Abstract

In the year celebrating the 500th year of the Reformation, it is important to present research on the increased visibility of women in Protestant religious communities in Vojvodina. It is well known that women have always been the most religious ones, and that today women are more active in all (not only) Christian communities. In some Protestant communities throughout the world many are not only regular pastors but are in the highest offices such as bishops and heads of their denominations.. The aim of this paper is to show to what extent the ordination of women pastors in the three Protestant churches in Vojvodina contributes to peacebuilding and what practical solutions may be recommended based on their experience acquired during their pastoral duties in 2017. I have obtained empirical data from published literature and from semi-structured interviews with ten women pastors from three Protestant communities in Vojvodina located in different towns. The results show that by the end of WWII, thanks to various political and historical circumstances, a significant number of women became pastors in three Protestant churches in various towns in Vojvodina. Today, in some parishes the third generation of women pastors perform pastoral duties. The most significant result is that women pastors build everyday peace, the fundamental mission of their Christian religion, and they pass it on to younger generations. I have concluded that our public knows little about the impact these women pastors (who perform their duties in their mother tongues (Hungarian, Slovak) and/or in the majority language) have on the following issues: vision of peacebuilding, intercultural values, ecumenical dialogue, interreligious intertwining and affirmation of living together. The suggestion for immediate practice is to create various activities that will make the women pastors' work and contribution more visible in public life. Women pastors should be more visible in texts written by religious dignitaries, in encyclopaedia entries or in tourist texts that are intended for better understanding of the religious situation in Vojvodina as well as in schoolbooks for theological and religious education, and in schoolbooks about cultural relations.

Key words: Feminist theology, the Reformation, Protestantism, women pastors, gender, Vojvodina, everyday peace, interculturalism, interreligious dialogue

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Geographically, Vojvodina is located in the northern part of today's Republic of Serbia. Politically, during the 20th century, it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918 when the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was established. Later on, in 1928, it was part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and then from 1945 it belonged to the Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia, and to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992, while from 2006 up to now it is within the Republic of Serbia. Considering the population, the religious, national and linguistic situation has changed, but it stayed multinational, multilingual and multiconfessional.

Within the Austro-Hungarian Empire (until 1918), the population in Vojvodina had various nationalities and confessions. At the beginning of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, there were three major national communities: Serbs, Hungarians and Germans. Regarding the population's confessions, there were Christians (Orthodox, Roman-Catholics and Protestants). Three major Protestant communities (according to the terminology from the Law on churches and religious communities in Serbia, 2006) were The Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia (A.C.), The Reformed Christian Church and the United Methodist Church for Serbia – Macedonia.

After WW II (1944-1945) in Yugoslavia the situation had changed drastically as far as the population structure is concerned because of certain government measures: the German community almost disappeared because of the drastic measures towards the Germans as the ones who lost the war (some were banished, some were held in concentration camps, some were killed etc.); the Hungarian community has been gradually shrinking until now (according to the census); while the Serbian community has been increasing (the first and second colonization – people from other parts of Yugoslavia inhabited the abandoned homes in Vojvodina). It is important to emphasize the relationship between the government and churches in Yugoslavia. Not only that the churches were separated from the state, but the process of building a new social system (socialism) meant an atheistic framework (formally religion was each person's private affair, but the state carried out an active program of atheization). After WW II, in Vojvodina Protestant religious communities remained, but religious life was difficult because of the lack of finances needed for work and religious services, maintenance of churches and education and support of pastors. A few Protestant communities continued their mission. After the war in three

communities the women were allowed to assist in tworship but the ordination of women pastors had to wait until the second half of the 1950s. They were active in the support, maintainance, renewal and improvement of the life of the church community.

These historical facts are important when we speak about the practice of introducing women into clergy in three Protestant religious communities in Vojvodina. Today, we do not know for sure how many different active Protestant churches and communities exist in Vojvodina. After the last census, there are no reliable data about the number of male and female believers in those Protestant churches and communities that are registered according to the existing Law on churches and religious communities (Official Gazette, RS, no. 36/2006). This Law regulates traditional churches and communities (Article 10): “Traditional churches and religious communities as religious organizations with the centuries-long historical continuity, whose legal subjectivity was acquired through special laws”. Among those churches are (Article 13): “The Slovak Evangelical Church (A.C.), Reformed Christian Church, Evangelical Christian Church (A.C.). Their continuity with the legal subjectivity is acknowledged according to the Law on Evangelical-Christian churches and on Reformed Christian Church in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (“Official journal of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia”, no. 95/1930)”.¹

The basic theme of this paper is peace and how women pastors contribute to peace building within their parishes (and outside of them) in everyday life. It is necessary to explain the term peace which is not only the absence of war, but the fundamental teaching of the Christian religion. If we look up the examples of this term in *The Great Bible Concordance* (Vojnović, 1991, Vol. I, 665-666), we can see that the term is the basic Christian greeting by which Jesus’ disciples recognized their teacher (Peace be with you!). All the Protestant churches rely on the text from the New Testament, and they share peacebuilding which generates its fundament in two of Jesus’ basic messages: Love God and your neighbour.

Exactly 500 years ago, the Reformation expanded across the world, because it insisted on returning to the basic Christian teachings and principles, including peace. Reforms of the

¹In the text below I use names of the churches as they are listed in the Law according to the systematisation in that document. In the Law, the EMC is not characterised as traditional, although it has been present in Vojvodina since the 19th century (specifically 1898). Because of the women clergy tradition in this church, I write about it as one of three equally legal churches. I omit the never ending discussion about women clergy in non-Protestant churches. See Marija Virag’s text listed in references.

Christian life, above all in practice – both of the pastors and the believers – are parts of the movement.

2.0. THE AIM OF THE PAPER

Peace is the absence of war, but it is much more than that. Peace represents a continuous interreligious, intercultural and international cooperation in everyday life, because there is no peace without cooperation with other religious communities in multinational and multilingual places where women pastors serve God.

The aim of this paper is to show in what measure the ordination of women pastors in three Protestant churches in Vojvodina contributes to peacebuilding in everyday life and which practical conclusions may be recommended based on their experience gained performing pastoral duties.

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An interview is one of the basic approaches for collecting materials in the feminist approach, which enables a woman to be heard. This implies that facts stated by women according to their experience are equally important material for making a conclusion about phenomena as are the facts found in various documents and written memories of others. In 2017, from January till July, I spoke with 14 women pastors about their experiences gained during their pastoral duties in three Protestant churches in Vojvodina: SEC (A.C.) (3), RCC (4); UMCSM (5). The conversations were audio taped (5 hours), transcribed (100 pages) and authorised by women pastors. This method implies that women have a constant control over the material meant to be publicly displayed (we usually say that a woman is the subject, and not the object of the text). The woman interviewer and the woman pastor have an opportunity to meet several times and exchange opinions until they reach the last version of the text that is acceptable for the woman pastor. In this method the truth is what women say since our starting point is their experience². I gathered minimum information which I estimated that would be useful for the interview. That minimum is collected from various written sources or during the conversations with authorities from the above mentioned religious communities (e.g. question related to religious education in primary schools). Since one of the important components of this paper is to show the continuity of women

²Detailed research methodology given in the book *Women Pastors' Contribution to Peacebuilding in Protestant Churches in Vojvodina*, Savić (2016).

clergy in Vojvodina, I included data about those women pioneer pastors in the second half of the 20th century. Some of them are deceased or they have moved from Vojvodina where they had performed their pastoral duties. I give detailed data about those women pastors who perform their duties in Vojvodina in 2017. I also give data about those women pastors who have left Vojvodina or of those who do not perform their duties anymore because that information is necessary to fully understand the continuity of women clergy. Unfortunately, basic information for some of them is still missing. Because there are more women pastors in Vojvodina than I presented in this paper, collecting this information will be a subject for further research.

3.1. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THREE PROTESTANT CHURCHES AND BASIC DATA ABOUT THE WOMEN PASTORS

3.1.1. The Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia SEC (A.C.)

In *A Map of religious communities in Novi Sad*, designed for tourists, Ankica Dragin (2003), writes: “The 1st written records on the believers of the Slovak Lutheran Church date back to 1725. They were Slovak from the northern part of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. In the beginning of the 18th century there were round 4,000 - 5,000 of them in the region. In 1928 their number rose to 80,000 and today there are 65,000 of them. Most of them live in Bački Petrovac, Stara Pazova, Kovačica, Padina and Kisač. There is one bishopric in Vojvodina, the seat of which is in Novi Sad, with 35 parishes and 27 pastors serving in 27 churches”. The author does not state that there are 4 women pastors among the total number of pastors in these parishes.

In Ana Petrović’s book *SEC (A. C.) in Serbia* (2016) intended for the wider but also for the religious public (in Serbian and Slovak), the data are somewhat different considering the number of places where parishes were established in Vojvodina (total 43). In Bačka: Bačka Palanka, Bački Petrovac, Bajša, Begeč, Gložan, Kisač, Kovačica, Kulpin, Lalić, Novi Sad, Odžaci, Padina, Pivnice, Savino Selo, Selenča, Silbaš, Stara Pazova, Titel, Čelarevo; in Banat: Aradac, Belo Blato, Vojlovica, Vršac, Zrenjanin, Janošik, Ostojićevo, Padina, Hajdučica; in Srem: Ašanja, Beograd-Zemun, Bijeljina, Bingula, Boljevci, Višnjićevo, Dobanovci, Erdevik, Ljuba, Lug, Slankamenački Vinogradi, Sremska Mitrovica, Šid. Data show that there are 23 pastors (their biograms--data about their personal and professional life--photographs and a description of those

places where they perform their duties), 5 of which are female³: Marta Dolinska, Viera Batoriova, Ana Petrović, Jasmina Kotasova Medvedova*, Maria Popić*, Olina Kolarova*⁴. Having in mind that the number of places where religious services are performed is bigger than the number of pastors, women pastors perform their duties in more than one place on average.

SEC (A.C.) is one of the Protestant reformation churches that originates from Martin Luther's teaching. It differs from the Catholic doctrine in the following (Miz, 2001, 260):

1. Scripture is the sole source of proper belief;
2. Human position after the fall (sin) and the belief that only faith, and not good deeds, bring salvation;
3. Church is an unseen community of saints (no hierarchy);
4. Sacraments (baptism and eucharist);
5. Relation between the Church on earth and in heaven;
6. Ethics;
7. Religious Service (rejection of statues, but not the crucifix), simple clothing, singing and instrument playing, introducing new prayers, songs and hymns besides the old ones.

Ana Petrović (2016, 83) writes that this church in Serbia spreads the Gospel of Jesus Christ, belief in the Holy Trinity; serves its members in religious service and liturgies, uses the words of God, sacraments, religious education and charitable work; leads its members towards mutual respect, support, tolerance and moral Christian and civil life. As far as the organization is concerned, a communal unit is the parish which is equally headed by pastors or laymen who are chosen by the members of the church (Miz 2001, 269). This is a significant novelty in the course of democratization of religious life.

These three Protestant churches have in common the fact that believers and pastors come from the minority communities, and only a small number are from the majority (national and linguistic) community. Another common feature is the continuity of women pastoral duties. Today, we talk about three generations of women pastors: first senior (mostly retired, but still

³Roman Miz (2001, 269), gives data for the period before the republics of SFRY separated. He writes that SEC (A.C.) in the FR of Yugoslavia had 26 parishes, 12 churches and 50,000 believers in Vojvodina (Bačka, Banat and Srem). He did not mention women pastors in this Church.

⁴Women pastors who do not live in Vojvodina any more, but used to perform their pastoral duties during some period of their carriers in Vojvodina, are marked with a star. They were not interviewed.

active), then, the generation of highly educated women pastors who mostly graduated from the faculties of theology in the countries of the former Soviet bloc, and third, the generation which includes women pastors who are highly educated in their home lands and in other EU countries. The third feature in common is that women pastors write about their own work as well as about the contribution that they and others give. That is the way they accomplish the continuity in theological practice (Table 1).

3.1.1.1. Biographical data about women pastors of the SEC (A.C.)

Viera Batoriova (Viera Bathoryova: March 5th1953, Kálnica, Slovakia).

She was born in Kálnica, Slovakia, in the family of Samuel Jelinek and Ana, born Masarova. She finished primary school in Kálnica and Beckov and high school in Nové Mesto nad Váhom (1971). She graduated from the Evangelical Faculty of Theology in Bratislava (1976). She was ordained on September 26th, 1976 in Bratislava. 1976-1992 Personal chaplain of Ištvan Batori, a pastor in Subotica. From 1992 she is a woman pastor in the parish of Lalić. From 1993 till 2005 she was a notekeeper of the Synod. She has been a coordinator of the Women's Altar Circle within SEC (A.C.) in Serbia since 1982. (Ana Petrović, 2016, 69-70).

Marta Dolinski, (Marta Dolinska, April 27th1953, Subotica). She was born in the family of Ištvan Batori and Etel, born Verbasi. She finished primary school as well as Grammar school in Subotica, (1971). She graduated from the Evangelical Faculty of Theology in Bratislava (1978). She was ordained on April 2nd1978 in Subotica. From 1978 she is a woman pastor in the parish of Bajša. (Ana Petrović, 2016, 72).

Ana Petrović (Anna Petrović, August 12th 1974, Zemun). She was born in the family of Palj Petrak and Verona, born Havran. She finished primary school in Boljevci and vocational technical school "Petar Drapšin" in Belgrade (1993). She graduated from the Evangelical Faculty of Theology at the Comenius University in Bratislava (1998). During her studies she also finished a course at the Thiel College, Greenville, Pennsylvania, USA. She was ordained on August 9th1998 in Boljevci. From 1998 till 2001 she was a chaplain of the parish in Janošik. During the period between 2001 and 2012 she was a woman pastor in the parish of Kovačica II. She is a

member of the Board of the Bible society of Serbia. Since 2013 she has been a woman pastor in the parish of Belgrade. (Ana Petrović, 2016, 79).

Olina Kolarova* (Olina Kollarova, July 23rd1976, Zrenjanin). She was born in the family of Adam Mesiar and Alžbet, born Liska. She finished primary school in Aradac. She graduated from grammar school in Zrenjanin (1995). In 2000 she graduated from the Evangelical Faculty of Theology at the Comenius University in Bratislava. She was ordained on July 30th 2000 in Aradac. She has been a woman pastor in the parish of Šid since 2000. In 2017 she moved from Vojvodina (Ana Petrović, 2016, 75).

Jasminka Kotasova Medved'ova* (Jasmina Kotasova-Medved'ova, May 17th 1979, Novi Sad). She was born in the family of Samuel Kotasa from Ljubuški. She finished primary and grammar school “Jan Kolar” in Bački Petrovac (1997). She graduated from the Evangelical Faculty of Theology at the Comenius University in Bratislava (2003). She taught religious education in “Jan Čajak” primary school and in “Jan Kolar” grammar school in Bački Petrovac. She was ordained on April 22nd 2007 in Bački Petrovac. Chaplain of the Bačka Seniorate (2007-2009). A woman pastor in the parish of Bačka Palanka (2009-2012). Since 2013, she has been a woman pastor in the parish of Silbaš. (Ana Petrović, 2016, 76).

Maria Popić* (April 20th 1977, Subotica). She was born in Subotica, and both her parents are pastors (Ištvan Batori and Viera Batori). She finished primary school in Subotica, and Evangelical grammar school in Bratislava. She graduated from the Evangelical Faculty of Theology in Bratislava (2002). She was ordained the same year in Lalić and in December she became a pastor in SEC(A.C.) in the parish of Belo Blato (near Zrenjanin). In 2003, she married Nebojša Popić and in 2004 her daughter Miriam was born. She moved with her family from the small and poor parish of Belo Blato to Slovakia (2011), where she became pastor-consenior in Nesvady.

The primary conclusion is that the women pastors of this church are highly educated, mostly on the Faculty of Theology in Slovakia, and that they have already accomplished a continuity of elite (they are the second generation of highly educated pastors). It is interesting to mention the migration from Vojvodina to Slovakia from the beginning of the process until today (Slovakia is already a member of the EU while Serbia is still on the way to become a member).

3.1.2. The Reformed Christian Church⁵ RCC

Fifteen years ago Ankica Dragin (2003)⁶ wrote that the preachers of the RCC and the first believers of this church settled in Vojvodina around 1750. “They were Hungarians from the Erdely region expelled from their homes after the counter-reformation. There are no reliable data on the number of believers at the time of their arrival to Vojvodina, but data from the end of 1919 indicate that there were 60,000 of them mostly Hungarians and Germans. Data from 1998 indicate that there were 17,600 of them at the time. Most of them lived in Stara Moravica, Pačir, Vojlovica, Feketić and Rumenka”. Today there are less than 16,000 believers (most of them emigrated). Among the total number of 13 pastors, there are only 4 active women pastors (and a significant number of deacons): Andrea Botoš in Rumenka, Marija Besedeš in Debeljača, Eržebet Čanji in Pačir and Sombor, Tilda Slifka in Debeljača and Maradik, Ilona Morton in Novi Itebej. In the meantime, some of the women pastors who performed their duties in different places in Vojvodina, moved away (Šuranji-Reti Katalin moved to Hungary).

According to theologian Roman Miz (2001, 269) “The Reformed tradition, according to Calvin, is basically the same as the Lutheran religion, but there are some differences“. One of the main differences is referred to “the unconditional predetermination, to the sacraments and to the Eucharist”. Calvin examines the predetermination and thinks that personal freedom and merits are unimportant – “man is just a tool of God’s will“. The central part in a religious service in reformed churches is the pastors’ sermon. As far as the interior of the church is concerned, it is without icons and humbly designed, there is not even the sign of Christ’s crucifixion, “because it is a sign and symbol of suffering“(Miz, 2001, 275). “We call our religion reformed because God returned it to its real form, the form Jesus Christ and his Apostles had given it.” Two basic rules of this church, as well as for all other Christians: “Love your God with all your heart, your soul and your mind. That is the first and the most important commandment. The second, similar to the first is: Love your neighbour as you love yourself.” (Mali katehizis, 1995, 3).

The tradition of women pastors who serve in Hungarian in this church is relatively long because the Reformation church in Hungary allowed women to be ordained three decades ago (1985).

⁵Reformed means reshaped (Mali katehizis: Priprema za svetu večeru, 1995).

⁶At first it was the author’s graduate thesis in the WSI and it included data about 24 different churches and religious communities in Novi Sad.

That is closely connected with the permission for women to enroll at the faculty of theology in that country. Those women who graduate receive two diplomas: the first one after they finish the academy and the second after a year of internship, when they take a final exam after 5 years of studying (Canon law, the Old and New Testament, Ethics, Dogmatics, Homiletics). Having the first diploma enables one to become an assistant pastor, and the ones that acquire the second diploma are enabled to perform pastoral duties fully and independently. In the first case the bishop names the assistant pastor for a year, in the second case the parish chooses a pastor until he or she retires.

The first generation of ordained women pastors that graduated from various faculties of theology in the world, got their positions as religious education teachers, assistant pastors or women pastors in Vojvodina among other places. They perform all the pastoral duties. At the time when it was decided that women could be pastors, Yugoslavia, as a country still existed. A few women pastors of this church were and still are active in Slavonia. They were born and attended school within the Reformation Church in Vojvodina but they are not included in this paper because the paper contains data about women pastors who are in Serbia in 2017 and they are marked in the tables with *. Data about women pastors in RCC are given in Table 2.

According to her personal opinion, Katalin Reti as a young woman pastor in RCC, in her text *The Role of Women in the Reformed Church* (2002, 148-150), lists four basic roles that a woman pastor has: a role in the family (a good wife and a good mother), because a woman's service begins in our vicinity, in our family; diaconal work (because "women are by their nature much more sensitive to other people's sufferings"); work with children and young (including religious education); work with women and participation in church management and organization, which means helping in missions outside of European countries.

The same author testifies that at the end of the 20th century "in Vojvodina within the Reformed Church there are 4 women pastors that graduated from the Faculty of Theology and one female pastor who did not finish her education, as well as four pastors that graduated and two that did not" (Reti, 2002, 150). We can observe that it is important for women to obtain higher education in order to be ordained pastors. Pastors can get the bishop's blessing even though they have not graduated. A woman pastor without a degree will never get the blessing to perform a pastoral duty. Furthermore the author (2002, 150), testifies from her own experience about the situation at

the faculty with male colleagues: “At the faculty I had some male colleagues who tried to convince me that being a woman pastor is not in the spirit of the Bible, because even apostle Paul recommended women to stay silent in church”. A stereotype that there is proof in the Bible that women should not be pastors became true even in the educational system of all Christian churches. It took a long time to break this stereotype thanks to continuous efforts made by feminist oriented women theologians from all around the world. When stereotypes and lies that such data exists in the Bible are rejected then the next argument is that the pastoral vocation is very difficult (which is true) for a woman, and since women are weak they cannot perform it. Reti Katalin (2002, 150), has an answer for this argument: “since then many have been asking me – isn’t it difficult being a pastor and a woman? – well it’s not easy – I reply – because we get easily tired, and because we get very emotional even when we shouldn’t, but I have to do my chores at home and if I get married I will have to take care of my husband and children.” The woman pastor indicates that there is no balance between male and female jobs as pastors and that she will always have more responsibilities as a mother and a wife which is not so with men (but it should be).

Reti Katalin explains how she came to Vojvodina (2002,149-150): “In 1996 at my final year at The Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca we were asked who would like to leave Transylvania and work in Vojvodina since there is a lack of pastors. Out of 40-45 men and 8-10 girls only one girl applied and that is how two years and three months ago I came to Vojvodina. So far, I have never had any problem because I’m a woman. ”

3.1.2.1. Biographical data about women pastors of the RCC

(Today in Vojvodina there are thirteen pastors and four of them are female)

Ilona Marton (Márton Ilona, Pančevo, March 26th, 1960). She finished primary school in Debeljača as well as the ninth and tenth grade (1977). In Zrenjanin she finished grammar school (1979). She graduated from the Faculty of Theology in Budapest (1982). In Novi Itebej together with her husband she had performed pastoral duties since 1981. From 1983 until 2005 she performed pastoral duties in Zrenjanin.

Andrea Botoš (Botos Andrea, April 23rd 1965, Csenger, Hungary). Her family belongs to the RCC. 1975 Confirmation. 1980 she enrolls grammar school and in 1983 she finishes Secondary Grammar School of the Reformed Church in Debrecen and enrolls the Reformed Theological Academy in Budapest where she graduated in 1988. In the same year she was ordained in Budapest and got married to pastor Botos Elemer. Since October 1st 1988 she has performed her pastoral duties in the parish of Rumenka (Klaudia Rohring was her predecessor there). Beside all the pastoral duties, she teaches religious education in primary school in Rumenka and in the congregation in Novi Sad

Eržebet Čanji (Csányi Erzsébet, July 21st 1970, Stara Moravica). She finished her primary school in Pačir and Stara Moravica (in Hungarian). She also finished music school. She finished Vocational secondary school of economics “Bosa Miličević” in Subotica (in Hungarian). She is a female cantor in the parish of Pačir (after she finished a cantor course in Debrecen). With the bishop’s consent she went to study in Budapest (1991), but she was also highly motivated by her organ professor. After the tenth semester she won a scholarship and spent a year at the Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich. Since August 1st 1996 she has performed her pastoral duties in the parish of Pačir. She graduated in 1996. In December 1996 she was ordained in Pačir (Kiš Antal senior pastor). She performs her pastoral duties in Hungarian in Pačir, Sombor, Bajmok, and Stara Moravica. From the beginning of 1999, she is a notekeeper of the Synod in the Reformed Church.

*Katalin Šuranji Reti** (Surányi Réti Katalin, 1972, Dej, Romania). In 1996 she graduated from The Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) and since September she has been a female pastor in the Reformed Christian Church. At first she was an assistant pastor in Stara Moravica, and then she became a deputy pastor in Subotica. Besides her duties as a pastor, she organizes the religious life in her community including charity and work with women. Her religious services are in Hungarian, her mother tongue. With her husband, pastor Surányi Zoltán, she has three children (twin daughters and a son). She and her family moved to Nagydorog, Hungary, where she continued to give sermons⁷.

⁷It should be mentioned that in the last two decades communication between the parishes within this church is frequent, as well as the exchange of women pastors in the neighbouring countries, Hungary and Romania. E.g. Császár-Bíró Zoltánné Bóka Emese Ildikó (born on November 5th 1965 – died 2017), was not ordained in Novi Sad, but she often helped and preached in that town. Furthermore, Klaudia Rohring, then Anamaria Fekete in Maradik, as

Tilda Đerge Slivka (Gyenge Slifka, Tilda, April 21st1970). Born in Novi Sad in a Hungarian family that belonged to the Reformed Church. In 1985 she finishes primary school as well as primary music school and enrolls ninth grade in Hungarian in Novi Sad. In 1991 she graduated from the High School of Vocational Education for Educators in Novi Sad. In 1997 she enrolled The Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) in Hungarian. In 2004 she was chosen a (deacon) advisor and she became a member of the Synodal Council; in June she took the second pastoral exam and she became the Master of Theology. In October she was named a woman pastor in Maradik. In 2007 she became a pastor in Debeljača where she also teaches religious education in primary school and works in children's playground (Őrláng) within the church. In 2013 she works as an assistant pastor of the bishop. In 2015 she leads the Conference centre of the Reformed Church in Feketić. In April she was elected Secretary of the Women's Altar Circle within the Reformed Church. Since 2016 she has been a director of the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation in Novi Sad.

Marija Besedeš (Beszédes Mária). Born on September 21st 1982 in Pančevo. 1989-1997. Primary school "Moša Pijade", Debeljača; 1997-2001 Grammar school "Svetozar Marković", Subotica, field of study socio-linguistics in Hungarian; 2001-2002 The Balassi Institute in Budapest, first year, English language; 2002-2003 Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, The Faculty of Philosophy, Department of the English Language and Literature; 2003-2011 Reformed Theological Academy in Papa, Hungary, Department for theologians and ministers, (MA, Magister Rerum Divinarum); 2006-2007 Faculty of Protestant Theology the University of Münster, Germany (language of study German); 2008-2010 The Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Germany, New Testament studies in German; 2011-2012 Assistant pastor in the Reformed church in Subotica; 2012 She was ordained in Papa; 2012-2013 woman pastor in Subotica; 2013-2014 At the University in Geneva, the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland she studied ecumenical theology and earned the MAS – Master of Advanced Studies in Ecumenical Studies. From January 1st 2015 she is a woman pastor in the Reformed Christian parish of Debeljača.

well as other women pastors. It means that woman preachers were and still are enough frequent and that there is no resistance among the laity, that is, a norm of women clergy is established.

*Anamaria Fekete** (1978). Born in Vrbas (father: Catholic, mother: Protestant); **1984-1992** She finished primary school in Hungarian in Vrbas. **1997** She finished high school in Hungarian in Subotica. **2007** She graduated from the Reformed Theological Faculty in Komárno in Slovakia (study field Theology and Ministry). She earned a master title. She studied in Hungarian. **2008-2010** she was an assistant pastor in Maradik. 2016 She enrolled the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Department of History.

According to this basic biographical data it can be concluded that all women pastors have the following in common: 1. they are highly educated – they graduated from faculties of theology (most of them received an MA degree); 2. they perform all the pastoral and family duties as well as all the administrative and organizational duties in their community; 3. most of them write popular and scientific texts; 4. apart from their mother tongue Hungarian, they speak Serbian and other foreign languages, above all German (since they studied in German).

3.1.3. The United Methodist Church For Serbia – Macedonia (UMCSM)

Ankica Dragin (2002) addresses a wide tourist public in Novi Sad⁸ and writes the following: “The 1st believers of the then Episcopal Methodist Church came to Vojvodina in the last decade of the 19th century. Some of them were missionaries from Central Europe (Austria, Germany and Switzerland). The 1st parishes were founded in 1898 in Srbobran, Vrbas and Novi Sad. Some other congregations were formed a bit later mostly among the Germans. There are round 2,000 believers today and they are mostly Slovaks, Serbs, Hungarians, Roma and others. 16 parishes are organized in 6 municipalities within 1 district. This district, along with that of the FYR Macedonia forms an Annual Yearly Conference (i.e. the Synod), which is in turn a part of the Central Conference for Middle and South Europe with the seat of its bishopric in Zurich. In 1968 the official name of the church was changed into the Evangelical Methodist Church as a result of various inter-church unions in Europe and on other continents. “

UMCSM is enlisted in the Register of churches and religious communities in Serbia (January 29th 2007). But it is not on the list in the Law on churches and religious communities. In the book written by Roman Miz (Miz, 2001, 290) it is classified in the chapter The Free Churches together

⁸10,000 copies: 5,000 in Serbian, and 5,000 in English.

with the Baptist and Pentecostal Church. In this paper religious communities are presented the way they consider themselves. Fifty-five years ago, Paula Mojzes (1962) composed the basic UMCSM doctrine in the Serbian language intended for the members of her community and for immediate practice⁹.

Methodism as a Protestant denomination originated in 18th century England and its pioneer John Wesley, an English Anglican cleric (who remained so until the end of his life). Wesley's intention was not to create a new direction in the religious life. He considered justice, peace and joy for the Holy Spirit the basics of real Christianity, which should be available equally to the poor, sick and all that are in need, as much as to the rich. Theologian Roman Miz (2001, 291) states that "his message is simple: New Testament Christianity, love for God and neighbour, individual faith and social care". According to his own vision of how gospels should be lived among the believers, Wesley organized travelling preachers who ministered to the believers in their places and simply preached the words of God. He introduced lay preachers (after they were educated and trained), who preached according to the Bible and to the tradition of the reformed theology. They also had in mind the need for adaptations according to the given situations – "rational and logical religion and politics" (Miz, 2001, 292)¹⁰.

As far as the organization is concerned, today UMCSM has only one General Superintendent with the title of Bishop for 12 countries in Europe, seated in Zurich. The Republic of Serbia is one of them. The Bishop (General Superintendent) ordains a superintendent (deputy, supervisory pastor in a district) if all the others agree. Elections are held every ten years. In Serbia the elections will be held in 2018.

Today, UMCSM in Serbia has its believers in different places in Vojvodina, but mostly in places settled by Slovaks (Kisač, Srbobran, Pivnice, Jabuka). Services are mostly in the Slovak

⁹In the preface the author thanks her brother Aleksandar Birviš from Belgrade who edited the text (as Teresa of Ávila' text was proofread by her confessor).

¹⁰At the very beginning Methodism was only a movement within the Church of England, but in America, even during Wesley's life it became a separate denomination and in the English speaking areas it has more than 40 million adherents. The emigrants from England and other European countries spread the movement throughout the American continent and the rest of the world (above all in African countries) through missionary work. Today, this church is the largest Protestant church in the USA. In Europe, Methodism spread from England and the USA to Germany and Scandinavia in the 18th century, and later on to different parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After 1918, Methodism spread throughout the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, gained significant number of believers and acquired considerable material base, schools, kindergartens, places for the poor and sick (e.g. in Novi Sad, sanatorium "Betania", today it is a maternity hospital, belonged to this church).

language, but also in Serbian, Roma, Macedonian, depending on the national structure of the community. According to Paula Mojzes: “Since the General Conference in 1956, women have been regarded as equal in the Methodist church.”

Since 1955, there have been 6 ordained women pastors. We classified them into three generations: the older generation (Paula Mojzes (1906-1970); Ljubica Hovan (1924-1996), Katica Dukai (1925-2003), Margareta Merz)¹¹; the other generation: highly educated women theologians who serve actively (Ana Palik Kunčak (1961)); and the third to which Marija Đurovka Petraš (1983) belongs (Table 3).

3.1.3.1. Biographical data about women pastors of the UMCSM

Paula Mojzes (Magyarbol, 1906-1970 Germany). She was born in a German Evangelical Lutheran family. She had eight years of formal education. **1933** She started working as a secretary in a bank in Osijek. **1934** She married Anton Mojzes, a Protestant preacher in Osijek. **1941** With her family she moved to Novi Sad. **1942** Her husband was killed in a Hungarian fascist concentration camp in Bačka Topola. She worked as a church sister in Novi Sad and regularly preached in other churches from 1946 onward. In November 1955, after the sudden death of the Superintendent Sebel, Paula Mojzes took his place, **1957** She was ordained a deacon in the Methodist church and a supervisory pastor in Vojvodina. **1958** She still performed secretarial duties, preached, gathered the community, translated from German texts for the Bible course for young and future pastors in Novi Sad. **1965** She moved to Germany and lived with her son, mother, sisters and brother and their families. **1962** She published *A Short History of The Methodist Church* a schoolbook for students in Serbian intended for explaining the church in the wider community and among the community members (the schoolbook is used even today). **1970** In the winter she died at the age of 64. She was buried in Pfungstadt, Germany.

¹¹Margareta Merz was a deaconess and dedicated to the patients in Betania. Being German, after WW II she did not take the last train to Germany because there were some patients in the hospital and she stayed with them. She was interrogated by the authorities, but because the people who knew her positively testified about her, she stayed in Novi Sad till she died. She ran a small UMCSM nursing home in Vrbas after the war, and since 1970 in Kisač.

Ljubica Hovan (May 13th 1924-1996). Born in Osijek, The Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as the oldest child in the family. Her father Ivan Vojvodić, an officer, was a Roman Catholic Croat, and her mother Marija (born Jasmann) was an Evangelical Lutheran German. Ljubica had three younger brothers (Zvonko, Boris, Tomislav). Ljubica's mother tongues were (Serbo)Croatian and German. **1931** She started primary school in Osijek. In **1940**, she finished high school and got employed as a clerk. **1946** She moved to Novi Sad (lived with her aunt Paula Mojzes). On December 31st she became a member of the Methodist Church. **1951** On May 13th she became a full member of the Church. **1952** On May 1st she took a position of the church sister (lay leader) in the congregation in Zrenjanin. From **1954** till **1961** she worked in the Methodist church in Novi Sad and attended (together with 7 church sisters) a four years long seminary for doctrine and charity work in the community. From **1957** Ljubica translated materials in German and Hungarian for the Church and the Bible seminary, edited a journal "Glas jevandjelja" for years and led the complete correspondence of the church sisters. In **1962** she married Martin Hovan (who finished the Bible seminary during the period 1957-1961) and got a pastor's position in Zrenjanin. **1965** Paula Mojzes was retired and Martin Hovan became a pastor in the Methodist Church in Novi Sad (L. Mušickog Street no. 7). Ljubica was not just a wife of a pastor, but in her husband's absence she conducted religious services and sermons. In November **1987**, she survived a stroke, but she never fully recovered. On June 2nd **1996**, she died at the age of 72. She is buried in Kisač.

Katica Dukai (Srbobran, 1925 - Senta, 2003). She was born on January 19th in Srbobran. She spent her childhood with her mother since her father died young. **1932** She started Catholic School for Girls and attended religious education. In **1934**, at the age of nine, she was baptized. **1941** As a 16 year old girl she attends religious services in the Methodist Church. **1942** During WW II she started working in the Diaconal Home for children in Budakeszi, later she worked in the orphanage in Srbobran, and took care of approximately 60 children. **1944** After the war, the orphanage was closed and she was left unemployed. In **1945**, after the war, many Germans had to leave Vojvodina and the Methodist Church lost a great number of its members, preachers and leaders of the community. Superintendent Sebele invited Katica Dukai to join the four years long seminary for lay preachers' assistants. **1954** Katica enrolled the seminary in Novi Sad. In that period, she had already performed diaconal work in Senta as a lay preacher. She also paid house visits to the members of the church in Novi Sad. In Vrbas she helped or replaced nurses in the

nursing home for the elderly. In **1956**, besides her regular work in Srbobran, when church sister Beta Fiala left, she was in charge of performing religious services in Bečej, too. In **1957** she finished her education in the seminary. On November 7th **1965**, she was ordained a deacon together with three other pastors in Novi Sad. In **1981** she retired. Katica Nikolić succeeded her in Srbobran. On December 27th **2003**, at the age of 78, she died and is buried in Senta.

Ana Palik Kunčak (Kisač, 1961). She was born on April 25th in Kisač in a Slovak family. Her father died when she was five. She lived with her mother and her sister who was born several months after their father's death. In **1967** she started primary school in Slovak in Kisač. **1971**. As a ten year old girl she attended religious education at the Methodist Church in Kisač. She enjoyed it there, and soon after her mother joined her and worked in the nursing home for the elderly in the Church. In **1974** she finished primary school and enrolled the Grammar School in Sremski Karlovci, translation course (from and into German) in Serbian. In **1978** she graduated. The following year, in **1979**, she spent six months in Zurich where she improved her German, studied and worked in the Church. She graduated as a social worker. On Christmas she received the Divine Call. In **1980**, she enrolled the Theological Faculty, Charles University, Prague. She studied in both languages, Czech and Slovak. In 1986, after graduating, she came back to Kisač and took over the pastoral duties there. In **1989**, she got married and in **1995** she gave birth to a son. Her mother and husband helped her with the housework. In **1999** she participated at the Conference *Women in Church* (organized by WSR) and for the first time she publicly spoke about her vocation in front of a scholarly audience. In **2002** her text was published in the book *Feminist Theology* (edited by Svenka Savić). Since **2003** she has been a Superintendent of the Vojvodina district.

Maria Đurovka Petraš (1983). Born in Novi Sad. She spent her childhood in Kisač. She has always been a part of the Methodist Church and as an active believer she participates in all the activities. In **1990** she entered primary school in the Slovak language. Eight years after, in **1998**, she enrolled in the Medical School in Novi Sad where the lectures were in Serbian. In 2001, she went to Slovakia and enrolled the Faculty of Evangelical theology at the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. She lived in the student dormitory. The studies were in Slovak, but since she attended high school in Serbian, at the beginning of the studies her knowledge of Slovak was not sufficient. Since the second year of studies she had received a scholarship. She earned an MA

title in Theology. In **2006**, as a member of a student's organization, she spent her summer vacation in the USA in North Carolina and improved her knowledge of English. In **2008** she came back to Kisač but she did not decide yet if she would join an international mission or get involved in social work. In **2009**, she was appointed to a small, 30 member congregation in Pivnice. Within the congregation there is a kindergarten for children – Korab. In March 2013, she was ordained in the UMCSM in Kisač by Bishop Patrick Streiff. She got married in Kisač in **2013**. That was an “interreligious” wedding administered by a woman pastor Ana Palik Kunčak together with Jaroslav Javornjik, a pastor of the SEC(A.C.). Her husband, Dušan Petraš, is of great spiritual and practical help. She spent the autumn of **2015** in a language school in Oxford in order to improve her knowledge of the English language.

I conclude that women pastors of the UMCSM are highly educated at the faculties of theology in (Czech)Slovakia and that they perform all the pastoral duties (religious services, confirmation, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, weddings, funerals). They are also very active in educating adults and youth organizing Bible classes, religious education, Sunday school for children (as a rule, at the beginning of the Sunday religious service, they address the children, who then join the programme in another room led by an adult assistant). The women pastors also perform other duties that the church has in a given moment (e.g. they publish a journal, in Serbian and Slovak, “Glas jevandjelja” and “Cesta života”).

4.0. THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4. 1. Childhood. Usually, we know little about the childhood of both female and male priests. Their private and public spheres are strictly divided. However, to understand peacebuilding activities that women pastors do in Vojvodina it is of great importance to show the way their mostly ecumenical religious opinions were formed during their adolescence. It is also important to present their interculturality during their service in different places.

One of the woman pastor answers the questions about her childhood in the following way:

My parents were Hungarians, but my mother's mother was German, and she was the one who brought this religion into our family. My father was Catholic, but my grandmother brought in the

Evangelical religion and the whole family turned to that direction. They liked that freedom, the way God's word dominates and the love that Jesus spoke about... that is the way the whole family became evangelical. (Marta)

The other women pastors mostly come from intercultural, binational, bireligious or bilingual families in which a model of living together with others and with different people already existed. They got used to the fact that they live with others and that became their point of view.

That is why we take their family origins as a base for our conclusions about the women pastors' readiness to accept intercultural challenges during their services:

Slovak family from Boljevci. My family was Evangelical Lutheran, they attended religious services, but it was, let me say, a new Lutheran family since my grandparents became Lutheran. According to family history, half of my family belongs to the tradition of Nazarenes, one fourth is Baptist and only one fourth is traditionally Lutheran. Then there were mixed marriages, but the Evangelical church prevailed. They married in the Evangelical church and they were raised to be devoted to their religion as they were devoted to their Nazarene and Baptist tradition. They remained devoted to the Lutheran church. My grandparents were active: my grandmothers were active in the women's circle and in the church choir, while my grandfathers were members of the church board and even the presidents of the parish, presbyters and auditors during the socialistic regime. (Ana)

4.2. How they decided to become pastors. For the question "how did you decided to become a pastor", most of them answered that a male mediated in making their final decision: their pastors, fathers, or other males outside their families and religious communities which is usual for religious communities. For example, one of the women pastors testified that after graduation she did not know exactly what she would study, but persuaded by a local pastor she prepared the entrance examination and enrolled in the Evangelical Faculty of Theology at the Comenius University in Bratislava. She also said that her father and pastor had an agreement.

We signed, my father did, that I would come back to Vojvodina to serve in our church, but he also signed that I would not perform pastoral duties if there were enough male pastors. (Ana)

Within their studies at the faculties of theology outside Serbia (in Bratislava, Budapest, Cluj-Napoca, Banská Bystrica) women pastors had an obligation to spend a semester or a short period of time in one of their religious communities abroad. In that way they learned about women clergy's tradition in the world, that is, in countries where these denominations are large. In the USA, for example, they faced the fact that women pastors are not only ordained by the norm, but that there are women who are elected for the most important positions in the church. One of them answers the question about her trip to the USA and if there were any women pastors:

Yes, there were, but in that Slovak Synod we cooperated with, there was only one woman who is a bishop now, but in ELCA there were women pastors. (Ana)

4.3. Three generations of women pastors. Asking about women pastors' tradition in their places, we got answers about their predecessors:

I am the first woman pastor in Kovačica. When I moved to Kovačica, there were no problems at all because I was a woman (e.g. to cover my head when I step onto the pulpit or some other things my women colleagues had to deal with). People often say to me that all of the pastors preach the same, but somehow I have a different, emotional approach to christenings, funerals and weddings. (Ana)

4.4. Prejudices. One of the women preachers from the third generation answers the question "Are there prejudices towards women pastors?" as follows:

These are reactions that even male pastors have to face when they come to a parish. Women especially. When I came to Janošik, a small village, a small community, people thought that they did not have any choice. They are glad when any pastor is willing to come there. They welcomed me and I have nothing but a good experience with them. When I was elected a pastor in Kovačica it was a surprise for the whole church, since a pastor is chosen by voting within the parish. When the previous pastor left Kovačica, at the church meeting they made a list of desirable pastors. There were several names on the list. Firstly, they talked to us in order to check if we can get along with each other, what were the expectations, wishes and to make sure that the chosen person is acceptable. In the end, only my name remained on the list. At the election, people voted for or against only one person. I was the only candidate. Everybody was surprised – a woman pastor in Kovačica, in one of the largest parishes in our church. (Ana)

The women pastors have gained different experiences: the first generation states some unusual elements (Reti Katalin), the second and the third generations have the impression that they came to the already conquered terrain. In other words, women pastors had prepared the terrain for each

other, not only in the church, but also among those gathered around the church – among believers and residents.

4.5. Peacebuilding. Answering the questions about peacebuilding in everyday life, women pastors listed various activities. Often, together with members of the local community or with interreligious boards, they resolve current problems (funerals and cemeteries, local needs, social care, building good relations in the neighbourhood) showing their genuine wish for welfare of all people. Next, they participate in festivals and celebrations organized by other institutions. They cooperate with other organisations on project activities or they organise interreligious celebrations within cultural associations, for example Advent. Social care programmes are organised in other places in Vojvodina where there is a need. For example, in Kovačica, UMCSM pastor teaches English for free; in Vrbas, religious services are performed in Serbian; in Padina, they have a social care program; in Pivnice, there is a children's playground; in Kisač, twelve-hour nursing care.

It is also a fact that the term “peace” implies all interreligious dialogues.

It is really important to find and give peace to people, because a church building is nothing more than materials, and nowadays it only serves to upset people and to raise their anxiety. We should try to perform our religious services and to practice our faith in God no matter if we are or are not in that church (although it is a historical injustice). (Ana)

How women pastors direct their children in the process of peacebuilding and successful life in the community, each of them explains in their own way:

When they came to school and when they said that they are Slovaks, that they are Protestants, not Orthodox, and that they celebrate some other holidays and not Saint Sava, everything was all right. They, of course, go to school and show their respect for their friends' customs. They were not singled out. Those children are capable of accepting others and that fact gave us hope for future generations. It does not have to be exactly how medias present. There is understanding, there is tolerance. Young people are ready to accept something new. (Ana)

4.6. She has a partial explanation for the fact that there are many women pastors in protestant communities in Vojvodina:

Yes. At the moment, in our church there are thirteen pastors and four of them are female. These data are not unexpected, since the Faculty of theology plans the number of female students – the

number for female students is smaller than for male. When I enrolled Theology, there were only six places for women pastors, and twenty places for male pastors. But the department for religious education teachers accepted 30 female students.

There are different explanations, since there are some verses in the Bible that say women should be silent at the gatherings. Some quote the verses, but the context in which it is written and why it is written should be taken into consideration. Women pastors can be physically and mentally one hundred percent present at their work places as well as male pastors can. It does not depend on gender, it depends on the type of person you are. (Tilda)

4.7. *The language of their education, communication and religious service in church is an instrument for peace building. Namely, it is a fact that language is an important element of religious education and religious activities. Speaking different languages is an instrument for peace building in the everyday life of women pastors. All of the women pastors deliver their sermons not only in their mother tongues but in the majority language, Serbian, or in other foreign languages (e.g. in German). They either come from places where two (or more) languages are actively used or serve in such places.*

Ana Petrović answers the question: “What is your family language, Slovak or Serbian?” as follows:

Both Serbian and Slovak. I speak Slovak with my children and my husband speaks Serbian with them. The little one mostly speaks English. Since he was a little boy he copied everything he had heard in cartoons or children’s shows. He starts a sentence in one language, and then he continues in another, and finishes it in the third. When he started kindergarten, in August last year, the kindergarten teachers asked us to focus on Serbian. They say: We hear Dušan speak, but we do not understand him at all. Today, we use all three languages. It would be a pity to let him forget English since he has already learnt a lot on his own. This is somehow a reconciliation of different traditions in one family.

4.8. When asked, “What is nice about your vocation?” women pastors answered differently. They mentioned everyday moments they had shared with others, numerous activities they had organised with their own people, with others, foreigners or refugees.

For example, when people gather, not only the believers of the church. Usually those who do not go to church come too, because they see something nice is happening and they come. (Tilda)

The exchange is a base of happiness and pleasure in a religious community:

It is a special joy to perform a religious service for children, because their hearts are open for listening and accepting God's words. I believe that the words of God will remain in their hearts and that they will help them to choose His way. It is also very important to bring the Good news to elders or sick, to those who are not far away from the other side, but who do not know if eternal life will be given to them. In those moments it is important to prepare them for the trip, which is Jesus himself.

Together with my husband we perform religious services in various small and isolated communities. We feel great joy when we see them and their desire to hear God's words and His message.

The greatest joy for pastors is when people come to them for spiritual talks. When their worries, troubles and problems are exposed to God through prayers, and when we testify moments when God is merciful and helpful for those in trouble, when He protects them and saves them... There are many occasions when all the generations together listen to the words of God, when parents, grandparents and their grandchildren attend religious services. These are Advent, Christmas, Easter, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost, or religious services at the beginning and the end of a school year, Reformation day, and meetings of 70 year olds– these are all nice occasions when children sing, recite and present scenes from the Bible. Our community has a small choir. They sing at weddings, christenings, holidays, and with their songs, psalms they celebrate God. Every year, we organize choral festivals for the choirs in Banat. (Ilona)

4.9. Religious identity. The question Do your children have any problems publicly expressing their religious identity? they answer:

No, no, no. For example, I had been teaching for years in Debeljača. There is a small number of Catholic and Orthodox Christians... Pupils usually go home from school together. In order to go home together with pupils from other classes, some of them come to Reformed religious education lessons and when I ask something (before I get acquainted with them) they say I'm Catholic, I don't know that... No problem. We shouldn't divide them into two groups of Hungarians – those who belong to the Catholic and those who belong to the Reformed church...I don't think that's the reason. I have never noticed any kind of discrimination about that issue. I think linguistic barriers are much bigger than religious ones. (Tilda)

Data about the way Saint Sava is celebrated are valuable. Saint Sava is a school's saint for all children and their children participate:

Well, my children also participate. They sing, play instruments and recite. They are confident in their faith, but they show respect for other religions' customs (e.g. during the service, if we have to stand up, I stand up too, showing respect for the others. I don't want to sit alone, while everybody else stands up). When everybody makes the sign of the cross, I tell my children: You shouldn't make the sign of the cross, that is not in your faith, but you should stand up and show respect for the others. I know who I am. One of the boys even asked me if he is allowed to eat "koljivo" (boiled wheat grains) when they offer small cupcakes of "koljivo", everybody can take one... they would like to try it. Well, try it! Go and try it! You know what is yours, but go and learn about others. (Tilda)

All of the women pastors mentioned work with preschool children as one of their activities (Tilda, Eržika, Marija). At that age it is important for children to communicate with their peers and adults in their mother tongue, and to get socialised within their cultural mainstream.

But, all of the women pastors emphasised that shifting from one linguistic-cultural-religious environment to another was not a problem, although it was in the beginning. They estimate that that kind of experience is welcome in their life and practice.

5.0. DISCUSSION

There are not many texts about women pastors in Protestant churches (first in Yugoslavia, then in Serbia) and I wanted to research the topic. That is why I applied to participate at the international scientific meeting at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad dedicated to the process of reconciliation and peace within the Yugoslav region. I came to present my paper and brought with me only two books that could be cited: *Shining Humanity: Life Stories of Women Peace Builders in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2013) by Zilka Spahić Šiljak (I wrote a review for this book and her work inspired me greatly) and *Women Peacemakers: Social and Political Engagement of Nobel Peace Prize Winners* by Alen Kristić (2012), who I did not meet before. I put my books on a desk in front of a man who said to me: Oh, I'm glad someone reads my book! Alen Kristić in person!

However, I did not send my paper to the editors, since I realised that the topic is too complex for me, and I had to do a large research because the wider public knows little about women pastors in Protestant churches. There are only a few data about religious issues within the women's movement in Serbia that can be taken into consideration. It seems like women's organizations do not include women's religious organizations. It is a fact, according to the women pastors' testimonies, that women gathered around the church are organized in their own groups (pray group or work group etc.) on the local, national or international level and that there is no need to join any other organizations yet. That is why I suggested a talk about everyday peace, since both women in religious communities and those outside them have one thing in common, everyday life.

Only a few know that women's groups have existed for a long time within the Protestant communities. A woman pastor in the SEC(A.C.) testified about that:

Then in 1982, the Bishop suggested that I should be the women's representative at the Altar Circle in our church. The so-called altar circles have existed for the last ninety years in our church. These are groups of women that meet and who have their activities in the church. I was in charge of it and occasionally, when they invited me for a jubilee, I lectured at those gatherings. Once a year, in Novi Sad we have a plenary meeting and representatives of these circles report about their activities. We start these meetings with a short religious service and a lecture. Our women pastors are in charge of that... (Viera)

In the paper *About social activism of the women's civil organizations in the Yugoslav region* (Subotički Miletić, 2016) it is stated that nothing is done to improve religious dialogue in the women's civil organizations as if it is understood that civil and religious spheres are separated (with a slogan that the state is separated from the church). The author gives a hypothesis (later confirmed) that there is no dialogue between women's civil sector and religious communities in Serbia and Montenegro. The research was conducted in 2014 and the data were obtained through a questionnaire. The author questioned 53 activists and leaders in 16 nongovernmental organizations in Serbia and Montenegro. The thing that was in common for these activists and leaders of the organizations is that they used funds donated by the EWI (from Omiš) in the period from 2007 till 2013 for their programmes usually about women's rights in underprivileged groups (Roma women, disabled women, victims of violence, young women etc.). The obtained results show that only two organizations in Serbia have clearly stated in their programmes theological activities, interreligious dialogue and peacemaking activities. But, most of the participants are ready to start cooperation with churches and religious communities. The author suggested that EWI should encourage projects which could influence cooperation with religious communities.

According to this research I confirm that, in general, there is no cooperation between women's nongovernmental organizations and women pastors when peacemaking in their villages and towns is concerned, since none of them mentioned that kind of cooperation. One of the reasons why the situation is like this is that women pastors are active in smaller places in Vojvodina where there are no women's nongovernmental organizations (except in Novi Sad and Sombor). The other reason, as Subotički Miletić wrote, is that women's NGOs are not especially oriented towards religious issues, among which peacebuilding is one of the basis. Namely, only a few

women's organizations enlisted peacebuilding in their programmes, but surely no activities about everyday peace were enlisted.

It is evident that all the women pastors stated that peace meant everything that exists in the intercultural inventory. For example, when asked about the language of religious education, Ana Petrović answered:

In Serbian and in German, because our community is officially bilingual and multilingual in practice. In Belgrade, we work together, the SEC(A.C.) and the German Evangelical Religious Community, because there is a German seniorate within the SEC(A.C.) in Serbia and one of those German communities is in Belgrade. Since there is only a small community of Lutherans in Belgrade it would be a sin to separate them. We belong to the same church, and Slovaks and Germans are together.

Here I will write about insufficient visibility of the women pastors in the wider public, even though they have been active for several decades. The current practice should be changed and their work should not be forgotten nor neglected or minimized.

The Protestant churches, especially those with a small number of members, are seen as negative phenomenon (undesirable, cults etc.). The church of the majority and those churches with a bigger number of members – publicly known religious communities – do not make enough of an effort to change this attitude. Primarily because Protestant communities are not defined well in the law. The media and wider public rarely write or speak about the Protestant (smaller) communities in a positive manner, except on special occasions. Regarding the media, a positive exception is TV Vojvodina. Its programmes for national communities include religious programmes, but not all religious communities are equally included. Furthermore, in Serbia, Protestant churches, where the women pastors come from, gather their believers (mostly) from Hungarian and Slovak national communities, and also believers from the Roma national community. In this way those communities are isolated from the majority who, as a rule, do not speak the minority languages.

There are not enough theological and scientific texts about Protestant communities in Serbia. If it was written about them, it was done within their national and religious communities which have a small number of readers (the exceptions are the journal *Religija i tolerancija*, edited by Zorica Kuburić since 2004, and some activities conducted by Marijana Ajzenkol in the civil association,

for example, publishing of the *Interreligious calendar* is one of the most noticed from the last 10 years).

In the review of the Christian life in Vojvodina (Miz, 2001) there is no special emphasis on the fact that (some) churches have a tradition of women clergy. In media and on other occasions examples of women pastors from abroad are usually mentioned (sometimes even for the churches that exist in Vojvodina).

The third reason is that there is no constant use of feminine gender nouns that denote women pastors. In some texts, e.g. Ana Petrović's text, a phrase *a member of the clergy* is used as a neutral, common gender form, although the Slovak language distinguishes masculine and feminine genders of the nouns that denote professions. That shows that visibility of the women pastors is multi-layered and we can talk about them from different points of views. Firstly, in what manner authorities in churches write and speak about them (Miz, 2001); secondly, in what manner women pastors in Serbian are spoken about, since the usage of gender-sensitive language is not standardised yet. On the other hand, Slovak is a gender-sensitive language, and even Hungarian a language that has no gender category has fixed rules for determining female vocations by certain suffixes. Good examples of this practice can be found in a bilingual, Serbo-Slovak, book by Ana Petrović (2016). In Slovak, there is a norm about how gender marked nouns for some professions are used. For example, for a woman it can be only said woman professor, not professor solely. If we look through Ana Petrović's biography we can notice that she writes about herself as *a member of the clergy*, since she believes that *a member* in Serbian is a common gender noun. For all her professions she used masculine gender nouns in Serbian, while in Slovak she wrote nouns of feminine gender for all professions and titles: *apsloventka* (woman graduate); *kaplanka* (woman chaplain); *fararka* (woman member). In the text written in Serbian, for these professions she used masculine gender nouns: "chaplain in the parish of Janošik" (instead of woman chaplain); "*a member of the clergy* in the parish of Kovačica" (instead of woman pastor), "member of the Bible society board" (instead of woman member); "regional programme coordinator of the *Women in church* programme" (instead of woman coordinator). When she was asked about professions in Serbian, she answered that there is no such thing as female gender nouns denoting professions in Serbian. In other words, women pastors themselves should use the language potentials for their own affirmation and presentation in public, above all in written texts. In this way knowledge about their work and accomplishments can become widely spread.

How much is done for the affirmation of the peace philosophy? What is the women pastors' contribution in building the intercultural society?

It is difficult to make a distinction between contributions women Protestant pastors give to peacebuilding, interreligious and intercultural dialogue during the education of young believers (but also during the religious services). All of these segments are found together in their everyday religious services to God and Jesus who gave us the general greeting "Peace be with you". The greeting always reminds us that we are invited to build peace. Jesus' identification (I am the Road, the Truth, Life.) reminds us that peace building is a part of our lifepath, the creation of life's truth and life itself. That is why women pastors are a good example of everyday peacebuilding.

These examples show that women pastors in their churches, families and local communities, holding on to their attitudes and values such as understanding and respect for others ("...taking participation in celebrations and festivals organized by other institutions, cooperating with them..."), give their contribution to improve interactions between groups that belong to different religions, nations and speak different languages.

All of the women pastors work in minority communities and their work on maintenance and development of national and cultural identity (language, religion, tradition, customs) is of great importance (this can be clearly seen in the case of the celebration of Saint Sava).

Most of them, especially the young ones, are aware of the fact that gender roles are important identity factors. About their professional role they say: *So far, I have never had any problems because I'm a woman.* (Reti Katalin).

The women pastors' answers show the high level of their intercultural sensibility. None of the statements are ethnocentric and some of them testify the intercultural identity, integration and interaction with other cultures which becomes "normal and unnoticeable".

As woman religious education teachers, these highly educated women pastors, who speak the majority language, as well as minority and foreign languages and who had an opportunity to get acquainted with different cultures, secure culturally appropriate and quality education which gives additional contribution to the development of interculturality. To make intercultural education successful, it should be started in the early years of children's lives. All of the women

pastors mentioned work with preschool children as one of the activities. Through that education children form their cultural identity. Since those kindergartens are mostly ecumenical, children also learn how to respect other people's identities.

These examples clearly show that the process of peacebuilding is filled with everyday practical situations that occur while living together with others. Because of that, it is important to listen to everyday life needs and build in it every single stone of future peace. Such an example is the phenomenon of the saint's day in the Orthodox community. This custom is not present in the Protestant religion. The woman pastor explained to her children the saint's day phenomenon in the following way:

I can explain that to them only by comparing it with our name day. Among the older Hungarians it was a rule, for example, that in each family one male was Šandor and his name day was on a certain day and every male child in that family had to be named Šandor and then all of them gathered at the oldest Šandor's place on his name day. Then, without an invitation or announcement, since it was Šandor's name day we all went and congratulated him. No matter if you are a relative, a friend or a neighbour. That's the way I explained that to them. (Tilda)

There are different cultural traditions that are transferred into religious communities, and they serve in the peacebuilding process. For example, cultural tradition of giving a personal name to children. A woman pastor explains this tradition in the communities within the Reformed churches:

It is an unwritten rule, the Church does not obey it, but the family does. For example, if the boy is born into a family then he will be of his father's religion, and if it is a girl then she will be of her mother's faith. It is an unwritten rule. However, we do not ask those families, those young people who get married nowadays, to make a promise, we simply leave it to be their free will. It used to happen that parents want their children to be baptised in the Reformed church, but the godparents are not in the Reformed church. It is interesting, how can you promise that you will raise a child in one religion when you are not in it. But, we say it again, it is all about one's conscience. You can make a promise or not, or if you gave a promise, it is on your conscience weather you will fulfil it. (Tilda)

6.0. CONCLUSION

There is a long tradition of women clergy in three Protestant churches in Vojvodina, but a wider public in Serbia and in the Yugoslav region is not aware of it. This is especially the case in the academic community. The aim of this paper is to present data about the continuity of the women pastors' presence in the religious life of multireligious Vojvodina and about their efforts in the peacebuilding process, in order to create better insight into the years long contribution they have made to building religious and social tolerance, and especially to building ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

Today we talk about three generations of women pastors (and deacons) in the 60 year long continuous work and service to peace. Each generation has its specific characteristics:

The first generation was born before WW II and it survived the war and the post-war changes in the Protestant community: the persecution of Hungarians and Germans; the banishment of Germans (who were Lutherans, Calvinists or Methodists); withdrawal of church property; closing of religious institutions etc. Their work can be described as survival, protection and revival.

The second generation of the women pastors was born after the war. They mostly graduated from the faculties of theology in the countries of the former Soviet bloc (Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania) and were active during the collapse of the SFR Yugoslavia, civil wars in the neighbouring countries, hyperinflation, struggle with poverty, prosecution of the minorities, and the arrival of refugees. Therefore, their work is focused on peacebuilding, humanitarian work and preserving the national, religious and cultural identity.

The third generation includes women pastors who are highly educated in their home lands (which in the meantime joined the EU) and in other EU countries. They had opportunities to improve their professional knowledge abroad, to learn foreign languages and to develop many other competencies including intercultural ones. This generation also faced numerous challenges. The biggest challenge is that numerous Hungarian and Slovak believers (even pastors and women pastors) have emigrated from Serbia into their homelands or into the EU or into other countries all around the world. The expected changes in the society and in the church which have to be done in order to get closer to the EU and its values and culture represent nearly the same challenge. All three generations share a common fact that they work a lot on women's affirmation through different activities in churches, especially through various activities that are

directed to the enrichment of the diaconal work. One of the activities is the annual celebration of the International Women's Day of Prayer.

In the year when the world celebrates 500 years of the Reformation, I present the fact that, in Vojvodina today, there are 14 highly educated women pastors in three Protestant churches with a huge spiritual experience and long tradition. However, it is not well known that the practice of women clergy in Vojvodina is 60 years long. The following factors influenced this situation:

1. Non-transparent texts. Examples of women clergy are not mentioned in some important existing documents on religious communities (such as laws or literature about scientific research and encyclopaedias). Furthermore, in very important students' books written by famous and acknowledged theologians, women pastors in Protestant churches are not mentioned while churches are explained in detail. In media, if women pastors are being written about, women pastors from abroad are presented (e.g. women pastors from the Church of England within which women can be ordained even bishops).
2. If it is written about women pastors, a masculine gender form of a noun that denotes their vocation is used in all above-mentioned forms of text (legal texts, students' books or in newspaper articles). The feminine gender form of a noun (woman pastor, woman bishop, deaconess) is rarely used, although these examples can be found in religious texts written in the distant past. The phrase a member of the clergy is used because it is believed that it represents a neutral form that denotes both male and female (the term *member* is taken from the legal terminology and it is marked as a neutral gender form). If a feminine gender form is used in published literature, it is the case in the mother tongues of the national minorities. In Slovak (and in German) the usage of feminine gender forms denoting vocation is standardised and it is used with no exceptions. But this literature is rarely read by a wider public in Serbia, since it does not speak those languages.
3. When any kind of implicit or explicit discrimination of women pastors is in question, we gained data that determined there was no discrimination at all. But according to some statements the women pastors gave during their interviews, it may be concluded that some kind of discrimination exists, but they do not understand it in that way.
4. All the women pastors are dedicated to peacebuilding in everyday life since it is an inseparable part of their vocation.

7.0. FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION

Since the wider public in Serbia knows little about the impact women pastors of three Protestant churches in Vojvodina have to peacebuilding in everyday life (those women pastors have been performing religious services in their mother tongues (Hungarian and Slovak) or in the language of the majority for the last 60 years), I emphasise their dedication to intercultural values, ecumenical dialogue, interreligious intertwining and affirmation of the values of living together with others.

The women pastors' contribution is large and almost immeasurable. A suggestion for immediate practice is to make the women pastors' work and contributions visible through various activities; in texts for understanding the religious situation in Vojvodina written for the academic public or in texts written for touristic purposes and offers, and especially in students' books written for religious education or cultural enlightenment, as well as for wider cultural purposes. New data should be published not only in the majority language but in minorities' languages, that is, in women pastors' mother tongues or in languages in which they perform religious services, and in foreign languages. The language in which it women pastors and their vocation and profession are written or spoken about is important. Namely, there is no usage of feminine gender nouns in written or spoken discourses. The women pastors' contribution would become more visible, not only in their service but in the church hierarchy where they occupy important positions, if these female gender forms were used (woman notekeeper of the Synod, woman bishop, deacon, female cantor, woman pastor-consenior).

Experiences with women clergy should be exchanged between the churches where this kind of practice in Vojvodina does not exist (yet). In the year when the world celebrates 500 years of the Reformation in the world, these data should be shared with all our local communities.

The research data should be an impulse for young generations who know little about life in multiconfessional Vojvodina today, especially about women in the Protestant communities. Equally, the data should help in understanding religions which are a part of the wider understanding of others.

It is important for new generations of today's women in nongovernmental organizations, above all in the City of Novi Sad where this kind of young potential is not present enough, to have initial literature about women pastors' contribution to peaceful life together with others. New

research data could be a motive for women in this town to gather, especially in order to organise actions for peace.

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9.0. APPENDIX

Table 1 DATA ABOUT WOMEN PASTORS IN VOJVODINA (1945-2017):

Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia SEC(A.C.)

	Name and surname	Place and date of birth	Family	Faculty	Ordination	Place of religious service
1	Batori, Viera (Viera Bathoryova)	March 5 th 1953, Kálnica, Slovakia	Slovak	1976 The Evangelical Faculty of Theology in Bratislava	September 26 th 1976, Bratislava	Subotica, Lalić
2	Dolinski, Marta (Marta Dolinska)	April 27 th 1953, Subotica	Hungarian	1978 The Evangelical Faculty of Theology in Bratislava	April 2 nd 1978, Subotica	Bajša
3	Petrović, Ana (Anna Petrović)	August 12 th 1974, Zemun	Slovak	1998 The Evangelical Faculty of Theology at the Comenius University in Bratislava	August 9 th 1998, Boljevci	Janošik, Kovačica, Belgrade
4	Kolarova, Olina (Olina Kollarova)	July 23 rd 1976, Zrenjanin	Slovak	2000 the Evangelical Faculty of Theology at the Comenius University in Bratislava	July 30 th 2000, Aradac	2000 Šid 2012 moved from Vojvodina
5	Kotasova Medvedova, Jasminka (Jasmina Kotasova- Medved'ova)	May 17 th 1979, Novi Sad	Slovak	2003 The Evangelical Faculty of Theology at the Comenius University in Bratislava	April 22 nd 2007, Bački Petrovac	Bačka Palanka (2002-2012); 2013 Silbaš
6	Maria, Popić	April 20 th 1977, Subotica	Slovak	2002 The Evangelical Faculty of Theology in Bratislava	2002 Lalić	Belo Blato (near Zrenjanina) 2011 moved to Hungary

**Table 2 DATA ABOUT WOMEN PASTORS IN VOJVODINA (1945-2017):
The Reformed Christian Church RCC**

	Name and surname	Place and date of birth	Family	Faculty	Ordination	Place of religious service
1	Marton, Ilona (Márton Ilona)	March 26 th 1960, Pančevo	Reformed Christian Church	1982 The Faculty of Theology, Budapest	-	Zrenjanin (1983 – 2005); Novi Itebej (1981-)
2	Botoš, Andrea (Botos Andrea)	April 23 rd 1965, Csenger, Hungary	Reformed Christian Church	1988 The Reformed Theological Academy, Budapest	1988 Budapest	Rumenka, Novi Sad
3	Đenge Slifka, Tilda (Gyenge Slifka, Tilda)	April 21 st 1970, Novi Sad	Reformed Christian Church	2004 The Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca, Romania	2004	Rumenka, Debeljača, Maradik
4	Čanji, Eržebet (Csányi Erzsébet)	July 21 st 1970, Stara Moravica	Reformed Christian Church	1996. The Reformed Theological Academy, Budapest	1996 Pačir	Pačir, Sombor, Bajmok, Stara Moravica
5	Besedeš, Maria (Beszédes Mária)	September 21 st 1982, Pančevo	Reformed Christian Church	2003-2011 Reformed Theological Academy, Papa, Hungary	2012 Papa	Subotica, Debeljača
6	Šuranji Reti, Katalin (Surányi Réti Katalin)	1972, Dej, Romania	Reformed Christian Church	1996 The Protestant Theological Institute, Cluj-Napoca, Romania	1996	Stara Moravica, Subotica Moved to Hungary.
7	Fekete Annamaria	1978, Vrbas	father: Catholic, mother: Protestant	2007 The Reformed Theological Faculty, Komárno, Slovakia		2008-2010 assistant pastor, Maradik

**Table 3 DATA ABOUT WOMEN PASTORS IN VOJVODINA (1945-2017):
The United Methodist Church For Serbia – Macedonia (UMCSM)**

	Name and surname	Place and date of birth	Family	Faculty	Ordination	Place of religious service
1	Mojzes, Paula	1906, Magyarbol, Hungary 1970, Pfungstadt, Germany	German Evangelical Lutheran	lay woman preacher	1957	Novi Sad
2	Hovan, Ljubica	May 13 th 1924, Osijek 1996, Kisač	father: Roman Catholic mother: Evangelical Lutheran	four years long seminary	-	1952 the church nurse in the community in Zrenjanin. From 1954 till 1961 she worked in the Methodist church in Novi Sad.
3	Dukai, Katica	Srbobran, 1925 - Senta, 2003		1957 four years long seminary for lay preachers' assistants	1965 She was ordained a deacon.	Srbobran, Bečej, Senta
4	Palik Kunčak, Ana	April 25 th 1961, Kisač	Slovak, Methodist	1986 The Theological Faculty, Charles University, Prague	1986 Bratislava	Kisač, Novi Sad
5	Djurovka Petraš, Maria	April 8 th 1983, Novi Sad	Slovak, Methodist	2008 The Faculty of Evangelical theology at the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica	2013 Kisač	Pivnice