

Newsletter (Pilgrim of Benced)

2010. No. 7.



*Beautiful is the Nyiko Valley
and its neighborhood,
Its people believe in God,
More beautiful is pussy willow,
Like on other places the lily of the valley,
La la la..." (szekler folk-song)*

**Redacted and translated from Hungarian by: Pall Krisztina
(pallkrisztina@yahoo.com)**

International Certificate

Pilgrim of Benced have appeared for 4 years since 2006.

Iw we look on first number we realized that it changed a lot. And it will change, ecoluate. Now our request is, if you have any idea please tell us on e-mail adress below:
bencedizarandok@yahoo.com.

At the same time we would like to inform you, that after 4 years it entered in Romanian Database, and in an international Database. So the Pilgrim of Benced has an international number: **ISSN 2067 – 1385.**

(ISSN (International Standard Serial Number).

Getting the ISSN the responsible is Pall Krisztina.

Pilgrim to Deva- About Francis David

Deva is a pilgrim place for Transylvanian Unitarians. Here, in this town, in a jail died Francis David , who established the Unitarian Church.

Every year the Transylvanian Unitarians organize pilgrims to Deva.



Deva castle

About Francis David (spelled in Hungarian language: David Ferenc):

Note: David is pronounced, "Da-VEED."

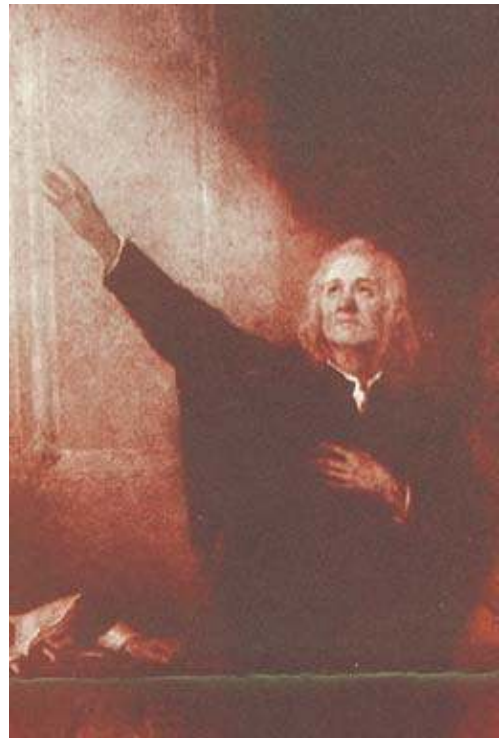
For a short time, religious toleration was the rule of the land in 16th-century Transylvania. When his mother died, the newly crowned King John Sigismund found himself ruling a country divided religiously among Roman Catholics, Calvinists and Lutherans. Among the king's advisors were George Biandrata, a Polish physician and skilled politician, and court preacher David Ferencz, known in the west as Francis David.

In the heady times of the 16th century, Christian doctrine was the subject of great debate. King John Sigismund, realizing there was no possibility of compromise among the various interpreters of proper doctrine, issued an edict that each person was free to support their chosen understanding of Christian doctrine. The edict allowed advisor Biandrata, and court preacher David, both members of the Reformed (Calvinist) tradition, to begin to explore questions concerning the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Jesus. Their exploration and unorthodox interpretations of Christian doctrine caused considerable concern among other members of the Reformed clergy.

In those days, doctrinal matters in Transylvania were fully aired by convening a formal debate. King John Sigismund scheduled such an event for March 3, 1568. He invited believers in the "Unity of God" position to debate the Trinitarians. The debate lasted ten days, beginning at 5 a.m. each day. Francis David represented the Unitarian position and relied on scripture to buttress his arguments. At the conclusion of the debate, David's arguments were seen as stronger, and many in Transylvania embraced Unitarianism. A second debate the following year led the King to declare that he himself was Unitarian and there should be religious toleration in the land. By 1571, Unitarianism was given legal recognition in what would turn out to be King John Sigismund's last public act. He died two months later as a result of an accident, and left no heir to the throne.

John Sigismund was succeeded by a Catholic named Stephen Bathori, who dismissed most of the Unitarians at court, while retaining Biandrata as one of his advisors. Stephen Bathori reaffirmed a policy of toleration for those Christian religions named in the 1571 decree, but declared that he would not allow any further religious innovation.

Unitarianism gained more converts in Transylvania during that period, despite the prohibition against doctrinal changes, and an ecclesiastical organization was developed. By 1577, restrictions were placed on Unitarians, but the organization continued to thrive. Francis David, by now the Unitarian Bishop, was still driven toward reform of doctrine rather than development of church organization. He explored questions having to do with the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, infant baptism, predestination and the worship of Jesus, questioning doctrine in all four areas. Biandrata, more concerned with the health of the church than with matters of doctrine, urged



Francis David



Hungarian Unitarian

David to keep silent. But this was not Francis David's way.

Francis David began to preach his heretical ideas from the pulpit. Biandrata, concerned for the survival of the Unitarian Church, reported David's activities to the ruler. David continued to preach after the Prince ordered him to stop, and Francis David was arrested and tried for the crime of "innovation," questioning and challenging religious doctrine. The prosecutor at trial was Giorgio Biandrata, who dissembled when asked about his own earlier involvement in questioning religious doctrine. Francis David was found guilty of innovation and condemned to prison for the remainder of his life. He died in the royal dungeon in the castle at Deva on November 15, 1579. Biandrata went on to push the Unitarian church toward more conservative theological positions. By the time he died in 1588, very little remained of his former influence in the Transylvanian Unitarian movement. The Unitarian Church itself was forced into a position of doctrinal stagnation that lasted more than 200 years. (Based on information in *Unitarian Universalism: A Narrative History* by David E. Bumbaugh (Chicago: Meadville Lombard Theological School Press, 2000).

Declaration of Turda

In sixteenth century Transylvania, Francis David (1510-1579) became the founder of the first Unitarian faith to be known literally as Unitarian. Francis David had originally trained as a Catholic priest before becoming a Lutheran and then a Calvinist, and then finally a Unitarian. In the year 1568, King John Sigismund called a Diet (debate) in the city of Turda to determine which of the established religions in the area would be declared the official religion of his realm. During that lengthy debate, Francis David held his ground against all the other established religions in the region and convinced King John Sigismund that to declare one religion as the state religion and to compel his people to follow that religion was wrong. King John proclaimed religious freedom throughout his realm, the first such declaration known in history. This victory did not last long, within three years King John was dead, and his successor did not hold his tolerant views. Francis David was ultimately sentenced to prison for refusing to acknowledge that Jesus Christ was to be at least Adored, and he died in the prison at Deva in 1579. The Unitarian faith that Francis David founded is still alive today amongst many of the ethnic Hungarians living in the Transylvania region.



At the declaration of Turda

Here is the text of one of King John Sigismund's decrees:

"His Majesty, our Lord, in what manner he --- together with his realm --- legislated in the matter of religion at the previous Diets, in the same manner now, in this Diet, he reaffirms that in every place the preachers shall preach and explain the Gospel each according to his understanding of it, and if the congregation like it, well, if not, no one shall compel them for their souls would not be satisfied, but they shall be permitted to keep a preacher whose teaching they approve. Therefore none of the superintendants or others shall abuse the preachers, no one shall be reviled for his religion by anyone, according to the previous statutes, and it is not permitted that anyone should threaten anyone else by imprisonment or by removal from his post for his teaching, for faith is the gift of God, this comes from hearing, which hearing is by the word of God." (Pall Krisztina)

Memories of a girl from Benced about pilgrimage of 2009

This year as every year we, the youth from Benced participated at the pilgrimage to Deva. We hardly waited Saturday, the trip day, to be together, and to visit again the Castle of Deva.

We left Benced on Saturday morning, on 14th of November in 2009. We went with the ministers and youth of neighborhood.

When we arrived to Szeben we visited the town. The weather was bad, but we were happy. We arrived at 11 o'clock to Deva. We went by foot to the castle because finally the sun appeared. The National David Ferenc Youth Association organized the pilgrimage for 12 years.



There were youth and elders, too. We

comemorated life, ideas of David Ferenc. The service began at 2 o'clock p.m., it was led by Fulop Julia, youth minister of Kolozsvár.

Hearing the worship we were happy to participate in this celebration.

After this we went by foot from the Castle to the Town.

We left Deva at 5 o'clock. We would like to thank you to our minister that she organized this trip. And of course for our parents, too. We hope that we will go next year. **(Bedo Erika)**

The month of memorials

November is the month of memorials, stop, tears, and silence.

On 1st of November we organized the commemoration of our souls, dead persons. On 22nd of November we organized our bishop, the establisher of Unitarian Church. His idea, his life must be an example for us. I think that Francis David appeared for many times in our lives. For us and for our ancestors is very important that THERE WERE AND ARE UNITARIANS. We have to maintain this faith, because this gives us force, this gives us water when we are thirsty, this faith stops the thirst of soul, spirit, the thirst for God. This faith stops the thirst of love, because we cried for many times, that we would like to be loved. And how happy are we when we know that around us there are who loved us, there are love, it stops the thirst of homeless, because it teaches us where is the base, on which is standing hard.

The base for what, after Francis David, in this small village your parents fight for. It is in present, too. It was built with alive stones, with love, with traditions... There are still alive stones inside.

Alive stone is the sleeping child, who became the member of our Church.

Alive stones are our youth, after confirmation, who knows who was Francis David, what taught Jesus...

Alive stones are our parents, grandparents, children from Bible school.

Alive stones are you, members of Unitarian Church of Benced..

I think that Francis David would be very proud seeing this community, what they know, can do, working together,. But I am frightened, this alive stones till when take alive the stones, the wall.

Because this I would like to present a story. In these days I got on my yahoo groups an interesting letter. The author of the letter apologized if he hurts somebody when he expressed his opinion. After it he talked about respect. At the end of the letter he wrote love people!!! It is so rare reading at the end of letters beautiful words. My friend wrote this letter for every member of group.

Love people!!! Is a message for everybody

My dear followers, you have to love everybody, the past, our memories, the church, your home, love yourself.

Just this can maintain the base, the alive stones, the alive wall. **(Makkai Ilkei Ildikó)**

Appendix

The report of meeting of Benced Ittre Foundation – NGO.

Report

06.11.2009, la Benced

There were present the staff and the members of NGO.

Items on the agenda:

1. financial rapport
2. future plan
3. ISSN four community newspaper
4. problem of hired deposit

1. The financial rapport was ratified by the members. The price of membership is 15 RON, the price of the newspaper is 1 RON.

Pap Bencedi Gyula vice-president of the Foundation told that the Foundation in March helped the private company SC Advanced Label Technologies SRL transferred money on account of Foundation 16000 RON, giving this money for workers, escaping the big tax. By this process the Foundation got from the company 2000 RON, from what 500 is for sport activities.

2. Future plan: grants for old people, for youth, for telecottage, redacting the community newspaper in English and Hungarian. The most important to work together with Unitarian Church of Benced. Pap Balazs told that it is good idea, because the Church is the community. Pall Krisztina, the president of the NGO said that she would like to be in the staff Pap Attila and Mozes Eموke, justifying that these persons are very active, main voluntary. Everybody ratified it..

3. The community newspaper, Bencedi Zarandok got an international number, being in an international database. Bencedi Levente mentioned that we have to change a little bit profile of the newspaper, and to actualize more the website. The president it could be possible if there would be more helpers, because it is a huge work.. There was mentioned that the newspaper appears in English in Hanska, at Nora Church.

4. There is a problem with hired deposit. The companies don't want to pay. The price is 50 Euro. But for example SC Terfin SRL has problems, the company haven't pay for 6 months. Pall Krisztina said that it is a symbolic price helping the community. Before there was asked to be present the head of the company but he didn't appear.

Pap Bencedi Gyula, vice-president

Pall Krisztina, president

Financial report of 2010

Capital : (02.12.2008.) : 5881,93 RON 7200 RON (help advance by Pall Krisztina)

Income

- Grants (telecottage, youth, olders) 3500 RON
- Membership:RON
- Price of newspaper Bencedi Zarandok: 329 RON
- Rent (Szalon, Terfin): 1430 RON
- Price of summer camp: 1525 RON

Total: 6784 RON

Expenses:

- For grants 7314,00 RON) the program sponsored just 70% of the projects
- Administrative expenses: 500
- Accounting: 250+250 RON
- Food for summer camp: 300 RON
- Presents for helpers: 250 RON

Total: 9206,32 RON

4th of November 2009. Benced.