

## **DID UU KNOW?**

### **Ambulatory Luminaries**

Did you ever notice that the numerous rooms off the Ambulatory of our church are named after (you might have guessed) various Unitarian or Universalist luminaries? This is the second of several articles that will attempt to shine a light on who these Ambulatory Luminaries were and why they merit the honor of being named to these locations.

#### **Francis David, 1520-1579 (Ambulatory Room 14) by Toni Gold**

The next of our Ambulatory Luminaries is Francis David (Ferenc David, 1510-1579), who became the founder of the first faith to be known as Unitarian.

Born in the the Kingdom of Hungary, province of Transylvania (today part of Romania), David was raised Roman Catholic, attended Wittenberg University, became a Catholic priest, then a Lutheran priest, then a Calvinist priest, and finally founded the Unitarian Church of Transylvania. Versatile, to say the least!

He was the leading figure of the non-trinitarian movement during the Protestant Reformation. He was much influenced by the writings of Michael Servetus, the first of our Ambulatory Luminaries, who was burned at the stake in 1553.

David worked in the royal court of the sympathetic John II Sigismund, whom he converted to Unitarianism; in 1558 Sigismund granted religious freedom to his subjects, an astonishing act of toleration during the prevailing religious wars. David was instrumental in organizing the Diet of Torda in 1568, which allowed four religions: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian — the first law guaranteeing freedom of religion in the midst of the religious wars of the Protestant Reformation.

With a change of ruler in 1571 to a Roman Catholic, Istvan Bathory, the policy of toleration ended. The Diet of 1572 declared a prohibition on changing religion, and Roman Catholicism became the established religion once more.

Despite the prohibition against doctrinal changes, Unitarianism gained more converts in Transylvania during that period. 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. 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. He continued to preach his heretical ideas from the pulpit after the Prince ordered him to stop, and was arrested. He 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.

Another Unitarian martyr! Who knew? Makes one appreciate the revolutionary American idea of the separation of church and state.

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