

SÁNDOR KOVÁCS: *The Josephine Edict of Tolerance and the Transylvanian Unitarian Church*

Abstract: The period preceding the Edict of Tolerance (1781) tore at the Transylvanian Unitarian Church. Forced occupation of churches and schools, as well as compulsory conversion to Catholicism jeopardized the mere existence of Unitarianism in Transylvania. A reinvigoration of the Church and religious life could be noticed after the Edict of Tolerance, issued by Joseph II. The present paper presents the strategies adopted by the leaders of the Church to obtain the favour of the ruler. Bishop Stephan Agh was willing to give away even the priceless copy of the *Restitutio Christianismi* to secure the future of the Unitarian community. Of course, Servetus could not save the Unitarians, but fate may have allowed the continuation of Transylvanian Unitarianism. The paper also shows the results of the audience obtained by Bishop Agh with Joseph II, co-regent of the empire. The appendix contains the Bishop's plea addressed to His Royal Highness as well two letters instructing the lay nobility how to behave and act during the Royal audience.

Keywords: Transylvanian Unitarianism, Michel Servet, Edict of Tolerance, Joseph II, Stephan Agh.