

ISTVÁN PÁSZTORI-KUPÁN, *A Secular Decree on Interfaith Acceptance Based on the Bible*

**Abstract:** This study presents the historical and especially the theological message of the Transylvanian tradition of interfaith acceptance as it appears in the decree of the Transylvanian Diet of 1568. The notions of tolerance and acceptance are and have to be understood as belonging to a sixteenth-century society based on social order, and not as a modern liberal concept of the individual's freedom of conscience. Nonetheless, as it appears from the historical lesson, the right of the community to choose its preacher as well as the preferred theological teaching – in a word: the freedom of conscience for the community – was and is much safer than that of the individual. As a result of our analysis, many Western scholars – otherwise well-known authorities on the subject – either ignore this document or even disparage its historical importance, despite the fact that the only other contemporary example of the kind was the *Konfederacja Warszawska* of 1573. By comparison, the Transylvanian secular edict with its exclusive reference to *Romans* 10:17 as its main and only reason for making peace amongst various denominations is unparalleled in any European society of the time. It represents a remarkable theocratic concept of religious tolerance.

**Keywords:** religious tolerance, Transylvanian history, Reformation, secular edicts, freedom of conscience, theocratic tolerance.