

CUPRINS

SÁNDOR KOVÁCS
Către Cititori | 3

STUDII

RÓBERT ZOLTÁN BÁLINT, SÁNDOR LORÁND DEMETER, DÉNES KISS
Șireag de perle?
Analiza sistemului de valori în rândul preoților unitarieni | 5

SÁNDOR KOVÁCS
Istoria edițiilor cărții de cântece unitariene de la 1924
până în prezent | 34

ATELIER

LÓRÁNT TÓKÉS
Pictorii-tâmplari ai familiei Elekes din Ocland | 75

VARIA

BÉLA BOTOND JAKABHÁZI
Turbulențe biblice I. Zippora – ocrotitoarea vieții
(comentariu biblic) | 79

BÉLA BOTOND JAKABHÁZI
Turbulențe biblice II. Saul și vrăjitoarea din Endor
(comentariu biblic) | 87

RECENZII

SÁNDOR ELŐD ŐSZ

Maarten J. AALDERS: *Holland–magyar protestáns kapcsolatok a két világháború között* (Budapest: Kálvin Kiadó, 2023), 447 pp. [Fordította: Téglásy Sándor. Lektorálta: Pusztai Gábor és Lányi Gábor] | 93

LÁSZLÓ SOMOGYI

CZIRE Szabolcs: *Mélység mélységet szólít. Bibliaolvasatok – léttükör* (Kolozsvár: Kolozsvári Protestáns Teológiai Intézet, 2024), 192 pp. | 98

CSABA TÓDOR

Róbert KÖKÉNYESI: *A Selected Sermons of Transylvanian Unitarian Bishop György Enyedi* (Monee: IL, 2025), 239 pp. | 103

Rezumate | 107

Indexat de Religious and Theological Abstracts.



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ABSTRACTS

RÓBERT ZOLTÁN BÁLINT, SÁNDOR LORÁND DEMETER, DÉNES KISS
Strand of Pearls? A Survey of Values Among Unitarian Ministers

This article explores the value system of ministers in the Hungarian Unitarian Church, focusing on how values shape pastoral identity, ministry, and relationships within both the clerical community and congregations. Based on an open-ended questionnaire survey (N = 52), the analysis applies classical value theory and Samuel W. Blizzard's (1914–1976) role typology.

Results show that most ministers define their vocation primarily in theological terms, emphasizing divine calling, faith, and the mediation between God and humans, while a smaller group adopts a more functional, community-oriented perspective. Faith emerges as the central value, complemented by service, humility, love, and community.

Effective ministry is seen as dependent on both internal factors (faith, vocation, emotional stability, moral integrity) and external conditions (supportive relationships, institutional stability). The article also identifies differences by gender and age, reflecting varying emphases on relational, structural, and experiential dimensions.

Overall, the findings highlight that pastoral values are dynamically shaped by theological, social, and institutional contexts.

Keywords: Hungarian Unitarian Church, ministers, pastoral identity, relationships, survey, value system, Blizzard, Samuel W. (1914–1976)

SÁNDOR KOVÁCS

The History of the Unitarian Hymnbook Editions from 1924 to the Present

This article explores the century-long history of the Unitarian hymnbook published in 1924, based on archival sources and primary documents. The research focuses on the editorial work of Márton Pálffi (1873–1936), who contributed the majority of the content with his poems, psalm adaptations, and translations. The article presents the process of preparing the first edition in 1924, congregational resistance, the editorial conflict of 1927, as well as the three Tri-

anon-themed state censorship. The analysis covers the editions published during and after World War II, with particular regard to the 1958 communist censorship, which systematically altered the theological terminology of the hymns. The article documents the reform attempts that have been repeated continuously since 1938 but have never been completed, as well as the detailed proposal by Albert Márkos (1914–1981) and Gyula Péterffy (1909–1979), which sets forth guidelines that remain valid to this day.

Keywords: censorship, church music, hymnology, liturgical reform, Unitarian Church; Márkos, Albert (1914–1981), Pálffi, Márton (1873–1936), Péterffy, Gyula (1909–1979)

LÓRÁNT TÖKÉS

The Elekes Painter-Carpenters of Oklánd

The Unitarian church in Oklánd contains two distinct coffered ceilings created in the second half of the 18th century. While scholarship has traditionally attributed both works to a single András Elekes and his son, the existence of multiple individuals with the same name in the village records complicates this identification. The western ceiling of the nave, completed in 1771, bears an inscription by “András Elekes, carpenter of Homoródoklánd”. This elder master’s career spanned several decades, including works in Székelyderzs and Homoródszentpéter. Based on death records, he was likely born around 1725 and buried in 1783. Another inscription from 1771 identifies an “Andreas Elekes Junior” on the youth gallery, who was likely the elder’s son, born in 1749. Significantly, one ceiling panel was designed by the local school rector, András Kuti, rather than a member of the Elekes family. The eastern ceiling of the former chancel was completed later, in 1786, by “the elder and the younger András Elekes”. The “elder” master in this context is identified as a prominent local carpenter born in 1757, as the original elder master had already passed away. Identifying the “younger” master is more challenging, as two men of similar age lived in the village at the time. Ultimately, the research suggests that, rather than just two individuals, at least three, possibly four, different men named András Elekes, along with András Kuti, contributed to the church’s decoration.

Keywords: 18th century, church history, coffered ceiling, Elekes family, genealogy, inscriptions, Oklánd, painter-carpenter, unitarian church; Elekes, András (1725 (?)–1783 (?), Elekes, András (1757 (?) – ?), Kuti, András (1738–1815)

BÉLA BOTOND JAKABHÁZI

Biblical Turbulence I. Zipporah – Defender of Life (Bible Commentary)

This article provides a theological and existential analysis of one of the most enigmatic passages in the Pentateuch, the “Bridegroom of Blood” episode (Exodus 4:24–26). The author utilizes the metaphor of “biblical turbulence” to describe narratives that disrupt conventional images of God and force readers into painful human depths. The core of the analysis focuses on the liminality of the scene: an overnight lodging on the road where Yahweh, the very God who called Moses to his mission, suddenly attacks and seeks to kill him.

The article argues that this “theological scandal” serves as a narrative threshold, demonstrating that even a chosen leader is not above the covenantal law. A central theme is the radical role reversal: Moses, the future lawgiver, is rendered passive and mute, while his Midianite wife, **Zipporah**, becomes the decisive liturgical actor. By performing a blood ritual (circumcision) with an archaic flint knife, she recognizes the symbolic necessity that Moses neglected. From an **Unitarian perspective**, the author emphasizes that Zipporah does not merely obey but actively protects life – even against a perceived divine threat. The study concludes that the story presents a mature, responsible faith where the preservation of life stands as the ultimate value, often defended by those without formal authority but with the courage to act in the face of ambiguity and silence.

Keywords: biblical turbulence, Book of Exodus, divine violence, liminality, Moses, Pentateuch, Unitarian theology, Zipporah

BÉLA BOTOND JAKABHÁZI

Biblical Turbulence II. Saul and the Witch of Endor (Biblical Commentary)

This article offers a theological and psychological analysis of the biblical narrative of King Saul and the Witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28), exploring the human experience of crisis when all traditional forms of divine guidance fail. The author posits that Saul’s turn to necromancy is not a sign of unbelief, but rather a desperate attempt to find orientation in a state of total divine silence following the death of the prophet Samuel. The analysis moves beyond traditional moralizing interpretations that label the medium a fraud or Saul a mere sinner. Instead, it emphasizes Saul’s existential courage: he does not seek comfort but truth, even when that truth confirms his inevitable defeat and death. From a specifically Unitarian perspective, the article argues that the story underscores individual

responsibility and human dignity. In the face of God's silence, Saul remains an active subject who carries the burden of his decisions without the mediation of a redemptive mechanism. Ultimately, the narrative serves as a witness to a faith that does not seek easy consolations but remains faithful, even in the shadow of unavoidable catastrophe.

Keywords: biblical hermeneutics, divine silence, existential crisis, King Saul, Witch of Endor, Unitarian theology

SÁNDOR ELŐD ŐSZ

Maarten J. AALDERS: *Holland–magyar protestáns kapcsolatok a két világháború között (Dutch-Hungarian Protestant Relationships Between the Two World Wars)* (Budapest: Kálvin Kiadó, 2023), 447 pp. [Fordította: Téglásy Sándor. Lektorálta: Pusztai Gábor és Lányi Gábor]

This review examines Maarten J. Aalders' comprehensive study of the historical and ecclesiastical ties between the Protestant communities of the Netherlands and Hungary during the interwar period. The book explores a relationship spanning over four centuries, which gained new momentum following World War I. A central focus of the work is the humanitarian effort known as the "children's trains": between 1920 and 1930, nearly 29,000 underprivileged Hungarian children were hosted by Dutch families, an action that left a lasting impact on thousands of lives and solidified bilateral social bonds. The review highlights the book's reliance on primary Dutch archival sources, offering Hungarian readers a fresh external viewpoint on their own history, Trianon, and the development of 20th century Protestant identity.

Keywords: children's trains, church history, Dutch–Hungarian relationships, humanitarianism, Protestantism, relationships, Trianon, war

LÁSZLÓ SOMOGYI

CZIRE Szabolcs: *Mélység mélységet szólít. Bibliaolvasatok – léttükör* (Kolozsvár: Kolozsvári Protestáns Teológiai Intézet, 2024), 192 pp.

This review explores Szabolcs Czire's volume *Mélység mélységet szólít. Bibliaolvasatok – léttükör* (Deep Calls to Deep: Bible readings – a mirror of existence), published by the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca. The book comprises twelve edited and revised sermons, categorized into three thematic sections: "Altar of Life," "Heights and Depths," and "Time". Rather than offering ab-

stract systematic theology, Czire presents a “reception-centered” biblical reading that bridges the gap between scholarly exegesis and existential guidance. A defining feature of Czire’s methodology is his extensive use of Hebrew etymology and letter mysticism to reveal deeper spiritual layers of the text. The volume is an excellent example of contemporary biblical theology that remains accessible for all, serving as a “mirror of existence” for the modern reader.

Keywords: biblical exegesis, existential theology, Hebrew mysticism, homiletics, time, letter mysticism, mysticism, Transylvanian Protestantism

CSABA TÓDOR

Róbert Kökényesi: *Selected Sermons of Transylvanian Unitarian Bishop György Enyedi* (Monee: IL, 2025), 239 pp.

This review evaluates the significance of the volume *Selected Sermons of Transylvanian Unitarian Bishop György Enyedi (1555–1597)*, translated and edited by Róbert Kökényesi. The publication fills a critical gap in international scholarship by providing the first English translation of twelve sermons (*conciones*) by György Enyedi, a defining figure of Transylvanian antitrinitarian theology in the 16th century. The reviewer emphasizes that the project was born out of a personal and spiritual motivation within a diaspora Unitarian context, aiming to reintegrate Enyedi’s intellectual heritage into the international theological discourse.

While the review notes some stylistic fragmentation due to the meeting of historical-critical, methodological, and personal-religious registers, it concludes that the work is an invaluable contribution. By making Enyedi’s complex exegetical and apologetic thoughts accessible to English-speaking audiences, the volume opens new perspectives for the international research of early modern antitrinitarianism.

Keywords: 16th century theology, homiletics, internationalization, sermons, translations, Transylvania, unitarianism; Enyedi, György (1555–1597)