

Four short dramas for use in adult religious education classes on Transylvanian history and theology, authored by Rev. Kinga Zsigmond, edited by Rev. Ruth Gibson

ISABELLA (Queen of Transylvania in the mid-1500's)

Historic character drama, authored by Rev. Kinga Zsigmond, edited by Rev. Ruth Gibson

I'm the official queen of Transylvania. It's an unfortunate historical time and an unfortunate situation for me personally. There is no more Great Hungarian Kingdom. The Muslims conquered half of the country including our royal court and strongest fortress, Buda. The Habsburgs conquered the Western part of the country. My husband as the *voivod* of Transylvania has defended his land. No Muslims, no Habsburgs are in Transylvania, we are independent.

The "only " problem with this independence is that Transylvania doesn't have a royal court, or a royal palace. For the time being we are dwelling in the archbishop's palace. Father Martinuzzi, a very educated man, is taking care of things. Better said, he is manipulating me since my husband died after I gave birth to our only child, John. So, here I am with a baby prince, who is going to be the first king, prince, or whatever he may be called, for this sadly independent country.

Oh, no! I just learned that Father Martinuzzi was killed! What's going on here? There are so many cliques among the nobility. Some want the Habsburgs to take over, some want to rely on the court in Constantinople, some want Catholic bishops to come in, others are establishing all kinds of other churches.

I pray for my son to be wise. Protect him, Lord, give him the strength to figure out the best for our country.

JOHN SIGISMUND (son of Isabella)

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I would like to have a father beside me, to listen to his advice. I know my mother prays for me a lot. But I can't see how her God could help me, as I don't trust His deputy here on earth. That deputy--the Catholic Church--just steps on my toes. It has too much hypocrisy and too many creeds. That doesn't fit me well. However I can see that many people are happy with it. The Church's magnificence can make you blind.

My counselors say that I should spend less time with political issues and more time hunting and fighting. But I like books better. I know this country has many enemies,

and I know many of my "colleagues" would like to succeed me in my throne. I'm not going to hurt them. I'm not able, and I'm not willing. Of course, they won't be impressed by my noble heart. Most of all I hope I can be a good king for this country.

Have you heard of my new priest, Francis Daavid? I employed him recently. He speaks foreign languages. He studied in Wittenberg and Frankfurt am Main. He is very progressive. He was a Superintendent first for the Lutherans, and then for the Calvinists. And now, you won't believe it. He is talking about a "clear Christianity" which actually doesn't have to do much with the Trinity.

Holy One! With the help of Francis Daavid we decided in 1568 Anno Domini that everybody could choose his or her own priest and church and that nobody could be punished in religious preferences. I'm very proud of that. It has brought to our tiny land "refugee guests" from all other European countries. Fortunately they all speak Latin, so we can get along pretty well.

BIANDRATA (advisor and physician to Isabella and John Sigismond)

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I'm the Italian doctor you beloved descendents surely don't like. I can understand that. But, remember I protected and cured Isabella. I protected and cured John. I was a good doctor.

And I'm very liberal, that's why I had to leave Italy. I was in Switzerland, Poland, many places, finally I settled down in Transylvania. Many foreigners, radicals like me, came here to live with a clear conscience. We left behind the pope, we left behind Luther, and Calvin. We left behind the doctrine of the Trinity, but something of our Christian tradition has to remain in our religion. I'll stick with Jesus Christ. I like to pray in his name, I like him to take care of me. It's not my fault that Francis Daavid is not able to get along with him. He prays from his heart straight to God, he says. Well, that's great. But I'm sure most people don't want to do that.

Francis doesn't listen to me. Now he is going to have listen to the court. Because now he doesn't have his guardian angel, poor King John who died too young. I have warned him: stop coming up with your new religious ideas—or at least, keep them to yourself. Don't try to promote them in public! But he wouldn't listen. So I went to the court. I turned him in. He is an Innovator, for Goodness sake.

JESUS (central figure in Transylvanian Unitarian theology)

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I never imagined in my life that I'd end up being seen as a God. But you see? Everything is possible. I've become a God for millions and millions. Actually, I wouldn't brag about it; the same thing happened to those twisted, plutocrat bloody Caesars in Rome in my time. Also I know a country these days where people are taught things like this " Hey, we live where everything is possible; we are in America". This gives me quite a lot to think about.

Actually I like these days in America, because some folks there adore me, worship me, cling on me, wait for me, would do everything for me. Still, I'm a little bit afraid of this big to-do. Naturally—it reminds me of when we processed into Jerusalem. You know that story. The rest is... hmm... theology.

Anyhow, I have had some bad times in my eternity as well, especially in the 16th century. In that tiny, tiny place,— Transylvania, some people call it, that “land behind the forest” – there was a man who refused to worship me. Not that I like being worshipped a lot, but you know how we get accustomed to comfortable situations. Once you've had the chance to be an emperor, you don't really miss starving in the desert or being beaten up on the streets.

O.K. I know I'm cynical. But witnessing so much pain and failure, kind of explains my approach. So, that guy, Frances Daavid, was a great guy. He had realized the most important teaching of religion, he understood and practiced Love. He was so loving, so tolerant, it wasn't a surprise for me to see him perish in a dark, cold prison.

The passing centuries have piled thousands of books, interpretations and blood around me. I'm tolerant, oh, God knows I am, but I hate this. People do bloody business in the churches because they want power, authority (for themselves of course), and they hold me responsible for that. They say, “It's for you, Jesus, it's for you, dear Lord.” But I'm not that bloody, I'm not a murderer, I hate atrocity, I can't stand hypocrisy. *Do not* sacrifice people's lives for *me*. I hardly can deal with my own death; don't give me any more of such violence.

When I met Frances Daavid here in heaven, in this exciting eternity, he was very quiet. I thought he would be very upset with me. Thank God, he wasn't. He said to me: "You know Jesus, you did a lot of good things for us, but you pissed me off with your idealism especially because I got bitten by the same bug." He was so honest, and so tolerant. As he always has been.