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THE ROLE OF LUDWIG RICHARD CONRADI IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN AND ROMANIAN ADVENTISM

(PhD Thesis Summary)

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(Summary)

God's mission to sinful humanity is the most beautiful story ever shared, representing the centerpiece of the entire biblical canon. Beginning in the Old Testament with the fall of our proto-fathers, it has continued through the patriarchal period, the history of Israel and the Christian Church, and will conclude with the apocalyptic climax of God's mission. The central event of God's mission is recorded in the Gospels and is contained in the incarnation, ministry, atoning death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Born out of a deep call to conform to the "Great Commission" in the context of the messages of the three angels of Revelation 14, 6 - 12, the story of Adventist mission is one of steady expansion of vision from a limited focus on North American territory to the development of a worldwide missionary commitment.

The context in which Adventism was born was one characterized by a cumulative series of forces and preparatory factors that seemed destined to impel people to devise plans for the rapid worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The economic crisis of 1837 and its aftermath, which extended into the 1840s, somewhat dampened the optimism of many Americans about man's ability to establish the millennium on earth. In this context, people were looking for answers, and millerism had a message that offered answers.

Even though he did not meet the criteria of a speaker of his reputation at all, William Miller was a self-taught man, passionate about history and Bible prophecy, with a lot of common sense and very sincere in his beliefs. Full of modesty, preferring the simple dress of a farmer, he impacted anyone who would listen to him for five minutes, his sincerity, fairness of judgement and biblical-historical expertise giving his listeners the assurance of logical reasoning. Seen at first as a great aberration, William Miller's teaching polarized individuals and churches as they lived through the year of the end of the world.

The profile of his message was an imminent premillennial Parousia, contrary to the majority of his days, making it a doctrinal peculiarity of his movement. The message bore the imprint of extensive biblical reasoning, strongly rooted in history, with clear prophetic parallels between "prediction and fulfilment". Not interested in popularity, but only in people accepting Jesus Christ and joyfully embracing His return, Miller's preaching had nothing extravagant, only elements that placed a serious solemnity in the minds of the audience. The imminence of Christ's return made him bear on his soul the burden of saving his fellow men and made his message distinctive.

In spreading his message, William Miller was aided by remarkable, effective and thoughtful men from the various denominations of his time, men who, inspired by the urgency of the prophetic message, transformed Millerism into a major religious movement. As a result, Millerism was a mass, highly comprehensive movement, proving to be a brilliant product of modern methods of spreading William Miller's message, such as newspapers, itinerant

speakers and professional organizers. People like Joshua Himes, Joshiah Litch and Charles Fitch came alongside Miller theologian and became the men of action he needed, being his exceptional calling card. These collaborators defined and expanded Miller's interpretive framework, equipped Millerite pastors with the latest visual missional technology, and powerfully promoted his message through thoughtful evangelistic strategies. From the perspective of reviving the greatly diminished evangelistic impulse, Millerism was seen as the final segment of the Second Religious Awakening.

Through a historicist hermeneutic peculiar to biblical prophecy, Millerism acquired a perspective of an imminent, literal and visible premillennial Parousia in 1843, and this apocalyptic perspective became an integral part of the millerite mission. As a result, they felt an urgent responsibility to proclaim worldwide the news of Christ's imminent judgment and return, not through individual witness, but only on a macro level, to all nations, through publications. However, "disappointment" was the watchword that characterized Millerism after October 22, 1844. One of the most

important missiological and soteriological consequences of the great disappointment was the cessation of all missionary effort, the hopefuls being fully aware that their mission was over because God's "door of mercy" had closed against the churches that had rejected the millerite message.

Adventism, as it is known today, was born in early 1845, on the one hand in a crucible of dashed hopes, confusion and even fanaticism, and on the other out of a deep spiritual revival of the Millerite Movement. From the minority that gradually distanced itself from the millerite group and continued to seek a rational biblical reason for what occurred on October 22, 1844, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was later born.

To begin with, Seventh-day Adventism had to overcome many of the theological consequences of millerism, subsequently the emergence of new leaders (Hiram Edson, Joseph Bates, James and Ellen White, and John Andrews), doctrinal development, organizational ideological strategies were and institutional factors that 1ed this core to

denominationalism. Gradually, however, departing from the millerite principles of interpretation, which they believed to be correct, Adventist pioneers rejected Church authority and Tradition, using only the Bible as a tool in theological construction. They compared verse by verse, letting each word find its own meaning. They continued by using prophetic parallelism, typology and the interpretation of symbolic figures, seen from a historicist perspective. In this way, they laid the foundations for truths that have come to be known in Adventist historiography as "pillars of faith" or "ancient milestones".

Out of an urgent need to regulate the ownership of church buildings and to organize publishing activity, the Sabbatarian Adventist group organized itself into what is today the Adventist Church, and has since had the ability to offer pastoral credentials, the legal means for fundraising, the ability to develop institutions, and to meet missionary challenges. In tension with its eschatology, the Seventh-day Adventist Church later committed itself to promoting health and education, and it even came to lead missiology and institutionalism.

In the early years after the Disappointment, engaged in a process of maturation. Adventism was inward-looking, primarily concerned with theological crystallization and organizational formation, with a slight upward missionary trend. The limited missionary concept was marked, on the one hand, by a realistic perception of its own limited resources and the imminent return of Christ, and, on the other hand, by the burden and failure of other enormous denominations to spread the gospel. Any attempt to take the new faith outside of the United States of America was considered a waste of time and effort, even unbelief in the imminent return of Christ.

The genius of the pioneers was that they were able to capture the millennial dynamic, expanding and applying it to the three angels' imperative message to preach it to "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" (Rev. 14, 6). By 1874 there was a period of transition and gradual expansion of the conception of the missionary task from the idea of an imminent second coming to the realization that, before the Parousia, the

Adventist message still had to be proclaimed to the world.

Initially, Seventh-day Adventists developed a mission limited to the North American area rather than a worldwide mission. Very soon, however, a number of factors altered this narrow missionary perspective. The waves of European immigrants arriving in the United States in need of help and the realization that they "must preach again" (Rev. 10, 11) prompted American Adventists to think of ways and means to offer help and hope to these people. With the help of the printed page, itinerant preachers, public sermons, lay evangelists, and the Sabbath school, coupled with sound theological perspective, Adventists slowly but surely began to fulfill the mission to which they felt called.

Subsequently, immigrant converts to Adventism in America felt the urgent need to convert their families and friends and took this burden upon themselves, willing to return to their homelands with the Adventist message at their own expense. It was they who helped the Adventist Church to understand that it must gradually expand its mission. Through Michael

Belina Czechowski Adventism unofficially crossed the Atlantic, with European Adventists pressing the American Adventist Church to broaden its missionary focus to the whole world. With the help of place-toplace preaching and magazine publishing, he quickly planted a missionary church, leaving countless small groups of Adventist believers in many countries. Also, by deciding to work on his own, Czechowski became the forerunner of Adventism's self-supporting mission concept. The Swiss Adventists' request for experienced pastor, coupled with the changes in Ellen Adventism and White's continued encouragement, changed the perception of the Seventhday Adventist Church, radically altering its concept of mission.

The arrival of John Nevins Andrews in Europe in 1874 represented the transition in the Adventist Church's missionary mentality from a local and insular outlook to a worldwide perspective. He single-handedly defined the role of mission and the missionary, teaching the church to do mission and adapt to local and cross-cultural circumstances. Through his

sacrificial work the foundations were laid for the further development of Adventism in Central and Eastern Europe and he provided a model of sacrifice and dedication. His contributions as a leader, missionary and editor broadened the missionary perspective and helped the newly born church develop a stronger sense of outreach. With his reporting system, he kept American believers connected to European missionary activity, stimulating them to see the great opportunities opening up and making them aware of the magnitude of the task entrusted to them. For all its initial slow and cumbersome missionary design, Adventism was nevertheless successfully transplanted to Europe.

I can therefore say that the early leaders of the Adventist Church were very talented people who took on extraordinary tasks, which they accomplished with very limited resources and in a very short period of time. They developed and perfected a doctrinal system to provide the church with an effective program and plan for spiritual and numerical growth. Despite their differences, they were enormously successful both individually and collectively.

The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is identified with the fascinating story of a Spirit-inspired movement, driven forward to progress through the lives of people with complex and dynamic personalities, strengths and often weaknesses. Under the researcher's magnifying glass, some of these historical figures raise serious questions about both their personalities and their work and influence. By descending respectfully but analytically into the reality of their lives, into their moments of joy or sorrow, into the sacrifices and struggles they made with genuine commitment, into the midst of their dedication, into their moments of glory or their mediocrity, into their unparalleled courage or their moments of stubbornness and resistance, you can see that these people become much more human and that, however noble their lives, they can end tragically.

In 1883, with the untimely death of John Andrews, the Adventist Church in Central Europe was not only without a genuine leader, but was in a disastrous, very weak and fragile state. With no bold medium to long-term mission strategy, the 200

members were struggling to meet the financial demands of the Basel, Switzerland, publishing house, and the general feeling was that Europe was a particularly difficult mission field. With few, discouraged and disorganised workers, Europe had become the ideal candidate for an unsuccessful type of mission. However, a few years later, the European Adventist Church was becoming a thriving nucleus of mission churches with a fantastic vision and prospect for growth. The metamorphosis happened because of one man's leadership and vision: Ludwig Richard Conradi.

Even though more information is now available about his ministry and work, however, as a person Ludwig Richard Conradi remains a mystery, and it is as yet impossible for any researcher to obtain and create a clear and faithful picture of his personality, which often brings together seemingly irreconcilable opposites. This is partly because there are very few autobiographical references in his books and articles, and partly because a picture of his problematic nature has barely been "scribbled" from the fragmentary and

hazy memories or fleeting impressions of those who knew him personally.

Conradi was perhaps that unique and unique combination of the scholarly skills of John Andrews and the tireless energy of Mikhail Czechowski, possessing that rare quality of genuine leaders to dynamically combine in his own personality unique maximum efficiency in talents. work and implementation of ideas and his own vision, always inspiring courage and confidence in those around him. His perseverance, versatility, visionary spirit and performance extraordinary have made him unquestionably the most successful missionary in the Adventist Church, profoundly impacting members, leaders and institutions like no other. He was simply the embodiment of the fundamental shift in the missionary perception of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Looking closely at his life, his character traits, his inner turmoil and tendencies in behaviour, one can find many characteristics of a temperament that combines the hard-to-please tendency of the choleric with the perfectionism of the melancholic. Also,

Conradi's skills and qualities are closely linked to his achievements and vice versa. He was the type of the self-educated person who maintains a lifelong thirst for knowledge by making the most of every opportunity for personal development. On the one hand, Conradi was a very warm, sincere and devoted man, an "angel from heaven", ready at any time to get involved in the very personal affairs of his colleagues and parishioners, happy to help wherever he could. He loved people and for the sole purpose of "winning" them to God's cause he devoted and sacrificed his whole life. Conradi had such a strong personality that people literally could not resist him, following him with great enthusiasm without question.

Diplomatic, capable, and highly intelligent, Conradi knew how to deal well with people, especially when it came to achieving his goals or implementing his ideas and plans, and was by far the most successful Adventist organizer and "missionary strategist" of his day. Without a doubt, Ludwig Conradi was a born leader, ambitious, ready at any time to excel and perform on all levels.

At the same time, Conradi was a man of unusual energy, combining in his own person excellent organisational, commercial and financial skills with an innate charisma as a preacher, theologian, teacher and public evangelist, qualities which enabled him to bring under his control the further development of the Adventist Church in Europe. He was highly creative, alert, decisive and thorough, renowned for his tenacity and foresight. It was difficult to oppose or contradict him, not only because of his very strong personality, but also because of his vast general knowledge, which he made full use of whenever he had the opportunity.

Equally motley, however, is the picture of the weaknesses and flaws of his temperament, from their perspective Conradi is often cast in a less than glowing light. Ludwig Conradi showed a tendency towards absolutism and domination, his Spartan character bringing out his patriarchal personality and military officer mentality very well. Prone to self-sufficiency and with a strong impulse towards freedom, Conradi could be tyrannical and had absolutely no ability to tolerate any criticism or contradiction, certainly unable

to accept any fault. In view of his authoritarian, even domineering, nature and aggressive temperament, he was quite difficult to work with. As strong as he was, he was sensitive and easily upset.

Conradi was a consummate strategist, a bold visionary, characterized by relentless enthusiasm and an abiding passion for mission, church development and growth, his leadership giving rise to one of the most dynamic missionary models in Adventist mission history. He was characterised by fantastic mobility and flexibility, taking on radical decisions and brilliant moves on the European Adventist mission chessboard other. Because he always anticipated like no organisational growth, Conradi created effective church structures that consistently enabled even greater growth, maximising the efficiency of the work of the organisations he led. Conradi was a keen and keen observer of successful leaders and evangelists. emphasizing their ongoing training and coordination in their areas of work. His personal example gave his leadership unquestionable credibility, succeeding in generating in European church members a commitment that overcame difficulties and shortcomings.

As a preacher, lecturer and evangelist, Conradi had an extraordinary ability to captivate his audience and take them exactly where he wanted them to go, and was able to inspire them with exceptional speeches. He was charismatic and an excellent speaker, with exceptional public speaking, demonstrated by his audience appeal and the results materialized in many conversions in different parts of the world. His sermons were always fresh, extensive, never superficial, and sprang from a deep and thorough study of the Bible, the main objective of his preaching being, on the one hand, to proclaim the "Present Truth" and to confess Christ, and on the other hand, to lead the hearers to salvation by leading them to obedience, faith and change.

With an unshakeable enthusiasm and a constantly moving, pragmatic nature and an almost unquenchable drive for action, Conradi attended numerous conferences and undertook missionary journeys, in his decades of activity crossing the Atlantic more than 70 times, preaching the Gospel on four

continents and in all European countries, establishing and strengthening mission centres. His love for people and his fiery zeal led him to preach the Adventist message in over 63 different languages, baptizing new converts in the Nile and Jordan or in the Black, Baltic and Mediterranean Seas.

Learning from experience that faithfully following sound and solid strategies, the missionary activities undertaken will lead to steady church growth, Conradi has been guided to success by principles that transcend time and space and can serve as a guide in any missionary endeavour today.

He was therefore careful to learn from the mistakes of his predecessors, his great merit being that he remained sensitive to European political, cultural and religious circumstances and context, adapting and acculturating Adventism. He contextualized his message and methods, keeping distinctive and potentially divisive teachings in the background. While he was clever and skilful enough not to eliminate what mattered to European Christians, Conradi was also very concerned to give the European Adventist Church a

strong local identity. He sought to demonstrate the compatibility of the Adventist faith with various European Protestant traditions, emphasizing an Adventism with indigenous roots that had its roots in a historic European Adventism and preceded the American one

In his evangelistic endeavours, Conradi never went haphazardly and never started from scratch, his strategy, to which he remained faithful over the years, being that, once in a new area of work, he would immediately contact German immigrants. At the same time, Conradi referred to the local church as a microsociety in which each member acts as a missionary and leads others to Christ. From his point of view, the rationale for dedication was not only related to the seriousness and reliability of a project, but especially to the fact that it offered an eschatological perspective to the projects presented.

Another missionary strategy was also to stay and work in one place until a new church was planted, thus creating a secure environment in which new believers could find strength and fellowship. He succeeded in instilling in the souls of European Adventists a strong sense of their own identity, uniting all members, especially the German-speaking ones, into one big family. The driving force behind this unwavering zeal was the abiding conviction that he was in possession of the 'Present Truth', creating among his co-workers an almost elitist sense of mission.

Conradi took a trilateral approach to European territory that involved evangelism through literature, a pastor's public ministry, and Bible studies, following the pietist model. Conradi demanded much sacrifice, hard work and dedication, expecting total commitment from his staff, and was consistent throughout his career in creating an eschatological and apocalyptic framework for any missionary endeavor.

Conradian missiology has also revolutionized and reconfigured the concept of education among European Adventists, with one of its major goals being to find local leaders to train in established Adventist schools and then return to their home countries to work as evangelists, speakers and preachers. It was also he who developed a perspective unparalleled in European

society at the time, introducing women to medical missionary and peddling work.

Conradi invested all available resources and experimented with different missionary approaches in different contexts, always evaluating the results and reconsidering approaches and methods that proved ineffective. He was thus able to set high standards before his workers, modelled on those approaches that had proved effective over time in different contexts. He continually found and adapted simple but highly effective ways of working, always focused on results.

Over the years, in addition to his intense missionary, preaching and organisational work, Ludwig Conradi acquired considerable theological and ecclesiastical knowledge, which he reflected in a vast literature throughout Europe, his writings gaining an "almost canonical reputation". This was because he never stopped studying, but continued to develop continually, becoming an extraordinarily talented and capable writer, by far the most prolific European Adventist author and editor to date. In addition to his many responsibilities in the European field, he found

time to translate and write numerous books, booklets, missionary reports, essays and theological articles for various Adventist journals and magazines. His writings are characterized by spirituality, seriousness and maturity of thought, with a distinct European flavor and aroma in content, style and appearance.

He was fully aware that beyond the pulpit, the printed page is a force that can change the world, so he invested heavily in this area. The number of his books and treatises is estimated at a total of twelve to fifteen million copies, with many of his publications translated into other languages. These figures are truly impressive and unparalleled to this day, and the revenue from their sale is also considerable. This prolific literature maintained his influence and ability to shape the European Church long after he left the Church and even after his death in 1939.

The main sources for investigating and shaping a "Conradian" theological perspective are his numerous articles and reports to various church publications, letters to individuals and institutions, and pamphlets and books published over time. His theological interpretations are by no means superficial, the soundness of his biblical argument placing him far above the unproblematic expositions of other Adventist pioneers. They spring from thorough systematic research, are based on a 19th-century methodology, and are supported by numerous historical and ecclesiastical bibliographical references.

Over the years of its activity, "Conradian" theology has been a downward, regressive dynamic in relation to the fundamental principles of the Adventist Church, marked by doubt and distrust, inconsistent hermeneutics, the formation and consolidation of independent personal opinions, personal and public rejection, and, last but not least, the consistent pursuit of a personal direction, wrong in many respects, until leaving the church. The theological perspective, at whatever stage of his development, shaped his public discourse, leadership and missiology, while decisively influencing for more than half a century the Adventist churches in Central and Eastern Europe that he founded and led.

Although there have been several attempts to present "Conradian" theology diachronically, however, perhaps the most accessible form is a synchronic approach and the framing of its concepts into two broad categories. In the first category, one can include the truths he held in common with the Adventist Church until the end of his life, from this point of view only the principle of observance of the biblical seventh-day Sabbath remains the constant of "Conradian" theology. In the second category, the aspects that underwent changes and led to his separation from the church can be included

Out of a desire to give European Adventism a Protestant identity with indigenous roots, Conradi shifted the emphasis from an American Adventism rooted in Calvinism and Puritanism to a European Adventism strongly influenced by Lutheranism and Pietism. Conradi also came to believe that the proclamation of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 was fulfilled in the work of the Reformers and saw no special divine providence in the emergence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He

abandoned the Adventist conception that the Millerite Movement was the fulfillment of the first angel's message, that Samuel S. Snow was the second angel, and that the Adventist Movement was the fulfillment of the third angel. He claimed that the "everlasting Gospel" had been preached all along, only that it would have a final and complete fulfillment in the last days through a preaching of the Word, himself seeing himself as part of this prophesied movement.

As might be expected, Conradi also linked the imminent Parousia to the Reformation, suggesting that the Reformers had correctly accounted for prophetic time, subsequently being a correct benchmark for other theologians to interpret in relation to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. He brought to Adventist public attention the Reformers' conceptions of the end time and the various events that were to take place, conceptions that dramatically influenced ecclesiastical decisions in the context of World War I. Thus, Conradi's methodology of continually relating to the Reformers led to misunderstandings that had negative consequences for Adventism.

There were also changes in the way Conradi related to the doctrine of the Sanctuary, a subject that formed the basis of the Millerite Movement and the Adventist Church. Even though in the first instance he retained the traditional Adventist interpretation of the Sanctuary, however, over time his theological discourse changed with regard to its meaning and function

Adventist ecclesiology to be largely determined by their apocalyptic outlook, regarding Adventists as the "remnant," "true Israel," and "the sealed ones" of the end time, without totally removing non-Adventists from the Church of God equation, yet toward the end of his life his continued reference to the Reformation period changed his theological discourse on this point as well. In his later years, the Seventh-day Baptist Church, which he also joined in the last years of his life, served for him as a bridge between the 16th century Reformation and the missionary period of the 20th century.

Ludwig Richard Conradi's missionary success increased the confidence of church leaders in the United States in him, giving him a great deal of freedom of movement in dealing with ecclesiastical matters in Europe. So for a little more than a quarter of a century, it was Conradi who made the major decisions, building a church in his own image, in competition with the American church and with a strong missionary sense.

The missionary strong momentum that preceded the outbreak of World War I crippled almost every effort by European leaders to sort out the administrative aspects of the church-state relationship, and at the outbreak of the war European Adventists were totally unprepared to deal with the damage the conflict would do to the church. Faced with the problem of compulsory recruitment and bearing arms even on the Sabbath, the pragmatic thinking of Conradi and the other German leaders placed the European Adventist Church in danger of abandoning convictions and principles, finding itself in the position of having to compromise in order to preserve its freedom and organisational structure, without considering another

approach that would not lead to a conflict of identity. Thus, compromise by church leaders, dissatisfaction with leadership decisions, the alleged "new light", personal issues of self-centeredness, and the quest to hold high positions in the church gave rise to the largest splinter group in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, namely the Reform Movement. Any reconciliation efforts initiated by the General Conference were doomed to failure, further deepening the existing crisis.

The decisions taken after the end of the war by the General Conference displeased and deeply affected Conradi, and all the efforts were seen as a personal affront. Even though he later worked as field secretary for the General Conference, preaching and baptizing souls for Christ all over the world, Ludwig Conradi took firm steps towards separation from the Seventhday Adventist Church. As with other strong Adventist leaders, his apostasy was a lengthy process, with the causes of his separation from the church being a mix of human/psychological, relational and theological reasons. From this combination of factors, we can conclude that Conradi's reaction was somewhat normal,

although the issues involved could have been resolved in a conciliatory manner, if he had wished so himself.

Conradi spent the last years of his life as a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church, where he was also granted pastoral credentials, focusing with all available resources on destroying everything he had built a lifetime on. His sudden death led to the disintegration of the young churches he had founded.

The following reasons can be listed for the late decision to convert to Seventh-day Baptism: the changes that took place in Adventism after the end of the First World War, which Conradi could not cope with; only within this church was he able to retain what had once made him an Adventist; the need for validation, and the desire to interpret the Scriptures freely.

No one has had a more formative influence on European Adventism than Ludwig Richard Conradi. For nearly half a century, as preacher, administrator, teacher and author he shaped the face, structure and theology of Adventism in Central and Eastern Europe, and a distinctive type of Adventism is linked to his name. As one of the most gifted Adventist leaders, his influence and charisma have left a legacy unmatched to this day. Often, Conradi's life and work have been evaluated only through the lens of numbers, which point to the beautiful and positive side of all he stood for, especially as an administrator. Beyond this, his real influence as the spiritual guide of European Adventism was determined by the moral qualities and motivations behind his decisions. Although outwardly all seemed well, subtle influences and forces were at work, adversely affecting the European church for many years after his departure and even after his death. Felt on many levels, his influence produced an European Adventism that was very different from the American one.

Returning to "Conradian" missiology, it should be noted that his dream was permanently linked to the idea of creating a strong and missional European church, competitive with the American one, a church where people could find answers to theological questions, offer metaphysical hope and be a home for every believer. Through strong leadership, he established an Urban Mission Center in Hamburg, Germany, from where he set out, through systematic growth strategies, to expand the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany and, through Europe, throughout the world. There he leased or purchased premises and land to serve the various missionary purposes he had undertaken.

Starting from sound institutional and economic policies and with rigorous management, he developed a very strong material base, which provided the necessary comfort for further missionary work. Thus, in Hamburg he established the Seventh-day Adventist Association to provide a legal framework and insurance for church property, paving the way for subsequent real estate acquisitions. His educational policies and the urgent need for missionaries arriving in Hamburg to be trained and empowered with the right information and techniques also led Conradi to open an Adventist Missionary School, first in Hamburg and later in Friedensau. With the school's move to Friedensau, he was the architect of a healthy, vegetarian food factory and bakery, a year later adding a sanatorium there. At the same time, he moved the Adventist publishing house from Basel to Hamburg and founded a new publishing company called Internationale Traktatgesellschaft. Also under his baton, an organisation for the relief of the people, called Christlicher Hilfeverein, was founded. Last but not least, his grandiose missionary outlook led him to think up and implement plans for foreign mission on the African continent, the Near East, Asia and other parts of the world.

While developing a solid material base and setting up and organizing new institutions and organizations, Conradi invested in people, developing a broad missionary program, which he implemented consistently in several stages. Through a network of lay missions, which he created and coordinated with great skill, he reached district after district, city after city and country after country, succeeding in "winning souls" for Christ and implanting Adventism in most European countries

His missionary program was scrupulously implemented in four distinct, strongly connected stages with fantastic impact.

In the first stage, Conradi focused his resources to train leaders and lay people in missionary work so that they would be able to take on various missionary tasks. Thus, he organized courses to train colporteurs, Bible workers and pastors, making the Friedensau Missionary School the main training and cultural center for any member of the Adventist Church in Central and Eastern Europe who wanted to work full-time for the church. At the same time, Conradi also made a systematic effort to train the laity, making use of some excellent training centers, such as the Sabbath School Group, the "Tabitha" Missionary Group, the Adventist Youth Association, such training centers subsequently contributing to winning souls for Christ.

In the second phase, Conradi emphasized those missionary activities that put European Adventists in direct contact with non-Adventists to perceive and awaken their religious interest through interaction and conversations on a personal level. Thus, he used and

perfected various methods, such as peddling, the work of the port mission center, the volunteer missionary club, and Sunday school for children.

All the missionary efforts up to this point were aimed at preparing a context for the entrance of Bible workers and preachers, who could, in this third stage, offer individual or group Bible studies to those interested. Held in public halls or people's homes, in catechetical groups or by correspondence, the Bible studies offered by Conradi's teams provided a setting for those interested to become familiar with the fundamental principles of the Bible as understood and preached by the Adventist Church.

The main missionary activity in the last phase was a final effort to draw church sympathisers into the Adventist community. In most cases, this missionary effort consisted of an invitation to a series of public presentations on biblical topics.

It has also made Germany and Central and Eastern Europe, respectively, the driving force of foreign mission, sending missionaries to Africa, the Near East and South Africa through its rigorous missionary programme. Thus Europe became a second missionary base, alongside North America, for the foreign mission. The expansion of Adventist missionary work in Europe peaked shortly before the outbreak of World War I, and the period 1889-1914 can rightly be called the "golden years" of European Adventism

Passionate about "winning souls" and with a burning desire to embrace his divine calling to "go into all the world" and "make disciples", upon his conversion Ludwig Conradi devoted his whole life to preaching the Gospel, baptising sincere believers and organising them into groups and churches, and was among the few things he remained faithful to until the end of his life, regardless of denomination. As part of his organizational management, Conradi undertook extensive missionary journeys, racking up thousands of miles traveled by ship, train, or simply horse and wagon, traveling the world with great personal effort and stress, sometimes at the risk of his own life, to advance Adventism. He was always sure that "God always has a way".

Also as part of his organisational management it should be added that he created institutional factors, which led to a strong missionary church, able to adapt easily to the challenges of the time and to be successful in planting new churches in any circumstance or context. Conradi created smaller administrative structures, constantly subdividing the structure of the church to provide greater autonomy and to help local churches more easily fulfill their missionary goals.

His organizational perspective can best be captured by examining an unique "experiment" in the history of the worldwide Adventist Church known as the European General Conference, of which he was the protagonist. As president of this European higher body, he saw himself in a partnership with the American administrative unit, feeling constantly motivated by its numerical and financial superiority. Thus, until the dissolution of the European General Conference, Conradi engaged in fierce competition with the American General Conference both in terms of finances and membership, taking total decision-making and action liberties. When he left the church, he left

organizational structures that capture his organizational genius very well.

Conradi was also considered the "financial expert" of the Adventist community of his day, his financial policies directly influencing his missionary successes. His genius in this area can be gleaned from the reports in which he informed his readers of the moves he was planning in order to arouse missionary zeal and get them on his side. Beyond information, he conducted extensive fund-raising campaigns, always trying to find new ways to raise additional funds for the mission. Conradi was also a proponent of financial transparency and built strong auditing policies.

The "Conradian" missionary paradigm was also successfully implemented in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic area with his own specific approach, following the same intentions, plans and working methods successfully tested in Germany and other parts of Europe. Only with such a well-developed strategy could Adventism be implanted in this area and only in this way could it survive the Orthodox steamroller

determined to nip in the bud any new and foreign religious current.

Ludwig Conradi carried out an impressive missionary effort in this part of Europe, first alone, then together with his foreign collaborators, opening two new access routes for the Adventist Church to Eastern Europe, through the Transylvanian gate and, starting with Dobrogea, also through the Kingdom of Romania. These partners of Conradi's were devout, God-fearing and people-loving people, who took from him the energy, missionary spirit, sense of duty and the elitist principle that they possessed the "present truth" that must be transmitted to the whole world. These were faithful, gifted and very valuable people, willing to take risks and sacrifice everything for the advancement of "the cause". As in Europe, without their support, Adventism would probably have died before it was born in Romania

His missionary approach, which remained consistent with his strategy of seeking out Germanspeakers first, meant that the first generation of native Adventist pastors were exclusively of German origin, their linguistic, legal and cultural peculiarities making them more receptive to the Adventist message. Later, through them, Adventism made its way into the hearts of Romanians and Hungarians, from among whom the first native Romanian pastors later arose, educated and trained to become missionaries and pastors in Adventist mission schools in Europe, especially in Friedensau.

Through this team of mentored servants of God, Conradi exercised his strong leadership and rigorously pursued the same systematic church growth strategies. By applying the same sound institutional and economic policies and rigorous management, a strong material base was developed in the Romanian area as well, which ensured the comfort of subsequent missionary work.

Thus, the Union of Evangelical Communities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania was organized, respectively the "Word of the Gospel" Society, thus providing the ecclesiastical and legal framework for institutional development. Subsequently, one by one, a publishing house and a printing house were established in Bucharest, with the Hamburg publishing house offering its support both by sending human resources and providing equipment. Also, first in Focşani, then in Diciosânmartin and Stupini, a Missionary School was established to train young Romanians. At the same time, although serious efforts were made to set up a Sanatorium in Romania, the project was abandoned for various reasons that can only be inferred.

Especially after the achievement of the "Great Union" and the organization of the Romanian Union, the same scrupulous "conradian" missionary program was developed in Romania, in four distinct but strongly interconnected stages, through which Adventist leaders and laymen could obtain missionary training, could interact with non-Adventists through publications or on a personal level to awaken their interest in Scripture and Adventist doctrine, could offer individual or group Bible studies to those interested, and could present a series of public Bible-themed lectures to draw church sympathizers into the Adventist community.

With this missionary outlook, in 1930 Romania ranked fifth in the world in terms of membership,

second only to the United States, Germany, the U.S.S.R. and the Philippine Islands, as Romanians accepted the truth faster than pastors could train and baptize them. Two years later, the year Ludwig Conradi left the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Romanian Union, comprising six Conferences, had 13,042 members, organized in 449 churches, a growth achieved under conditions of fierce opposition and bitter persecution. All this growth in human resources and material base placed Romania among the countries that could afford to train and send missionaries to foreign fields.

Therefore, based on the realities discovered in the doctoral research and which I have presented above, I can happily state that both the general working hypothesis and the secondary hypotheses have been successfully tested. In this context, I can make the following statements: Ludwig Richard Conradi was instrumental in the successful transplantation and development of European and Romanian Adventism. Also, the complexity of his personality, leadership, organizational and financial management, theology, but

especially his missionary strategy have been decisive for the consolidation and development of the European Adventist Church. At the same time, the German model of organization and functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church served as a model for other countries. including Romania. Thirdly, its theology and its way of relating to the American church leaders, namely Ellen White, generated, on the one hand, an European Adventism different from the American one and strongly under its influence, and, on the other hand, were causes that led to the split of the European Adventist Church and its separation from the church. Last but not least, the same "conradian" missionary paradigm, tested and applied in Germany and in various countries of Central and Eastern Europe, has been successfully implemented in Romania.

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