

## CHURCH, SECT, AND GOVERNMENT CONTROL: A HISTORY OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN AUSTRIA, 1890-1975

Author: **Daniel Heinz**. Ph.D., 1991

Adviser: Daniel A. Augsburg.

Seventh-day Adventism, a young American-based denomination, encountered strenuous opposition when it first reached Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. This was especially true in Austria, where traditional allegiance to Roman Catholicism, linked with a strong emphasis on cultural continuity, constituted the tenor of social life.

Although the Adventist church has been present in Austria for almost a hundred years, its influence and size have remained insignificant. Baptists and Methodists have had the same disappointing experience. Austria is certainly one of the most difficult countries for evangelical mission outreach in Europe.

This dissertation not only describes the history of Seventh-day Adventism in Austria but also examines the relationship of the denomination to its political and religious milieu. How did the Austrian Adventists conduct themselves under the shadow of the predominant Catholic Church? How did they relate to the different forms of government such as monarchy, fascism, and National Socialism? Which missionary methods were employed to counteract the influence of a largely hostile church and state and to adapt to the environment? These and related questions are explored with the anticipation that this study may furnish valuable insights to stimulate further discussion of church-state relationships and to provide a basis for continuing investigation of the dynamics involved in encounters of minority religions with hostile socio-cultural settings.

Chapter I sketches the origin and progress of the Adventist mission in Central Europe, dealing with the contributions of missionaries such as M. B. Czechowski, J. N. Andrews, and L. R. Conradi.

Chapter II treats the difficult beginnings of Adventist mission work in Austria-Hungary.

Chapter III describes Adventism during the inter-war period.

Chapter IV deals with Adventism in the corporative state and its adaptation during the Nazi period.

Chapter V discusses the post-war development of Adventism until 1975.

In overview, the Adventist church's adaptability from the outset of its existence in Austria facilitated denominational growth. The negative side of this approach was revealed during the Third Reich by the misuse of adaptability in making certain unwarranted concessions and compromises. Today flexibility still seems necessary to meet societal changes in Austria.