

# Vogel, Otto

## (1895–1954)

### WINFRIED VOGEL

Winfried Vogel, Th.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States) has served as pastor and lecturer in Old Testament and Practical Theology at different colleges and seminaries in Europe. He was president of Bogenhofen Seminary in Austria for fifteen years. Currently, he is editor and producer at the SDA European Media Center located in Germany and hosts a weekly talk show on biblical topics. Vogel has published two books and numerous articles.

Otto Vogel was an administrator of the Seventh-day Adventist institution at Friedensau, Germany during the Second World War.

### Early Years and Conversion

Otto Vogel was born on December 7, 1895 in Saxony, Germany.<sup>1</sup> His grandmother had become an Adventist when traveling colporteurs from the Rhineland toured Saxony and sold Christian literature. Eventually one of her daughters, the mother of Otto, became an Adventist when he was

still a small child, and she instilled in him a devotion to the end-time message and the Adventist Church. Otto was eventually baptized by Gerhard Perk, pioneer missionary to Russia.

### Into Church Service

Vogel became a wholesale trader by profession but sometime in the 1920s he followed a special call to literature evangelism issued by Ludwig R. Conradi at a large church gathering. Due to Vogel's efforts a new church was established in Limbach, Saxony. He was elder of the church until he was called to serve at Friedensau, the oldest theological training institution in Europe, which had been founded in 1899. The business manager there at the time, Willi Hans, knew the newly baptized couple, Otto and Rosa Vogel, from his Sabbath School class in the



Otto Vogel with wife Rosa, son Heinz (8 yrs old), and twin daughters.

Photo courtesy of Winfried Vogel.

Chemnitz Church twenty years before, and in 1940 he suggested to call Otto to Friedensau as an accountant and assistant to the manager. When the manager retired, Otto took over his position.

## Administrator

The situation on the Friedensau campus was very challenging, given that this was the middle of the Second World War. After the German army, which had maintained a military hospital for some years, had to leave in 1945, the Soviets occupied the campus and installed their own military hospital until 1947. This was the most trying time for Vogel, who also became the mayor of the village community of Friedensau. Food and supplies were almost nonexistent and there were neither seeds nor fertilizers at hand, which meant a meager yield in the gardens and fields. There were drunken Russian soldiers camping in the woods surrounding the campus, looting the meager provisions at Friedensau, and posing a threat to those living there, especially the women.

When the Russians left in 1947, the campus was in shambles: broken doors, smashed windows, destroyed furniture, and equipment and organ pipes from the church lay strewn about in the nearby woods. Dirt had to be removed from the rooms with shovels. Shortly after, Friedensau received permission from the authorities to reopen the school. Vogel now had the difficult task to not only create adequate space for living quarters and classrooms, but also to provide sufficient food for those living on campus. The local authorities additionally demanded a legal portion of food supplies from Friedensau. Consequently, and since he was both manager and mayor, Vogel had the challenging task of juggling the needs of staff and students with the demands from outside. This took a heavy toll on his health, and he died September 3, 1954 from a heart attack. At his funeral (September 6, 1954),<sup>2</sup> he was honored for his exemplary dedication and, above all, for his gentle Christian character and behavior.

## Contribution

Otto Vogel is remembered as administrator of the Seventh-day Adventist institution at Friedensau,<sup>3</sup> Germany during the difficult times of the Second World War. He was key in the rebuilding and reopening of the school at Friedensau after the war years.

Source

Hambrock, F. "Abschied von Bruder Vogel, dem Bürgermeister von Friedensau." *Adventbote*, October 15, 1954.

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## NOTES

1. Unless noted otherwise, this article is based on personal knowledge of Winfried Vogel as grandchild of Otto Vogel.

2. F. Hambrock, "Abschied von Bruder Vogel, dem Bürgermeister von Friedensau," *Adventbote*, October 15, 1954, 319.

3. Ibid.

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