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## Edener, Willi (1891–1980)

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### CHIGEMEZI NNADOZIE WOGU

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Willi Edener served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as pastor and administrator from 1911 to about 1955 in

Germany and Switzerland.

## Early Life and Education

Willi Edener was born in Magdeburg in 1891. In 1911, at the age of 20, he accepted the Adventist message and was baptized in Frankfurt am Main.<sup>1</sup> After completing a commercial apprenticeship, he trained as a nurse with plans to work in the mission field.

## Ministry

In 1913 he began to give lectures on Adventism through his own volition. After the First World War, C.W. Schubert called him to Munich where he received practical training as a pastor.<sup>2</sup> In 1919, Edener married Friedel Dorothea Behr, who was a great support to him in his various tasks. The couple had three children.<sup>3</sup>

Edener served in various administrative and ministerial positions: secretary of the Central European Union Conference (CEU), 1919-1921; director for Sabbath School and Home Missions, CEU, 1922-1928; president of the Main-Neckar Conference (later Central Rhenish Conference) in Frankfurt, 1928-1930. In 1931 he was commissioned by the General Conference committee to serve as superintendent of the Uruguay Mission in South America. The call never materialized.<sup>4</sup> He continued serving in Switzerland as president of the German-Swiss Conference, 1930-1932, as president of the Swiss Union Conference 1932-1933, as pastor in Karlsruhe, Germany, 1933-1936, as president of the South Bavarian Conference in Germany 1936-1949, and as president of the North Bavarian Conference, 1949-1953.<sup>5</sup>

## Later Life and Contribution

Around 1955 Edener retired from active ministry. His service was especially to young people. In Vienna, Frankfurt am Main, Zurich, Mannheim, Munich, and Nürnberg he worked as a pastor, youth secretary, and administrator. After the Second World War he was commissioned by the General Conference to publish a religious magazine for the Adventist Church. He was the fourth German to receive a publication license from the American military government. For years he dedicated himself to the magazine "Der Botschafter" (The Ambassador), in addition to his daily tasks. Many book evangelists and student preachers had the opportunity to publish this magazine in the first post-war years. Since Edener also devoted himself to youth work, he published a magazine with the title "Weg und Ziel" (Way and Goal).<sup>6</sup>

On January 2, 1979, he and his wife celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary with their children, grandchildren, and relatives. During the following months, his physical strength waned, until his death on Friday, December 5, 1980.<sup>7</sup>

## SOURCES

"Proceedings of the General Conference." *ARH*, June 13, 1930.

Kotz, Ernst to W. Edener, July 24, 1931 and Kotz to Edener, August 12, 1931. General Conference Archives of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD, Correspondence, Box 9845.

Kotz, Ernst. "Mission Board Items." *ARH*, September 22, 1932.

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Rupp, Reinhard. "Erste STA-Zeitschrift in Deutschland nach dem 2. WK: 'Ein Offizier will Sie sprechen!'" *Missionsbrief*, September/October 2015.

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1919-1953.

## NOTES

1. Nordbayerische Vereinigung, "Prediger Willi Edener," *Adventecho* April 1, 1981, 13.?

2. *Ibid.*?

3. *Ibid.*?

4. See letter: Ernst Kotz to W. Edener, July 24, 1931 and Kotz to Edener, August 12, 1931, General Conference Archives of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD, Correspondence, Box 9845.?

5. See *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* 1919-1953; "Proceeding of the General Conference," *ARH*, June 13, 1930, 215; Ernst Kotz, "Mission Board

Items," *ARH*, September 22, 1932, 24; "Proceedings of the General Conference," *ARH*, June 13, 1930, 215.?

6. Nordbayerische Vereinigung, "Prediger Willi Edener," 13; see also Reinhard Rupp, "Erste STA-Zeitschrift in Deutschland nach dem 2. WK: 'Ein Offizier will Sie sprechen!'" *Missionsbrief* 43, September/October 2015, 4.?
7. *Ibid.*?

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