

Provin, Henri (1866–1948)

ROLAND MEYER

Roland Meyer, Docteur en théologie protestante (Doctor of Protestant Theology) (Strasbourg University, France), was a teacher and a pastor in the Swiss French Conference. He taught systematic theology teacher at the Adventist University of France. His published articles and books include *La vie après la mort. Saint Paul défenseur de la résurrection* (1989), *Le retour à la vie* (1997), *Paul et les femmes* (2013), "Pourquoi Jésus est-il mort sur la croix?" in *Servir: Revue adventiste de théologie* (2018). Meyer collaborated on the revisions of the *Nouvelle Bible Segond* (2002) and the *Bible en français courant* (2019).

Henri Provin served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as canvasser, Bible worker, and pastor during the early years of Adventism in Europe.

Early Life

Henri Streit-dit-Provins, born in 1866, was from Höfen, near Thun, in German-speaking Switzerland. His wife, Marie, was born in 1872. Over the years, the family name had been simplified to Provin, without the "s." The Streit family was once linked to the import of a grape variety. At the end of the nineteenth century they lived in the small town of Le Locle, in the Swiss Jura, where they operated a small watchmaking company. Henri and Marie had three children, two daughters and a son: Martha, Esther, and Abel.

Career/Ministry

At the beginning of the twentieth century, when Adventism was still looking for a foothold in Europe, Henri and Marie Provin decided to sell their business and start an independent evangelist activity at their own expense. Provin began canvassing work around Neuchâtel, Switzerland.¹ Around 1903 he worked as a Bible worker in Tramelan. "As a result of his work, eight persons were baptized."² After two years, Henri was hired as a pastor for the Lemman Conference. He then worked in the region of Yverdon and in the Valais canton, where he had extraordinary experiences with God. Once while walking a particular territory in the Swiss mountains to share the gospel, he carried a heavy briefcase containing his Bible and various books. A woman riding a horse caught up with him, took his briefcase without saying a word, and pushed him behind a tree in the nearby forest. Just then he heard a group of people shouting: "Where is Provin? Where did he go? We want to kill Provin! What has become of him?" When things became calm, Provin went back to his path. The woman rider reappeared, returned his luggage, and then disappeared from sight. The mission's beginnings were arduous, but because of such experiences he was reassured that God was with him.

Later Life

For his retirement Henri and Marie settled in Gland, near La Lignière Clinic (Lake Geneva Sanatorium), to help their son Abel who had lost his wife when their daughter Liliane was only eight years old. As money was lacking, Provin raised chickens to sell eggs at La Lignière Clinic, located on the other side of the field. In 1935 the couple settled in Lausanne until the death of Henri in 1948, at the age of eighty-two.

Contribution/Legacy

The Provin family remains a symbol of sacrifice, dedication, courage, and faith for the service of their church and their neighbors. Henri was a key figure in the early beginnings of Adventism in Europe. His mission work contributed to the spread of the Adventist message from Switzerland onward.

SOURCES

Curdy, J. "Central European Conference." *ARH*, August 26, 1902.

Provin, H. "Neuchatel." In "Central European Conference." *ARH Herald*, December 17, 1901.

Wilkinson, B. G. "The Latin Union Field." *ARH*, July 28, 1904.

NOTES

1. See Henri Provin, "Neuchâtel," in "Central European Conference," *ARH*, December 17, 1901, 818; Joseph Curdy, "Central European Conference," *ARH*, August 26, 1902, 10.
2. See B. G. Wilkinson, "The Latin Union Field," *ARH*, July 28, 1904, 16.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring, MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000