

Vogel, Heinz Otto

Richard

(1921–2010)

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.

Heinz Vogel was a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, conference and division president, departmental director, and evangelist from 1940 to 1986.



Heinz Vogel in retirement.

Photo courtesy of Winfried Vogel.

Early Years

Heinz Otto Richard Vogel was born March 16, 1921, into an Adventist family in the vicinity of Chemnitz, a city in the southeastern part of Saxony, Germany.¹ His father, Otto Vogel, later became the manager of Friedensau Seminary and the mayor of the community there. His great-grandmother had become an Adventist when colporteurs from the Rhineland toured Saxony and spread the Adventist message, thus, Heinz Vogel was a fourth-generation Adventist. The family was very poor and suffered from the widespread unemployment in Germany during the 1920s. When Otto Vogel applied for state aid, he was granted 17 Reichsmark per month when the salary of a pastor was 200 Reichsmark a month. In 1926, Heinz Vogel's twin sisters were born, the same night the family's home burned to the ground. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Education

In 1937, Vogel graduated from middle school. Further education leading to a university entrance exam was prohibitively expensive. Vogel applied for a commercial apprenticeship, but was not accepted anywhere because he refused to work on Sabbath. Over the summer, he worked in the conference office until his father got him an

apprenticeship in the Friedensau bakery. When Vogel begged his father to allow him to study at Friedensau he agreed under the condition that Vogel attend the nurse's training school there and become a nurse at the Adventist Waldfriede Hospital in Berlin.

Consequently, Vogel attended the pre-nursing training from September 1937 until May 1938 and was scheduled to transfer to Waldfriede to complete the program. However, Vogel had a great desire to become a pastor and told the president of the seminary that he would like to study theology. With the necessary recommendations from the local church, the conference president, and the conference committee, Vogel was enrolled. The beginning of World War II caused his program of study to be reduced from the regular four years to two-and-a-half years.²

Ministry

Vogel applied to the West-Saxonian Conference for employment as a pastor, and he started working in the Vogtland area in the summer of 1940. In October, he was drafted into the National Labor Service, a precursor to military service. Vogel served in the German Wehrmacht (military) from March 1941 until 1945 when he became a prisoner of war and was released in August of that year. Because of his personal conviction, during the war Vogel served only as a paramedic and was highly decorated for carrying many wounded soldiers through the hail of bullets from the battlefield. After returning to Friedensau, where his father had become the manager and the mayor, Vogel married Käthe Harnack on September 22, 1945. A native of Königsberg, she had fled her home town when the Russian army approached. In the following years, three children were born to Heinz and Käthe Vogel, Christine, Burkhard, and Winfried.

Administrator

Vogel returned to pastoring in the Vogtland area with his newlywed wife, and they both served the churches there until December 1948, when Vogel was called to pastor congregations in Berlin.³ From 1951 until 1955, Vogel was the secretary and director of all departments in the Berlin Conference. In November 1951, he was ordained to the ministry and then served as a local pastor in several churches in the western part of Berlin until 1964. In 1963, he was elected president of the West-Berlin Conference⁴ until he became the secretary of the former Central European Division in 1969,⁵ with offices on the campus of Marienhöhe Seminary in Darmstadt, Germany.

At the General Conference session in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1970, Vogel was elected president of the Central European Division, which in 1971 was merged with the Southern European Division with the offices in Berne, Switzerland. Subsequently, Vogel became the vice-president of the newly established Euro-Africa Division (which is now the Inter-European Division)⁶ and at the same time the secretary of the ministerial association. In

this capacity, he organized Bible conferences and workers' meetings across the division⁷ and, together with his wife Käthe, held meetings for the wives of pastors.⁸

Later Years

Vogel directed the ministerial association until August of 1980, when he became a local pastor again, this time for the churches in Basel and Reigoldswil in Switzerland. In addition, he served the German-Swiss Conference as ministerial secretary⁹ until his retirement in 1986. During his retirement, Vogel continued to serve congregations in Switzerland and in the southwest of Germany by preaching sermons and doing seminars. He also initiated and organized lay preaching courses on a regular basis. In 2006, Heinz and Käthe Vogel moved to Friedensau. She died in December 2009, and five months later Heinz Vogel died in May of 2010.

Contribution

For forty-six years, Heinz Vogel served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a pastor, conference and division president, ministerial director, and evangelist. His years of active service in the ministry contributed to the growth and stability of the congregations and positions he served. As ministerial secretary, he contributed to mentoring younger pastors and their spouses. His evangelistic meetings brought several people into the Christian faith.

Those who encountered him and those who worked closely with him testified that Heinz Vogel distinguished himself as a man of integrity, kind-heartedness, and adherence to the truth. He was well known and sought after as a preacher, seminar lecturer, and evangelist, and his demeanor was characterized by gentleness and firmness, which also made him an outstanding and wise administrator. He loved the Bible and the proclamation of the Advent message and paid much attention to the education and formation of future pastors at theological training institutions. Vogel was a spiritual leader, and his last words to a younger colleague, only hours before his sudden death were: "Soon the Lord will lead His Church into His glory."

SOURCES

"Autumn Council Reports." *North Pacific Union Gleaner*, November 1, 1971.

Heinz, Daniel. "Heinz Vogel gestorben." *Adventisten Heute*, July 2010.

"News Notes." *ARH*, December 23, 1976.

"News Notes." *ARH*, November 1, 1979.

"News Notes." *ARH*, June 25, 1981.

Vogel, Heinz. "Berlin Needs Your Help." *World Mission Report*, Second Quarter, 1970.

NOTES

1. Much of the information in this article is from the personal knowledge of the author, Heinz Vogel's son.
2. Every student had to work towards tuition and living expenses. Hence, Vogel did office work for 20 cents per hour. He often went hungry.
3. Daniel Heinz, "Heinz Vogel gestorben," *Adventisten Heute*, July 2010, 4.
4. Ibid.
5. Heinz Vogel, "Berlin Needs Your Help," *World Mission Report*, second quarter, 1970, 3.
6. "Autumn Council Reports," *North Pacific Union Gleaner*, November 1, 1971, 12.
7. In "News Notes," it is mentioned that he conducted evangelistic series in Austria. See *ARH*, December 23, 1976, 19.
8. "News Notes," *ARH*, November 1, 1979, 20.
9. "News Notes," *ARH*, June 25, 1981, 25.

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