



Marie and Emil Frauchiger

Photo courtesy of René Frauchiger.

## Frauchiger, Emil Eduard (1865–1947)

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Emil E. Frauchiger was a pioneer Seventh-day Adventist convert, colporteur, pastor, missionary and administrator in the Middle East and Europe.<sup>1</sup>

## Early Life and Education

Emil Eduard Frauchiger was born on December 17, 1865 to Christian and Rosina Frauchiger in Lausanne, Switzerland.<sup>2</sup> After one year, the family moved to Geneva since Christian Frauchiger wanted better employment opportunities.

From the age of seven on, young Emil attended the German school in Geneva. When he was nine years old, his family returned to Lausanne. There, he attended a German school until he was confirmed in 1881 in the German Reformed Church by a pastor, S. Wagner, who had a great influence on Emil.

Emil attended art school in Lausanne for three years and at the age of 18 became a sculptor.<sup>3</sup> He served as a Sunday School teacher for a year in the Methodist Church where his mother attended. During this time, the pastor of the Methodist Church began preparing Emil to become a Methodist minister and wanted to send Emil to a theology school in Frankfurt a Main.<sup>4</sup> Hence, Emil began serving the congregations of Vevey and Morges on Sundays.

## Baptism and Pioneer Worker

In 1886, a new vista opened in the life of Frauchiger. In January of that year, a series of lectures by Seventh-day Adventists were held in the city of Lausanne by Jacob Erzberger, Ludwig R. Conradi, who had recently come from America, and partly by Ellen G. White. Here Frauchiger met White for the first time.<sup>5</sup>

The lectures focused on the prophetic books of Daniel and the Revelation which were otherwise rarely told by the other churches. The nearness of the return of Christ was at the forefront of all themes. Frauchiger and his mother, Rosina, together with twenty-three other Methodists joined the new Adventist movement. They were all baptized on May 15, 1886 by Ludwig R. Conradi.<sup>6</sup> The group formed a nucleus from which the Adventist work further expanded in Switzerland and beyond.<sup>7</sup>

Frauchiger went to Basel with Conradi; there Conradi started a training for canvassers as well as Bible studies.<sup>8</sup> After this training, Frauchiger worked in the publishing house in Basel. He worked together with Gerd Perk as the first colporteurs in Switzerland.<sup>9</sup> They sold the newly printed book of Ellen G White, *Das Leben Jesu Christi* [The Life of Jesus Christ].<sup>10</sup>

During his work at Basel, Frauchiger met again with Ellen G. White, who had her main residence in Basel during her two-year stay in Europe (1885-1887). This acquaintance was especially beneficial for Frauchiger, who together with Perk went to start colporteur work in Germany in 1888,<sup>11</sup> most probably in the city of Stuttgart.<sup>12</sup> The next year, from Basel, Frauchiger joined Conradi in Hamburg, where the headquarters of the budding mission in Germany was established. There, Frauchiger attended another training for the workers organized by Conradi.<sup>13</sup>

## Marriage and Early Work in Germany

At the European conference in Basel 1890, Frauchiger came from Hamburg to attend. Around that time, on September 2, 1890, he was married to Marie Borle. They had met in Basel and were engaged by letter since the last four years. Conradi led the wedding and after the conference, Marie and Emil travelled back to Hamburg. The marriage produced eight children. In Hamburg, Frauchiger sold Adventist literature during the day and held evangelist lectures in the evenings. At that time, he worked together with Julius T. Böttcher.<sup>14</sup> On the recommendation of Conradi, Frauchiger went to England, where he attended the mission training institute for Seventh-day Adventist workers.<sup>15</sup>

In 1893, Frauchiger was ordained as a pastor.<sup>16</sup> After his ordination and as one of the Adventist pioneer workers,<sup>17</sup> he continued this activity in southern Germany in the years 1894 to 1903. During this time Frauchiger also worked in Neustadt. Frauchiger thus became pioneer of the Adventist message in the Rhineland-Palatinate region in Germany. In 1898/99 Frauchiger held public lectures in Kaiserslautern and Neustadt which dealt with the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation. Afterwards a small group of Adventists was formed in Neustadt.<sup>18</sup>

## Administrator and Missionary

Frauchiger later went to Berlin and worked there from 1903-1908 as president of the East German Conference<sup>9</sup> and in Vohwinkel from 1908 to 1909<sup>20</sup> during which time he served as president of the Rhenish-Prussian Conference.<sup>21</sup>

From 1909 to 1917,<sup>22</sup> Frauchiger worked as a missionary in Constantinople. The Frauchigers, together with seven of their children,<sup>23</sup> arrived in Turkey where Frauchiger was to take over the leadership of the Adventist work from Claude AcMoody of the Turkish Mission<sup>24</sup> on account of AcMoody's poor health.<sup>25</sup>

The next year, Frauchiger was appointed superintendent of the Levant Union Mission. There he supervised the organization of four churches<sup>26</sup> and facilitated the publishing of a tract with the theme "Who is Jesus." The tract was the first to be published by a Christian organization. Unfortunately, this led to the imprisonment of some Adventist colporteurs as well as confiscation of the literature.<sup>27</sup>

The Turkish episode combined with continual persecution of Adventists led Frauchiger and the growing congregations to tread with caution.<sup>28</sup> Soon Frauchiger was assisted by Aimé Girou, a dentist, missionary, and preacher sent to Constantinople around 1911. Both worked among German and French settlers in Turkey.<sup>29</sup> That same year, together with Walter K. Ising, Frauchiger held the first evangelistic meetings in Haifa (in today's Israel), Syria which was attended mostly by German settlers. It was also in Haifa where they planned a workers' institute for those in that region.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Frauchiger constantly visited Bulgaria, Albania, and Palestine to hold evangelistic series.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to holding evangelistic meetings, Frauchiger established a training school in Constantinople and held lectures for the Armenians and Greeks. The training school served as a missionary training avenue for workers in Turkey. Three languages – Turkish, Armenian, and Greek – were taught to those preparing for mission among the inhabitants of the then Levant Union Mission.<sup>32</sup> The Levant school began on November 1, 1911 and closed on May 1, 1912.<sup>33</sup>

During the First World War, Frauchiger continued overseeing the work in the Levant field even though communications and movement became extremely difficult.<sup>34</sup> He was assisted by Diamondola Keanides (later “D. Ashod”), Frauchiger’s secretary who helped in translating and interpreting<sup>35</sup> as Frauchiger met with the Turkish government on behalf of Armenian Christians. She was instrumental in helping Frauchiger’s effort to assist persecuted Armenian Adventists who were in great danger.

From 1917 to 1923, Frauchiger served as president of the newly organized Czechoslovakian Union Conference.<sup>36</sup> The Frauchiger family lived in Troppau. Unfortunately, they went through difficulty in finding food. This was in addition to having left their most of belongings in Constantinople. To survive, Frauchiger began canvassing and established a printing house to sell Adventist literature. He soon was burned out. As a result, he decided to return to his home country on his own accord.<sup>37</sup>

## Later Years

From 1924 onwards, after the Frauchigers returned to Switzerland, Frauchiger began working as a pastor in the German-Swiss Conference in Bern and later in Luzern,<sup>38</sup> and retired a few years later, in 1930.<sup>39</sup> After his retirement, Frauchiger had various engagements, including preaching and documenting the beginnings of Adventism in Switzerland and Germany in the official Church magazine *Adventecho*.<sup>40</sup>

Emil Frauchiger died on January 8, 1947, in Luzern, Switzerland.<sup>41</sup> He was eighty-two years old.

## Contribution

Emil E. Frauchiger worked for the Seventh-day Adventist Church as pioneer colporteur, pastor, missionary, and administrator in the Middle East and Europe for 44 years. As a pioneer worker, Frauchiger played a crucial role in the early years of Adventism in Switzerland and Germany. As a pastor and missionary, Frauchiger led many converts to Christ. Some of them became leaders of the Adventist work in their regions. Frauchiger also played a key role as an administrator in establishing and organizing churches as well as strengthening the churches in the Middle Eastern regions under his leadership. Moreover, he was a major force in organizing mission strategies for the expansion of Adventism.

Frauchiger’s legacy as one of the pioneer workers in Europe is still evident in Germany and Switzerland.

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## NOTES

1. The author is grateful to René Frauchiger for his assistance in completing this article.
2. Advent Gemeinde Neustadt, "Geschichte unserer Gemeinde," accessed July 1, 2020, [http://adventgemeinde-neustadt-weinstrasse.de/?page\\_id=28](http://adventgemeinde-neustadt-weinstrasse.de/?page_id=28).
3. Ibid.
4. R. Ruhling, "The Advent Century in Central and Southern Europe," *The Church Officers' Gazette*, February 1945, 7.
5. See "Aus dem Kleinsten Lande der Reformation: Die Adventbotschaft in der Schweiz," [From the Smallest Country of the Reformation: The Advent Message in Switzerland], *Advent Echo*, December 1931, 93.
6. See report by Henry L. Rudy, "Switzerland: History and Progress Combine in Basel Church," *ARH*, January 29, 1970, 16. "General Meeting in Hamburg," *The Bible Echo*, December 1, 1893, 382.

7. See "Obituaries," *ARH*, March 27, 1947, 20; Emil E. Frauchiger, "Aus dem Kleinsten Lande der Reformation: Die Adventbotschaft in der Schweiz," [From the Smallest Country of the Reformation: The Advent Message in Switzerland], *Advent Echo*, March 1932, 20.
8. Emil E. Frauchiger, "Aus dem Kleinsten Lande der Reformation: Die Adventbotschaft in der Schweiz," ["From the Smallest Country of the Reformation: The Advent Message in Switzerland"], *Advent Echo*, March 1932, 21.
9. Rudy, "Switzerland: History and Progress Combine in Basel Church," 16.
10. René Frauchiger, email to author, July 22, 2020.
11. See Adolf Minck, "The Central European Division, Section 1," *ARH*, December 29, 1938, 25.
12. Emil E. Frauchiger, "Aus dem Kleinsten Lande der Reformation: Die Adventbotschaft in der Schweiz," ["From the Smallest Country of the Reformation: The Advent Message in Switzerland"], *Advent Echo*, April 1932, 30.
13. See Emil E. Frauchiger, "Aus dem Kleinsten Lande der Reformation: Die Adventbotschaft in der Schweiz," ["From the Smallest Country of the Reformation: The Advent Message in Switzerland"], *Advent Echo*, June 1932, 44.
14. See "The German Mission Field," *The Present Truth*, May 19, 1892, 157.
15. See Emil E. Frauchiger, "Aus dem Kleinsten Lande der Reformation: Die Adventbotschaft in der Schweiz," ["From the Smallest Country of the Reformation: The Advent Message in Switzerland"], *Advent Echo*, November 1932, 86.
16. Emil E. Frauchiger, "Aus dem Grossen Lande der Reformation," ["From the Big Country of the Reformation"], *Advent Echo*, April 1933, 31
17. See report in Emil E. Frauchiger, "Aus dem Grossen Lande der Reformation," ["From the Big Country of the Reformation"], *Advent Echo*, September 1932, 69-70; October 1932, 78.
18. Advent Gemeinde Neustadt, "Geschichte unserer Gemeinde," accessed July 1, 2020, [http://adventgemeinde-neustadt-weinstrasse.de/?page\\_id=28](http://adventgemeinde-neustadt-weinstrasse.de/?page_id=28)
19. See "East German Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1904), 61
20. Advent Gemeinde Neustadt, "Geschichte unserer Gemeinde."
21. See Guy Dail, "In Rhenish Prussia," *ARH*, January 28, 1909, 15.
22. See Emil Frauchiger, "Turkey," *ARH*, September 22, 1910, 9; General Conference Committee Minutes, November 2, 1909, 163, General Conference Archives, accessed, June 20, 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1910.pdf>.

23. One boy at that time was with his uncle Eduard Borle in Mexico. He joined the family one year later. René Frauchiger, email message to author, July 27, 2020.
24. See Frauchiger, "Turkey," 9. When Frauchiger arrived he noticed that he would have a rough start. First there was no housing prepared for him and his family. They slept on the floor for some time; some of their furniture were stolen on the way and some arrived vandalized. René Frauchiger, email message to author, July 20, 2020.
25. René Frauchiger, email message to author, July 14, 2020.
26. Twelfth Meeting Biennial Council [of the European Division], July 7, 1911, 18, General Conference Archives, accessed, June 20, 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1911-A.pdf>.
27. Frauchiger, "Turkey," 9-10
28. See "The Levant Union Mission," *ARH*, June 16, 1910, 17.
29. Frauchiger, "Turkey," 9-10.
30. See General Conference Committee Minutes, Forty-Third Meeting European Division, July 17, 1911, 64, General Conference Archives, accessed, June 20, 2020, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1911-A.pdf>; Emil, Frauchiger "The Levant Field," *Australasian Record*, December 12, 1912, 2.
31. René Frauchiger, email message to author, July 14, 2020.
32. Emil Frauchiger, "Constantinople," *ARH*, February 29, 1912, 13-14.
33. See "Out School in the Levant," *The Signs of the Times*, November 4, 1912, 716.
34. See for instance, Ludwig R. Conradi, "Another Word from Europe," *ARH*, September 24, 1914, 24.
35. See Mildred Thompson Olson, *Diamondola* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald, 1966), 188-131.
36. See "Obituaries," 20.
37. René Frauchiger, email message to author, July 14, 2020.
38. See "Ministerial Directory," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald 1926), 323
39. René Frauchiger, email message to author, July 20, 2020.



40. See *Adventecho*, from 1930-1933.

41. See General Conference Committee Minutes, February 6, 1947, 393, General Conference Archives, accessed, October 2, 2019, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1947-02.pdf>.

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