

# Meyer, Raymond (1916–2001)

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## ROLAND MEYER, AND CHIGEMEZI NNADOZIE WOGU

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).

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Raymond Meyer served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as pastor, teacher, missionary, administrator, and radio broadcaster in France, Tunisia, Senegal, and Switzerland.

## Early Life

Raymond Meyer was born on March 15, 1916 in Lausanne, Switzerland to Albert and Marguerite Meyer, the eldest of three children. His sister, Isabelle, was born in Sainte-Croix, Switzerland in 1917, and his brother, Sylvain, was born in 1922 in Algiers, Algeria. At the time of Raymond's birth, Albert and Marguerite Meyer were working in pastoral ministry in the Lausanne region, in Yverdon-les-Bains. Raymond completed his basic and high school education in Oran, Algeria where his parents were missionaries from 1921 onward.

## Education and Marriage

Similar to his father, Meyer wanted to become a pastor. He studied at the Adventist seminary in Collonges, France, from 1935 to 1937. Then he began to minister in the area of Nice, in the south of France<sup>1</sup> where he helped develop the Adventist outreach in that region. In 1939 Meyer married Hélène Jac. While Raymond served at the Adventist Church of Saint-Etienne, Hélène became pregnant. In 1943 little Christiane was born. Sadly, Hélène did not survive the birth. Her family lovingly stepped in to help raise Christiane during the first years of her life. In 1946, Meyer remarried. His new spouse, Odette Delavault, also studied theology at Collonges. The couple had the joy of seeing their family expand with the birth of their son Alain in 1947, and a year later, their daughter Danielle.

## Teacher, Missionary, Pastor

In 1943 Meyer was appointed Bible lecturer at the Adventist seminary in Collonges-sous-Salève, on the border between France and Switzerland. During the Second World War period Meyer was very active in a resistance network created by Jean Weidner to help the Jews who were pursued by the Nazis. While Meyer was pastoring in Saint-Etienne, he already had contacts with the resistance.

In 1944 he was arrested by the Gestapo (secret police of the German State), and later released. After the war, Meyer was appointed editor at the Publishing house, Signes des Temps (now Vie et Santé). He was in charge of the *Revue Adventiste* (*Adventist Review*) and the periodical *Signes des Temps* (*Signs of the Times*).

From 1948 to 1954, the Meyers lived in Tunisia as missionaries, contributing to the development of churches in the country.<sup>2</sup> After becoming president of the Tunis Mission, Raymond immediately began making evangelistic and medical ministry plans. To be effective, Meyer studied literary Arabic. After a chapel was built in the city of Ferryville (current day Menzel Bourguiba),<sup>3</sup> a small clinic called "Vie et Santé" (Life and Health) was opened and directed by Odette Meyer.<sup>4</sup> The clinic became so effective in the region that patients had to be refused treatment to avoid overcrowding. In addition, Meyer began radio broadcasts that went as far as Algeria and southern France.<sup>5</sup> By 1950, because of the ministry of the Meyers, there were three established Adventist churches with about sixty members.<sup>6</sup>

Around 1953 Meyer began pastoring the Paris-Neuilly church while assisting in the preparation of scripts for the Voix de l'Espérance (Voice of Hope) radio broadcasts.<sup>7</sup> After spending some time pastoring in the Belgian capital of Brussels (1955 to 1960), the Meyer family left for Africa. This time they settled in Dakar, Senegal, in 1960, where Meyer served as pastor for the West African Mission and a year later, as president of the Senegal Mission until 1966,<sup>8</sup> when they returned to France.

Until 1971, Meyer took charge of the Adventist church of Colmar, in Alsace, France. He spent the last years of his life as a pastor in Switzerland, in Neuchâtel and Geneva. During his active life, he was very involved in the development of radio ministry. His passion for the countries of the Bible drove him to develop and present numerous Bible and archeology lectures. He also organized guided tours in Israel.

## Later Life

During his retirement years Meyer was particularly active in the health ministry associated with the Vie et Santé organization. He led numerous Five-Day Plans to help people quit smoking. He continued his activities for radio broadcasts and continued documenting his Bible and archaeology lectures. He also collaborated with his sister Isabelle Ferraro-Meyer on the recording of Sabbath School lessons for the visually impaired. Meyer died on February 21, 2001, in Lausanne.

## Contribution

Raymond Meyer served the Adventist Church as a pastor, teacher, missionary, administrator, and radio broadcaster. In his several roles, he left a legacy that showed his dedication to the different cities, countries, and continents where he was called to work. His outstanding skills as a speaker allowed him to spread the Bible message to thousands of listeners. His innovative skills saw the beginning of radio broadcasting, which contributed to the spread of the Adventist message for French-speaking people in West Africa and beyond.

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## SOURCES

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Fridlin, M. "In French North Africa." *Quarterly Review*, June 1952.

"Here and There." *Quarterly Review*, December 1948.

"Here and There." *Quarterly Review*, September 1952.

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1942, 1961, 1962.

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## NOTES

1. See "South France Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1942), 183.
2. "Here and There," *Quarterly Review*, December 1948, 12.
3. J. J. Aitken, "Light amid Darkness," *Quarterly Review*, December 1948, 8.
4. See Marius Fridlin, "In French North Africa," *Quarterly Review*, June 1952, 7.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. "Here and There," *Quarterly Review*, September 1952, 12.
8. See "West African Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961), 220; "Senegal Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962), 227.

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