

Albinger, Ingrid Jenny Elisabeth

(1908–1999)

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Ingrid Jenny Elisabeth Albinger was a Seventh-day Adventist teacher, evangelist, chaplain, writer, and author from Sweden.

Early Life, Baptism, and Education

Ingrid Jenny Elisabeth Albinger was born on October 2, 1908, in Tidaholm, Västergötland Province, Sweden, to Johan Albinger and Hanna Bloom. Ingrid's mother was an Adventist. She was one of the early evangelists in the Holiness Movement established in 1887 as a result of the spiritual revival in the wake of the preacher children's message about the coming judgment. She dedicated Ingrid to the life of an evangelist, as she felt guilt over marrying a nonbeliever. Ingrid was a serious Christian, even as a child. She was baptized in 1920 by Adventist Pastor Simon Ljungberg in the Tidan River. She had convinced her mother to accompany her to his meetings, as she had been assigned to listen to the new preacher in town by a Bible teacher in the Holiness Movement. After the first meeting, her mother was convinced of the Adventist message.

Ingrid attended Nyhyttan Mission School between 1922-1926. At age 14, she was the youngest colporteur during the summers. Her command of the Swedish language led the faculty to ask her to teach at age 17. Between 1930-1932, she taught at Nyhyttan Mission School. The school was moved to Ekebyholm Castle, Rimbo, in 1932; she then taught at Ekebyholmsskolan until 1970. Her students, many older than her, said she was the world's most courageous woman not only because she dared to be their teacher but also in many other aspects.

Ingrid trained as a teacher and studied German at the university in Hamburg in 1932. She is not so much remembered for her classes in German and Swedish as for her worships and sermons, her lessons in homiletics in the seminary, and her authorship of several books on spirituality.¹ She became her mother's dream – a true evangelist bringing many young hearts to Jesus Christ.

Humanitarian Acts and Teaching Experience

Ingrid always had a heart for the miserable of the world and, during World War II, worked in various establishments run by the Christian City Mission of Stockholm for orphans, alcoholics, and single poor mothers. To do this, she was granted leave of absence from Ekebyholmsskolan. In a time when disdain for those who couldn't handle their lives in an orderly way was common, she stood with the weak and vulnerable.² She tried to instill this value in several generations of students at Ekebyholmsskolan, where she taught for 40 years. To this end, she organized "sunshine" bands among the students, which would regularly visit different prisons where she taught and led worship regularly. Her prison ministry included teaching, counseling, and caring for some prisoners after they had served their sentences.

Ingrid was a loyal Adventist all her life. When necessary, her fearless voice spoke against outward appearances that said nothing about a person's spiritual stance. Hers was the voice of essentials for faith – the deep-seated love for Christ and His salvation for every sinner who would turn their heart to Him. As a teacher, she had problems with extremists among her students, who perceived her as not following Ellen G. White sufficiently on some external matters.³

She had keen knowledge of E. G. White's writings and translated parts of the Testimonies into Swedish. She taught literature, which was sometimes difficult in an Adventist school as some students and future pastors held the belief that nothing other than E. G. White's books should be read, not even other Christian writers' works. She refused to give up the books that nurtured her spiritual growth. Her favorite devotional was Oswald Chamber's "My Utmost for His Highest." That title became a motto for her life as well.⁴

Through her warm heart and brilliant humor, she revealed many Adventist traditions that seemed like sheer nonsense, like the codes of dress and behavior, which were, over time, solely applicable to women students and women church members. Although Ingrid would never consider herself a feminist, she pointed to the blatant discrimination of female Bible workers in the church. Some of the pastors would use the Bible worker only as an errand girl whose responsibilities were to hand out pamphlets, welcome people, etc., even if she happened to be a more prolific preacher and a more apt Bible teacher than the pastor was.⁵ Ingrid became the first woman to serve as a chaplain at Adventist health institutions during the summers from 1937-1965. In 1950, she took the initiative to organize an annual week of spiritual nurture for housewives.⁶

Publishing Work and Marriage

Ingrid had been involved in the mission's school paper since 1930. It eventually became the Swedish youth magazine, *Ungdomens Budbärare* (1930-1957), which she wrote for and edited until the late 1950s. She would communicate regularly with former students who had left for the mission field. She published their letters and stories and, consequently, promoted foreign missionary work.

In 1940, a former guest at the Nyhyttan Sanitarium wrote to Ingrid expressing the wish to be able to read her devotionals. That request motivated Ingrid to share her many devotionals and sermons in written form. After four or five weeks, her first manuscript was ready, but the Adventist publishing house did not think a printed devotional was a good idea and recommended her to a secular publishing house. Gustav Lindsay, the division's and union's president, intervened and made it clear that, as long as he was president, no Adventist writer should have to go to a secular publisher. Thus, the devotional became a true success.

In total, Ingrid Albiner completed five books, which sold a total of 200,000 copies. In "Like Us in All Matters" (1956), a book on the life of Christ that caused both controversy and acclaim, Ingrid described His life conditions and social situation in a totally new way. The sordid conditions Ingrid had faced while working in Stockholm's city mission let her give the book a realistic setting. It became popular with Christians from different denominations and was used by ministers in free churches as well as the Lutheran state church.⁷ At a Lutheran church's Christmas service, Ingrid heard the minister preach and was struck by the similarity to her own thoughts. Later, she found that he had memorized a chapter from her book. The controversy over this book mainly came from Adventist circles, yet it has remained a classic in Sweden and has helped lead many people to Christ.

Ingrid married Erik Palm in 1976 at age 70, and he was an old schoolmate and a former missionary to Ethiopia. Earlier, in 1931, she had been engaged to a brilliant young colleague, Holger Lindsjö, who left for studies in the USA.⁸ Ingrid planned to follow later, but that did not happen. Later, she had been engaged to Louis Martin, a pastor from Finland, but sadly, he died, and she spoke at his funeral in 1944.⁹ Because of her undivided dedication and commitment to the church for so many years, she proved to be a great asset to the Adventist school and church in Sweden.

Influence and Legacy

Ingrid Albiner was possibly the most influential Adventist during the 20th century in Sweden. Her influence had two directions. First, she taught generations of future pastors and church members. In doing so, she shared a faith deeply rooted in Scripture, the Protestant Reformation, and the assurance of Salvation through Christ's righteousness. Second, through her chaplaincy, books, commitment to social issues, work among prisoners, and involvement in national temperance work, she became known and respected outside of the church.

In 1969, Ingrid Albiner received the highest educational medal of honor the Adventist Church bestows. Her legacy was widespread; theologically, Sweden became more Christ-centered and evangelical than its Nordic neighbors. She became a role model who deeply impressed the many young women who experienced the call to ministry. She passed on the great spiritual heritage of the child preachers and the 19th-century revival that totally transformed Sweden in an intelligent, committed, and contemporary way.

Ingrid Jenny Elisabeth Albiner died in Stockholm on March 16, 1999. Paul Sundqvist, a former student of hers and a close friend, officiated the funeral on April 7, 1999.¹⁰

SOURCES

Collection of Ingrid Albiner's devotionals. HASDA historical archive of Seventh-day Adventists, Sweden.

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Är du nöjd med ditt liv? (Are You Satisfied with Your Life?). Stockholm: Skandinaviska Förlagsexpeditionen (now Skandinaviska Bokförlaget), 1944.

Då livet fick mening (When Life Became Meaningful). Stockholm: Skandinaviska Förlagsexpeditionen (now Skandinaviska Bokförlaget), 1946.

Den nya människan (The New Human Being). Stockholm: Skandinaviska Förlagsexpeditionen (now Skandinaviska Bokförlaget), 1948.

I allt lik oss (Like Us in All Matters). Stockholm: Skandinaviska Förlagsexpeditionen (now Skandinaviska Bokförlaget), 1956.

NOTES

1. Collection of Ingrid Albiner's devotionals, HASDA archives, Sweden.
2. Private letter: Ingrid Albiner Palm to Paul Sundquist, February 29, 1982, kept at the HASDA archive, Rimbo, Sweden.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.
6. Svenskt Frikyrkolexikon, *Ingrid Albiner*, Yvonne Johansson Öster (Swedish Free Church Encyclopedia, 2014).
7. Promoting pamphlet for Skandinaviska Bokförlaget, 1957, kept at the HASDA archive, Rimbo, Sweden.
8. *Ungdomens Budbärare*, advert announcing engagement to Holger Lindsjö, author unknown (Järnboås: Nyhyttans Missionskola, 1931).
9. Wiklander, 73.
10. Gösta Wiklander, *I vår Herrens tjänst :Missionsarbetare inom Adventistsamfundet i Sverige 1880-1997* (Stockholm: Adventistsamfundet, 2000), 5.

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