

Vuilleumier, Jean

(1864–1956)

EUGENIO DI DIONISIO

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Jean Vuilleumier was a pastor, evangelist, editor, and professor from Switzerland who served as a missionary in the United States, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay, and France.

Years in Europe and the United States (1864–1895)

Jean Vuilleumier was born on September 5, 1864, in Tramelan, Switzerland. When he was six years old, his father, Albert F. Vuilleumier (1835–1923), heard the Adventist message through Michael B.

Czechowski, a Pole who had converted from being a

Catholic to the Adventist faith.¹ In 1883, when he was 19 years old, Jean Vuilleumier started to work in the Adventist publishing house in Basel, where he worked as a translator and occasionally as assistant editor of the church paper *Les Signes des Temps* [Signs of the times], founded in Switzerland in 1876 by the missionary John N. Andrews (1829–1883). Vuilleumier translated for Ellen White when she spoke at the town hall on the Sabbath after the dedication of the church in Tramelan on December 26, 1886.² In 1890, Vuilleumier was called to the United States, where he worked as a translator at the International Tract Society in Battle Creek, Michigan, and taught Bible classes. Occasionally, he carried out evangelistic campaigns in New England.³

Missionary Service in South America (1895–1900)

Vuilleumier arrived in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on October 9, 1895.⁴ His ability in several languages allowed him to work among English, Italian, French, and Swiss immigrants. He preached in French, German, Spanish, and English in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos, Santa Fe, and Córdoba. Vuilleumier baptized some of the



Jean Vuilleumier

Photo courtesy of Brazilian White Center - UNASP.

first Adventist families in Argentina and Uruguay. He also participated in the organization of Adventist congregations.⁵ In 1896, for example, in Santa Fe province, he baptized Pedro and Cecilia Peverini and three of their children.⁶ In the same year, he baptized Julio David Dupertuis and other French-speaking families.⁷ He also preached at evangelistic meetings. Besides Argentina, he extended his work to the Uruguay Republic.⁸ In Uruguay, he baptized former Waldenses, such as the family of Juan Rivoir in 1897. He was the editor of the magazine *El Faro* from its inception in July 1897.⁹

Pastor Vuilleumier made his home in Argentina, where he married Fanny Bertha Hämmerly. Fanny was born on February 2, 1873, in San Carlos, Santa Fe, Argentina, the daughter of Enrique Hämmerly and María Ida S. de Hämmerly. Pastor Vuilleumier's performance would have lasted longer in South America had his wife not died from tuberculosis in the town of Banfield, Greater Buenos Aires. In 1900 he decided to return to Switzerland with his daughters, Herminia and Sara, and his brother-in-law Armand Hämmerly.¹⁰

In Europe and North America Again (1900–1932)

In his native country, Pastor Vuilleumier was the editor of *Les Signes des Temps*, and he was a teacher at and on the board of the Latin Union School in Gland, Switzerland, which was established in 1904.¹¹ During these years in Europe, he preached at meetings in the city of Geneva and started the work in Barcelona, Spain. The office of *Les Signes des Temps* had been moved to Paris by 1902,¹² which gave him the opportunity to hold meetings in that city.

From 1911 to 1920, he worked as a missionary in Canada. He directed the French-language magazine that was published in that country and performed evangelism in the cities of Montreal and Ottawa.¹³ In 1921, the publishing house was transferred to Melún, France, where he went to direct the church papers *Les Signes des Temps* and *Revue Adventiste* [Adventist review] until he retired in 1932, at age 68, with almost 50 years of service.¹⁴

Retirement and Final Years (1932–1956)

For 25 years, he did research in the libraries and files from many European countries, resulting in the publication of mature scholarship papers and good documentation. He lived his last years in Lausanne, Switzerland. Pastor Vuilleumier died at his house in Lausanne at 92 years old, on December 9, 1956.¹⁵

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NOTES

1. Albert Frederick Vuilleumier was a member and elder of the Adventist Church of Tremelan, Switzerland, the first European church. He worked at the Swiss Conference from 1884, for which he was a canvasser and evangelist in Switzerland, France, Italy, and Algeria.
2. Sermon/The Mission of Christ, Manuscript 60, 1886, *Ellen White's Writings*, accessed November 3, 2020, https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_Ms60-1886.2¶=4360.7.
3. Daniel Hämmerly Dupuy, "Juan Vuilleumier," *La Revista Adventista* [Adventist review], July 1957, 17. Jean Vuilleumier, "Albert Vuilleumier obituary," *ARH*, April 19, 1923, 22; Daniel Oscar Plenc, "El exégeta historiador" [The exegete historian], *La Revista Adventista* [Adventist review], June 2018, 9; see "Homenaje del autor a la memoria de Jean Vuilleumier" [Tribute of the author to the memory of Jean Vuilleumier], in Daniel Hämmerly Dupuy, *Historia de las interpretaciones de las setenta semanas de Daniel* [History of Daniel's seventy-week interpretations] (Lima, Perú: Departamento de Publicaciones del Colegio Unión, 1968), 5–6.
4. Ole Oppegard, "The Scandinavian Work in Argentine," *Missionary Magazine* 11, no. 11 (November 1899): 496; Floyd Greenleaf, *Tierra de esperanza: El crecimiento de la Iglesia Adventista Sudamericana* [A Land of Hope: The Growth of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in South America], transl. Claudia Blath (Buenos Aires: South American Spanish Publishing House, 2011), 36, 45, 46.
5. The church of Tunas, Santa Fe, Argentina, was organized by Jean Vuilleumier and Frank Westphal in 1897.
6. Héctor J. Peverini, *En las huellas de la Providencia* [In the footsteps to Providence] (Buenos Aires, South American Spanish Publishing House, 1988), 36. Daniel Peverini wrote: "In the year 1896, pastor Jean Vuilleumier baptized seven people, namely my parents, my siblings, and I." Daniel Peverini, "En el Norte de Santa Fe, Argentina" [In North Santa Fe, Argentina], *La Revista Adventista* [Adventist review], March 1952, 5.
7. Greenleaf, *Tierra de esperanza*, 22.
8. Peverini, *En las huellas de la Providencia*, 38–39.
9. Jean Vuilleumier, "Argentina," *ARH*, April 14, 1896, 11; Jean Vuilleumier, "Argentina," *ARH*, August 25, 1896, 9; N. Z. Town, "Buenos Ayres," *ARH*, August 10, 1897, 11; Jean Vuilleumier, "Argentina and Uruguay," *ARH*, October 11, 1898, 9; Jean Vuilleumier, "A Polyglot Field," *Missionary Magazine* 11, no. 11 (November 1899): 489; Jean Vuilleumier, "Argentina," *ARH*, October 16, 1900, 12–13.
10. Jean Vuilleumier, *Carta Mensual* [Monthly letter], December 1900, 1; Ignacio Kalbermatter, "Necrología" [Obituary] (Ida Semó de Hämmerly), *La Revista Adventista* [Adventist review], August 28, 1922, 15. Ida S. de Hämmerly (1842–1922), Bertha's mother, was born in Switzerland and passed away in Tunas, Santa Fe, Argentina. She was one of the first believers in Las Tunas, baptized by Jean Vuilleumier. Jean Vuilleumier and John McCarthy, "Our course of meetings . . . ," *ARH*, June 15, 1897, 11. The church in Las Tunas was organized on April 17, 1897. Hernán

Hämmerly, interview by the author, Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina, July 2, 2011. Bertha Hämmerly's siblings are Ida Matilde Hämmerly, married to Domingo Daliesi; Lina Hämmerly, married to Bautista Raina; Armando Hämmerly, married to Martha Dupuy. "Notas editoriales" [Editorial notes], *La Revista Adventista* [Adventist review], December 1908, 127. "Armando Hammerly and the children arrived in Buenos Aires, on November 14, by the steamer 'Espague.' After visiting his family in Las Tunas, they joined the River Plate Adventist Sanitarium. He has a diploma as a nurse from our sanitarium in Gland, Switzerland." The sons are: Daniel Hämmerly Dupuy and Marcelo Hämmerly. Years later, Rosa Hämmerly was born.

11. "Latin Union School," "Latin Union Publishing House," *Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1906), 94, 104.
12. Arnold Roth, "Paris, France," *Missionary Magazine* 14, no. 1 (January 1902): 21; "Brother Jean Vuilleumier, until recently . . .," *ARH*, January 14, 1902, 16.
13. Jean Vuilleumier, "The French Work," *Canadian Union Messenger*, March 21, 1912, 2.
14. Jean Vuilleumier, "Europe at It Again," *Signs of the Times*, February 13, 1923, 1–2.
15. E. E. Roenfelt, "Death of Jean Vuilleumier," *ARH*, January 17, 1957, 32.

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