

# Eppner, Lille (1890–1982)

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## JEAN-MICHEL MARTIN, AND EUDRITCH JEAN

Jean-Michel Martin, Ph.D. (University of Geneva), is a retired church historian who has taught history in the Adventist University of France in Collonges-Campus Adventists du Salève.

Eudritch Jean: Diploma in Electronic Engineering (Haitian State University), B.A. in Theology (Adventist University of Haiti), and M.T.S. (Friedensau Adventist University [FAU], Germany). Jean worked as an electronic engineer in Haiti for twelve years and shortly served as assistant pastor at the district of Bethanie in the Central Haiti Conference. Currently, he is working as volunteer for the Institute of Adventist Studies of FAU. He plans to pursue doctoral studies in ethics.

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Lille Eppner was one of the first female administrators at a conference level and also served the Adventist Church as a Bible worker, teacher, and accountant.

## Early Years, Baptism, and Early Career

Lille Eppner was born July 24, 1890, in Cortaillod, Canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, to Marie-Elsa and Arthur-Henry Eppner.<sup>1</sup> She did her primary and secondary education near Neuchâtel, in Cortaillod and Grandchamps, respectively. However, in May 1907, she dropped out of school and started working as a housekeeper. Seven years later, she embraced Seventh-day Adventism and was baptized at the age of 24.<sup>2</sup> At that time, Eppner was working in Lausanne, Switzerland, as a secretary in the office of Mr. Meyer. Following her baptism, her employers granted her Sabbath privileges due to their deep satisfaction with her personal and professional involvement. She did not have children and remained single her whole life.

## Ministry as Bible Worker, Administrator, and Teacher

Lille Eppner worked in Meyer's office until September 1917 and then was elected secretary-treasurer of the Adventist Mission in Paris, France. However, she was not allowed to travel from Lausanne to Paris until the end of World War I. While staying in Switzerland, she was introduced to accounting. In the meantime, she served in the Lemman Conference, where she worked until 1919 as a Bible worker and a secretary for H. H. Dexter, Vital Monnier, Oscar Meyer, and Ulysse Augsburgur.

In 1919 Eppner moved to Paris and worked as a Bible worker and a secretary alongside Léon-Paul Tièche, then president of the Latin Union Conference. The following year she was elected treasurer of the Alsace and Lorraine Conference.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, she was made secretary-treasurer and departmental director for Sabbath School of the French Conference.<sup>4</sup> Eppner kept her position in the Latin Union Conference for two years and stayed on duty in the French Conference until 1922. Afterwards, she went to Collonges-sous-Salève, France, and started a teaching career at the Latin Union Training School (now Séminaire Adventiste du Salève).

Eppner worked at the Adventist seminary until 1946. During this period of 24 years, she taught courses related to commerce. In addition to teaching duties, she was the secretary of the seminary principal until 1930, and also served as registrar (1936-1945) and treasurer (1939-1945). At the end of her career at this educational institution, she moved to Berne, Switzerland, and worked for the Southern European Division, where she served as an assistant treasurer and accountant.

## Last Years

Eppner worked for the division until 1957 and then retired in Gland, Switzerland. Upon her retirement she dedicated herself in the first years to writing an autobiography and caring for her mother, who had moved in with her.<sup>5</sup> However, she became sick in 1976 and moved to *La Lignière* (Lake Geneva Sanitarium).<sup>6</sup> She stayed at the medical center until her death on January 8, 1982.<sup>7</sup> She was then 92 years old.

## Contribution

Lille Eppner served the Adventist Church as Bible worker, administrator, teacher, and accountant for about four decades. She can be considered a model of dedication and versatility. Throughout her teaching career, she contributed to the personal development of hundreds of young people. However, her main legacy lies in the leadership positions she occupied at the conference level. She was one of the first female administrators in European Adventism.

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### SOURCES

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### NOTES

1. Lille Eppner, *Esquisse de ma vie d'Activité*, Archives Adventistes, Collonges-sous-Salève, France, 1962.

2. Idem, "Letter to Mr Meyer," December 24, 1914, Archives Adventistes, Collonges-sous-Salève.

3. "Alsace and Lorraine Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1920), 142.
  4. Francis M. Wilcox, "Incidents of European Travel ... No. 11: Meetings in France and Spain," *ARH*, August 26, 1920, 2.
  5. Eppner, *Esquisse de ma vie d'Activité*.
  6. See R. D., "Lille Eppner," *Revue Adventiste*, June 1982, 15.
  7. Ibid.
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