

Drinhaus, Paul

1886–1930

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Paul Drinhaus served the Seventh-day Adventist Church from 1906 to 1930, as an evangelist, pastor, and administrator.

Early Life

Paul Drinhaus was born January 23, 1886,¹ in Wuppertal-Vohwinkel, Germany, to J. and Helene Drinhaus, part of one of the first Adventist families in Germany.² Drinhaus was baptized May 23, 1904, after which he attended the Mission School at Friedensau.³ In 1906 Drinhaus began working as an evangelist with the Rhenish-Prussian Conference.⁴ He toured the cities of Cologne, Essen, Mülheim, Duisburg, Oberhausen, and Bonn, where he was actively engaged in the spread of the Adventist message. In Frankfurt am Main, his efforts resulted in the baptism of 39 people.⁵

Ministry

From 1910 to 1913 Drinhaus worked as a minister in Berlin with the East German Union. Though still young, Drinhaus quickly took several leadership positions in Germany. In 1913 he became president of the Saxony Conference. In August 1914, at the beginning of the First World War, Drinhaus organized to take care of Adventist families whose fathers were conscripted in his area.⁶ Drinhaus was later conscripted into the German army but was not sent abroad. Since he was stationed inside Germany, he used the opportunity to visit and encourage Adventist congregations.⁷ When he was finally ordered to go to battle, he asked to be sent as a medic. The application was refused. However, his captain gave him the opportunity to be the source of “a good tone and good spirit in the [that particular] company.”⁸ Drinhaus used this period to conduct Bible studies and witness to his fellow soldiers.

After serving three and half years as a soldier, in 1918 Drinhaus was made president of the West German Union Conference, serving until 1926.⁹ In 1926 and 1927, Drinhaus served as the Home Missionary Secretary for the European Division,¹⁰ and in 1927 he became president of the East German Union, the largest union in Europe at that time.

Towards the end of 1929, Drinhaus and Wilhelm Mueller, then secretary for the Central European Division, were appointed by the Central European Division committee to visit the Liberian Mission.¹¹ According to the task description, Drinhaus and Müller were to “pay a missionary visit to Liberia with a view to investigate and if possible make arrangements for the opening of a new mission station among the Kpelle tribe.”¹²

Death and Contribution

After they returned Drinhaus was struck by fever, which he attributed to a cold he had caught. However, he had contracted tropical malaria, which eventually led to his death.¹³ After working on Sunday, he died Monday morning, March 10, 1930, and was buried in Zehlendorf, Berlin. He was survived by his wife and two children.



Paul Drinhaus
Photo courtesy of the Inter-European Division Archives in Germany.

According to the *Review* of May 1930, the untimely death of Paul Drinhaus was a big shock to the Adventist Church, especially in Germany,¹⁴ because Drinhaus had been a formidable force for mission. His jovial personality, unwavering commitment, and outstanding leadership qualities seemed almost irreplaceable. He served the Seventh-day Adventist Church for 24 years as an evangelist, pastor, and administrator, contributing to the establishment and spread of the Adventist message in various regions of Germany. Drinhaus also published the books *Weltkrise und ihr Ausgang* [World Crisis and Its Outcome] in 1925, and *In der Entscheidungsstunde* [In the Decision Hour] in 1927.

Memory Statements

“Brother Drinhaus is known to his brethren throughout Germany as ‘Happy Paul.’”¹⁵

“The work loses in Brother Drinhaus a man of true faith, who by his enthusiasm, punctuality, loyalty, and zeal for the work of God, was ever an example to us all. We feel that our dear friend and brother has been taken from our midst all too soon, but God’s thoughts are not our thoughts...”¹⁶

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. See H. F. Schuberth, “Paul Drinhaus,” *ARH*, May 8, 1930, 28.?
2. The parents of Peter Drinhaus belonged to the first Adventists in Germany and Europe. See Heinz Schweizer, Liste der ersten Gemeindeglieder der Adventgemeinde Vohwinkel [List of the first church members of the Vohwinkel Adventist Church]. October 25, 1987, Historical Archives of Seventh-day Adventists in Europe, Friedensau, Germany. For an overview see William A. Spicer, “Wide-Scattered Light Bearers,” *ARH*, March 4, 1937, 4.?
3. Schuberth, “Paul Drinhaus,” 28.?
4. “Rhenish-Prussian Conference,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1907), 81.?
5. Schuberth, “Paul Drinhaus,” 28.?
6. See Paul Drinhaus, “Experiences during the War,” *Lake Union Herald*, November 3, 1920, 5.?
7. *Ibid.*?
8. *Ibid.*?
9. See Schuberth, “Paul Drinhaus,” 28, “West German Union Conference,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1926), 132.?
10. H. F. Schuberth, “Nachruf,” *Adventbote*, April 15, 1930, 128.?
11. See Editorial, *ARH*, December 26, 1929, 32.?
- 12.

Schuberth, "Paul Drinhaus," 28.?

13. Ibid. Schuberth reported, "Next day he was again bright and fresh, feeling well. Friday midnight, March 7, the two brethren arrived in Berlin, and on Sabbath Brother Drinhaus, felt ill, but nothing serious was suspected. Sunday morning, he began to make preparations for the East German Union committee session, but was attacked by another fever, in consequence of which he was later found in a state of unconsciousness from which he did not recover."?
14. The same view was shared by the *Advent Survey* of the Northern European Division, see "A Great Loss," *Advent Survey*, April 1930, 16.?
15. J. L. Mc Conaughey, "Gleanings from the Indianapolis Council," *Lake Union Herald*, November 3, 1920, 1.?
16. Schuberth, "Paul Drinhaus," 28.?

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