Patrick, Arthur Nelson (1934–2013)

LYNDEN J. ROGERS

Lynden J. Rogers, Ph.D. (University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia), is a physicist and currently the head of Science/Maths at Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, Australia, where he has served for 38 years. His principal research interest concerns the interaction between the Adventist/Christian faith and science. He is married to Julie and has three adult children and five grandchildren.

Early Life

Born in Cooranbong, NSW, Arthur was the youngest child of Bertha Emma (née Pocock), who as a girl had known Ellen White in Cooranbong, and William Nelson Patrick. His siblings were Joe (eldest), Ivy, and Alice. He later acquired a younger half-sibling, John Patrick. At the age of four, Arthur, with his mother and the older children, relocated to the Wauchope district, NSW. Accordingly, most of his childhood and adolescent years were spent in a bush setting, where he attended a small district school for four years and assisted with the family dairy herd. He also worked with Joe in the big timber (for which that district is known), becoming adept with his “Kelly” axe and the peg-and-rake crosscut saw. Quiet moments would find the young Patrick catching snakes or riding his horse, Donny, a .22 rifle over his back and lost in bush poetry, much of which he learned in the saddle between his home and the timber.

Education and Qualifications

At the age of 15, while he was cutting up a huge log, Patrick registered the distinct conviction that he should go back to Cooranbong, to the Australasian Missionary College (AMC, now Avondale University College) and take up formal secondary school study. Alternately working at his books and at various jobs to support his education, the years 1950–1953 saw him lay the academic foundations that would later serve him well. His Leaving Certificate results would have taken him to Sydney University, but in 1954 he enrolled instead in tertiary studies at AMC. He graduated from primary teaching in 1956 and the following year from the BA (Theology) degree, which had been newly offered under the auspices of Pacific Union College.

In 1970 he undertook postgraduate study at the seminary at Berrien Springs. By August 1972, after receiving special permission to overload, Patrick had completed a four-quarter MA in systematic theology and a nine-quarter MDiv. Unfortunately, the doctoral program in which he wanted to enroll was not yet accredited, so following the suggestion of the seminary dean, W.G.C. Murdoch, Patrick undertook his DMin at the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. He later completed an Australian M.Lit. and Ph.D. Patrick’s qualifications are listed below:

- Diploma of Teaching, Avondale College, NSW, 1956
- B.A. (Theology), Avondale College, NSW, 1957
- M.A. (Systematic Theology—cum laude), Andrews University, U.S.A., 1972
- D.Min. (Biblical Studies), Christian Theological Seminary, U.S.A., 1973
- Ph.D., “Christianity and Culture in Colonial Australia: Selected Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan and Adventist Perspectives, 1891–1900,” University of Newcastle, 1992
Marriage and Family

Just a little more than a year after leaving Avondale, on January 14, 1959, Patrick married college friend Joan Merle Howse in the Papanui church, New Zealand. It was a union that would not only produce three additional New Zealanders (Zanita Faye, Adrielle Joy, and Leighton Ward), but enrich the lives of countless associates, students, and church members. Toward the end of his life Arthur affirmed that this was “the best thing he ever did.”

Employment and Service

Following his ministerial graduation in 1957 Patrick was appointed to Christchurch, SNZ, as pastor evangelist. In 1961 his employment was suspended by the conference executive committee as a result of his willingness to readmit a church member who had earlier been disfellowshipped because of “an alleged connection with (Robert) Brinsmead.” During this time he became a “rabbiter,” supporting the family by shooting rabbits for the Rabbit Board of South Otago, SNZ, an occupation in which he was well practiced and highly proficient. He was accepted back into ministry nine months later, partly because of the support of Desmond Ford.

In 1966 the family moved to ministry in North New Zealand, and two years later to ministry in the USA. Following his American studies Patrick returned, toward the end of 1973, to Avondale College, as a lecturer in theology. A few years later, following the establishment of the new Ellen G. White Research Center, Patrick was appointed as its first curator, a position from which he was removed in 1983, following questions concerning his orthodoxy.

At the invitation of James J. C. Cox, then Avondale’s principal, Patrick then became Avondale’s academic registrar, a position that was interrupted twice: by a year as senior pastor at Avondale College church, and another year’s study leave. He then relocated to Sydney as senior chaplain at the Sydney Adventist Hospital. His last full-time employment, which extended past his official retirement, was back in the USA, at La Sierra University. His official employment history is shown below.

1958 (January)?1961 (September) minister, S. New Zealand Conference
1961 (October)?1962 (June) leave of absence
1962 (July)?1966 (January) minister, S. New Zealand Conference
1966 (February)–1967 (December) minister, N. New Zealand Conference
1968 (February)?1970 (May) district minister, Illinois Conference, USA
1970 (July)?1973 (August) study leave
1973 (September)?1975 (December) lecturer in theology and church history, Avondale College, NSW
1976 (January)?1983 (December) lecturer/senior lecturer, Avondale College, and first curator, E. G. White/SDA Research Center, South Pacific Division of SDAs, Avondale College, NSW
1984 (January)?1988 (January) registrar, Avondale College
1988 (February)?1989 (January) senior pastor, Avondale College church
1989 (February)?1989 (December) study leave
1990 (January)?1991 (December) registrar, Avondale College
1992 (January)?1996 (October) senior chaplain, Sydney Adventist Hospital; formal retirement in June 1997
1996 (November)–1998 (December) visiting associate professor in church history and pastoral ministry, La Sierra University, USA
1999?2013 adjunct lecturer in church history; and, since 2008, honorary senior research fellow, Avondale College Advanced Education; occasional visiting fellow, La Sierra University

Retirement and Later Life

After ceasing full-time employment, Patrick delivered many guest lectures at Avondale College of Higher Education, where he was an honorary senior research fellow, and at La Sierra University. He also presented papers at various conferences and Adventist forums. In addition, he was involved with the supervision of PhD students.

He fought a successful battle against cancer for some 12 years, only to be eventually diagnosed with an aggressive and untreatable abdominal malignancy. He had sat at too many such bedsides not to know what lay ahead; yet his calm acceptance, his faith, and his courage inspired all. Arthur is buried at the Avondale Cemetery.

Contribution
Patrick’s winsome way with both the spoken and written word was first noted during his Avondale student days, and his word craft became legendary. During his years as a lecturer at Avondale he performed many student weddings. These were always fresh and personal. His engagement with the wider community was demonstrated by a large number of weddings and funerals conducted in this wider context.

He began writing for publication at Avondale in the 1950s and this continued for six decades. Patrick’s family forebears had enjoyed close and beneficial association with Ellen White in Cooranbong during her Australian years. He credited this circumstance, along with his appointment as the first curator of the new E. G. White/SDA Research Center at Avondale College in 1976, as providing much of the impetus that directed his research interests into Adventist historical studies, particularly with respect to the role of Ellen White. Certainly Patrick’s main contribution was in this field.

The SDA Periodical Indexes list many titles from his prolific pen. Many of his scholarly articles may also be found listed on https://research.avondale.edu.au/ and his own website, https://adventiststudies.com/, which was commenced late in 2011. His last article was posted with characteristic determination just days before his death. He referred to it as his “last post.” His book chapters and a number of his most significant articles are listed below.

Patrick received a number of honors during his life, and just in the last few days before his death he was advised that he had been awarded the prestigious Charles E. Weniger medallion.

Patrick was quick to recognize unfairness or lack of charity in the way certain individuals and groups were treated, particularly by the church he loved. This led him to expend himself on unpopular issues of social justice, such as the equality of women in the SDA organization, protection against abuse and exploitation of all kinds, and the better understanding of homosexuality. Although irenic by nature, he could at times, when he judged it necessary, present his view with some force.

Looking further ahead than most, he also possessed keen insight into more academic issues facing Adventism, such as developing an adequate understanding of the ministry of Ellen White, correctly contextualizing the theological positions of our denominational past and exploring the interface between Christianity and science. Patrick was totally unafraid of evidence. His was the ability to analyze the data calmly and perceptively and masterfully synthesize a response. Always his quest was to help his church grow in understanding.

Publications and Papers by Arthur Patrick

Books and Book Chapters


The San: 100 Years of Christian Caring. Wahroonga, NSW: Sydney Adventist Hospital, 2003.


Articles in Refereed Journals

SDA Journals


“Glacier View and the Australasian Ministers.” *Spectrum* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 66–71. (This was a summary of the paper presented to Sydney Adventist Forum on October 22, 2005.)


**Other Journals**


**Popular Articles (a selection)**


“New Zealand.” *Liberty* 58, no. 6 (November-December 1963): 18, 19.

“All That Her Writings Claimed Her to Be.” *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey* 70, no. 35 (August 29, 1966): 10, 11.

“Onward and Upward.” *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey* 71, no. 9 (February 27, 1967): 12, 13.


“After Seven Years: Ellen White and Adventist Heritage.” *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey* 88, no. 28


“Early Adventists and Sabbath Reform.” *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey* 90, no. 21 (June 1, 1985): 6, 7.


“Stocks and Sunday Laws.” *Record* 99, no. 23 (June 18, 1994): 6, 7.


“Fresh Light on William Miller.” Record 118, no. 2 (February 2, 2013): 14, 15; record.net.au.


**Conference Presentations**

“Visioning and Re-Visioning Seventh-day Adventist Tertiary Education in Australia: A Centennial Assessment of Avondale College.” Inaugural Murdoch lecture, Avondale College, August 1997.14


“Glacier View and the Australasian Ministers.” Paper presented to Sydney Adventist Forum Seminar marking 25 years since Glacier View on October 22, 2005, held at Epping Boys High, Sydney.18


**Resource Documents**

“A Brief, Annotated Introduction to the Field of Adventist Studies for Higher Degree Students.” Avondale College (June 2009); a printed pamphlet and web document updating “Adventist Studies: An Annotated Introduction for Higher Degree Students” (May 2006).24

**SOURCES**


Patrick family documents. Held in the collection of the author.


NOTES


9. Rogers, Life Sketch of Arthur Nelson Patrick, March 12, 2013; from personal communication from both D. Ford and ANP.

10. Arthur N. Patrick, personal communication to author, March 1, 2013. Also see Arthur N. Patrick to K. S. Parmenter, November 14, 1983, Avondale College Adventist Heritage Centre, in Articles by Arthur Patrick, Box 2096.

11. Arthur N. Patrick, personal communication to author, March 1, 2013. Also see Arthur N. Patrick to James J. C. Cox, November 14, 1983, and Avondale College Adventist Heritage Centre, in Articles by Arthur Patrick, Box 2096.


14. “Opening Ceremony and Murdoch Lecture” (August 30, 1997), Audiocassette 514, held at the Avondale Heritage Centre; also The Adventist Reader 1, no. 1 (July 9, 1999).


17. Ibid.; Also see Adventist Today, September-October, 2003, 16, 17.

18. Avondale College Adventist Heritage Centre, Box 2338, DVD 470; also at PUC and in the personal collection of the author.


23. Avondale College Adventist Heritage Centre, Box 2338, DVDs 471 and 472; also in the personal collection of author.