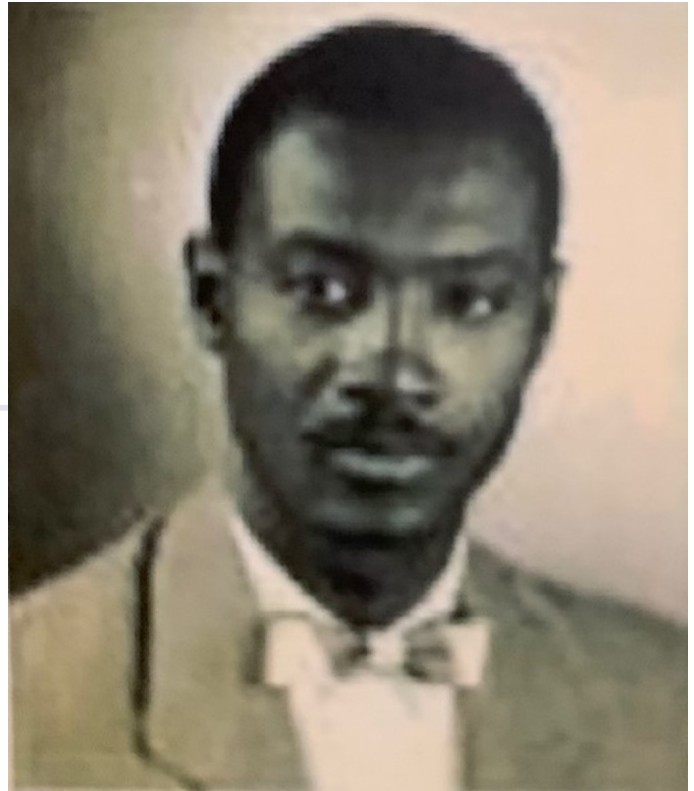


Arthur, Lionel Rodney (1920–2011)

GLENN O. PHILLIPS

Glenn O. Phillips, Ph.D. (Howard University, Washington, D.C.), although retired, is actively writing, researching, lecturing, and publishing. He was a professor at Morgan State University, Howard University, and the University of the Southern Caribbean. He has authored and published numerous articles, book reviews, and books, including "The African Diaspora Experience," "Singing in a Strange Land: The History of the Hanson Place Church," "African American Leaders of Maryland," and "The Caribbean Basin Initiative."



L. R. Arthur.

Photo courtesy of Glenn O. Phillips.

Lionel Rodney Arthur was a pioneering Barbadian Adventist educator, evangelist, business administrator, and pastor who served for over 50 years across the eastern Caribbean as well as in the New York City metropolitan area and in New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S.A.

Early Life and Baptism

Lionel Rodney Arthur was born on May 24, 1920, to Martin Arthur and Otis Marshall in Eckstein Village near Bridgetown, Saint Michael, Barbados. He was the oldest of three brothers. During his formative years, his grandmother, Adrian Marshall, cared for him. Arthur attended the Wesley Hall Boys Primary School in Bridgetown and excelled in his studies completing all the grades ahead of his age group!¹

His curious mind led him as a youngster to attend a series of tent meetings conducted by a visiting American evangelist, Dr. Glenn Millard. He was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church on June 17, 1934. He eventually attended the Government Hill SDA Church in St. Michael and immediately participated in several church youth programs. His interest in church work grew. He responded to the opportunity to study at Caribbean Training College (now University of the Southern Caribbean) in Maracas Valley, Trinidad, enrolling on February 24, 1940.² After completing his secondary education, he enrolled in the theology program and graduated on December 18, 1944.

Immediately afterwards, he returned to Barbados and taught at two primary schools. He also started his evangelistic work in several churches. In early 1946, he served as a church school teacher in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.³ He served for a year and a half and established the first Adventist church school in Christiansted.

Marriage, Ordination, and Education Advocate

On August 7, 1947, Lionel Rodney Arthur married Sheila Madeline Protain of Grenada in Bridgetown, Barbados. They had three children, Cuthbert, Myrtle, and Michael.⁴ After his marriage, he served as the manager of the book and bible center of the Leeward Island Mission (now East Caribbean Conference) and pastored several congregations in Barbados. Beginning in January 1950, he became the pastor of nine congregations on the island of Saint Lucia.

Pastor Arthur was ordained to the gospel ministry in the summer of 1951. He became a leading proponent of Adventist Christian education across the eastern Caribbean.⁵ While serving as education secretary for the Leeward Islands Mission, he was a leading advocate for the establishment of two secondary schools at Georgetown, Guyana, and Bridgetown, Barbados.⁶

Education and Administrative Career

Pastor Arthur served in various administrative positions in the South Caribbean Conference in Trinidad and the Guiana Mission (now Guyana Conference) during the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1956, he was called to serve the South Caribbean Conference as the educational and home missionary departmental secretary.⁷ He returned to study at Caribbean Union College (now University of the Southern Caribbean) in the fall of 1963 where he completed his associate degree in business and theology while pastoring several churches in northern Trinidad. From 1966 through 1968, Pastor Arthur was president of the Guyana Mission in Georgetown, Guyana. His desire for further training led him to enroll at Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University) in Takoma Park, Maryland, in the fall of 1968, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1970.

In June 1971, he was appointed assistant treasurer of the Northeastern Conference in New York City and served for two years. He then returned to pastoral work in the Brooklyn area, leading to the formation of various congregations, including the Flatbush Seventh-day Adventist Church. He also pastored the churches of Bethesda in Amityville, Mt. Zion in New York, South Ozone Park in Queens, Elim in Brooklyn, and Lighthouse Tabernacle in Brooklyn.⁸ He also encouraged the establishment of church schools supported by the churches he pastored. Before retiring, he served for two years as principal of the New Orleans Adventist Academy in Louisiana. After retirement, Pastor Arthur served as a church elder and in other roles at the Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hyattsville, Maryland.

Legacy and Death

Pastor Lionel R. Arthur's commitment to education, evangelism, administrative, and pastoral work throughout his service of over 50 years is his legacy to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Caribbean and the United States. Over his decades of service, he was directly responsible for the establishment of many congregations, several primary church schools, and two secondary schools in the Caribbean. During his early career, he served as teacher/principal of two schools in Barbados as well as an evangelist and a pastor of multiple congregations. His administrative positions included manager of missions, conferences, and book and Bible centers as well as treasurer and assistant treasurer of two conferences. He was most highly regarded over the years for his willingness to share his vast knowledge of denominational operations and policies with colleagues.

Lionel R. Arthur passed to his rest on February 1, 2011, at the Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Maryland. His funeral was held on February 13, 2011, at the Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hyattsville, Maryland, and immediately followed by his interment at the George Washington Cemetery in Adelphi, Maryland.⁹

SOURCES

Arthur, Lionel R. Obituary. February 13, 2011. Accessed May 26, 2022. Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church archives. Hyattsville, Maryland.

"Lionel R. Arthur." Student academic records: 1927-1947. Caribbean Training College office of the registrar. Royal Road, Maracas Valley, Trinidad.

Phillips, Glenn O. *Seventh-day Adventists in Barbados: Over A Century of Adventism, 1884-1991*. Bridgetown, Barbados: Caribbean Graphics and Letchworth, 1991.

Protain Arthur, Sheila Madeline. Obituary. October 18, 2015. Accessed May 26, 2022. Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church archives. Hyattsville, Maryland.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946 and 1957.

NOTES

1. Lionel R. Arthur, obituary, February 13, 2011, accessed May 26, 2022, Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church archives, Hyattsville, Maryland.

2. "Lionel R. Arthur," student academic records: 1927-1947, Caribbean Training College office of the registrar, Royal Road, Maracas Valley, Trinidad.
3. "Leeward Islands Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 126.
4. Sheila Madeline Protain Arthur, obituary, October 18, 2015, accessed May 26, 2022, Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church archives, Hyattsville, Maryland.
5. Arthur, obituary.
6. Glenn O. Phillips, *Seventh-day Adventists in Barbados: Over A Century of Adventism, 1884-1991* (Bridgetown, Barbados: Caribbean Graphics and Letchworth, 1991), 67-70.
7. "South Caribbean Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 114.
8. Arthur, obituary.
9. Ibid.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring, MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000