

ANDREWS, AFTER THIRTY-SIX YEARS



by Arthur N. Patrick

Early in December 1957, three wise men from North America arrived on the campus of the Australasian Missionary College (now Avondale College) to offer the first-ever Seminary Extension School in the lands “Down Under.” Melvin Eckenroth lifted our sights toward more effective evangelism and “Christ-centred preaching.” Arthur White inspired us with his “Prophetic Guidance” narratives, and Edward Heppenstall pushed back our Adventist horizons with classes entitled “Law, Grace and the Covenants” and “Doctrine of the Sanctuary.”

A new graduate (BA, theology) appointed as a ministerial intern to New Zealand, I deemed it an unusual privilege to attend the two-month extension school before crossing the Tasman Sea. The event was so challenging that I decided I must experience more of it—at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Mich.

Getting to the Seminary involved far more than travel to the top side of the world. I married Joan Howse on Jan. 14, 1958, and we ministered together in New Zealand for nine years and saved rigorously before transferring to the Illinois Conference. Finally, mid-1970, jobless and with three children, we arrived at Andrews University.

We were desperate for work to pay Seminary fees and living expenses. Providentially, the Michigan Conference employed Joan as an elementary teacher and then principal at Hartford. I established a landscaping business. During

the winter I worked night-shift, caring for the cows in the University dairy. Later, Steven Vitrano employed me part-time in the religion department.

Seminary classes, at last! In Old Testament, with Gerhard Hasel skillfully helping me implement *Kate Turabian’s Manual* for writing research papers; with Raoul Dederen, master of the succinct summary of yesterday’s lecture and today’s topic; with Mervyn Maxwell, narrative historian par excellence; with Edward Banks, passionate enricher of marriages; with Charles Wittschiebe, the white-haired advocate of the innovative idea (for Adventists!) that “God invented sex.” Outstanding was Leona Running, who retaught me Hebrew and Greek, after the manner in which Adventists baptize—by total immersion.

As Seminary dean, W.G.C. Murdoch felt certain that Andrews’ accreditation for doctoral programs would be received quite soon. So, after an MDiv, I dallied with master’s in systematic theology and additional classwork. Still the negotiations were incomplete. Murdoch’s sterling help moved me to Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, as the only Adventist amongst 300 students from 26 denominations.

Thirty-six years after finishing at Andrews, the grateful memories remain, in vivid technicolor. We treasure the era we lived in Dogwood Drive and were impacted by Seminary faculty, students and the James White Library—especially its primary documents relating to Adventist

history and thought. Joan also enjoyed the summer schools she attended, but she sacrificed graduation so we could return to pastoral-evangelism in Australia. I felt it was my duty to return to our home Division, despite attractive options for teaching and ministry in the United States.

The Seminary was not to blame that my life-goals impelled me to study elsewhere: DMin (academic emphasis, Biblical Studies); MLitt (Ellen White Studies); PhD (Religious History). But I wonder if our two daughters and our son have forgiven us for the financial privations of their childhood, caused by a father who *had* to attend Andrews University?



We’d love to hear your reflections on the time you spent at Andrews University. If you’re interested in contributing, please e-mail focus@andrews.edu.

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