

Avondale scholarship boosted: Encyclopedia increases research profile

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Keywords: Avondale, encyclopedia, research profile, Seventh-day Adventist

Abstract

Articles written by Avondale academics for the new *Encyclopedia of Seventh-Day Adventists (ESDA)* will significantly increase the university college's institutional research profile this year. The publication record addition is largely thanks to regional editor and conjoint associate professor Dr Barry Oliver, who ensured the peer-reviewed articles qualified for reporting as part of Avondale's University College's Research Data Collection.

While the South Pacific is only one of 13 divisions of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, Oliver and his writers contributed about 30 per cent of the encyclopedia's articles. Of these 629 articles, about 70 per cent are from Avondale academics and alumni. "Now just in case you think these articles are just a few sentences, a couple of paragraphs, no way," says Oliver in a video produced for an Adventist Heritage Here for Good Colloquium. "The article on Avondale College, for example, is 25,000 words."

Others by academics on staff cover issues such as the Adventist Church and military service in the South Pacific (Daniel Reynaud), Australian indigenous missionaries (Brad Watson) and the theological stream called Brinsmeadism (Kayle de Waal) or profile notable Adventists such as historian Dr Arthur Patrick (Lynden Rogers) and hospital administrator Dr Elwin Currow (Stephen Currow). Church institutions such as Betikama Adventist College (Lynnette Lounsbury) and Sydney Adventist Hospital (Paul Race) are covered, too.

The contribution of the 27 Avondale academics and alumni "highlights their commitment to sharing knowledge that enriches and expands an understanding of key people and institutions shaping the vital work and mission of the church," says Associate Dean (Research) Associate Professor Carolyn Rickett. She chairs the Research Committee, which invited Oliver to its most recent meeting so members could offer thanks. In a presentation during the meeting, Vice-

President (Academic) Professor Stephen Currow acknowledged Oliver's "longstanding connection and commitment to Avondale" as a graduate (1973, 1985), lecturer (1990-1997) and council chair (2008-2015). "The opportunities you have given to contribute to the encyclopedia are just further evidence of this commitment."

*What is the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-Day Adventists (ESDA)*?*

ESDA is a global church project which aims at completing approximately 8,500 articles with accompanying photographs, media, and original documents. ESDA is a great tool, ... for those seeking to learn more about the church, ... ESDA Online, the church's first online reference work, launched on July 1st, 2020. This free online resource will continue indefinitely, to be constantly updated and expanded.

(ESDA, para. 2)

How can the breadth of coverage of ESDA be maximised? How will the goal of maintaining currency be achieved? The future of the Encyclopedia is open to the involvement of all as contributors. "This is a chance to write about our church in an honest, open, and thorough way" (ESDA, para 9). Some specific topics are offered as motivation:

You may want to suggest an article on a school or ministry, or about Adventists' engagement with an issue that you are passionate about, such as social activism, technology, or the environment. To contact the main office please write to encyclopedia@gc.adventist.org.

(ESDA, para. 8)

ESDA is not only a research reference work, it provides an opportunity to contribute your awareness of historical events so as to inform others and maintain organisational 'memory'. **TEACH**

References

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