

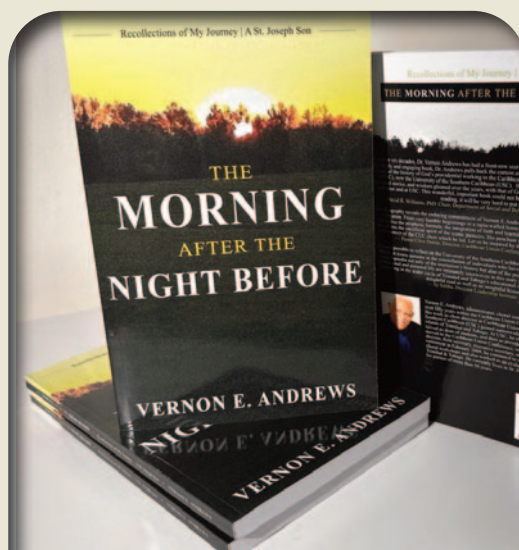


Petra Pierre-Robertson

**T**he *Morning After the Night Before: Recollections of My Journey, A St. Joseph Son* is an autobiography with 18 chapters and eight appendices. The first 16 chapters are succinct mini-narratives of selected experiences in the life of Vernon Euclid Andrews, a retired educator and administrator. Andrews served as the president of the University of the Southern Caribbean in Maracas, St. Joseph, Trinidad, and field secretary and music director for the Caribbean Union Conference in Maraval, Trinidad. His recollections are delivered in a conversational storytelling style, and the narratives cohere into a continuous whole. Using literary conventions of flashbacks and flash-forwards, he chronicles a narrative denominational history of the Caribbean Union and, more specifically, the University of the Southern Caribbean. Throughout all this, his autobiography is woven. It is a history book but also a personal story.

The first seven chapters recount various experiences from the author's birth to childhood and teenage years to adulthood. Simultaneously, these experiences are grounded in spatiotemporal, educational, and socio-cultural landscapes. These include his entrance into and experiences in the Maracas Seventh-day Adventist Primary School, his introduction to and subsequent love for music, musical recollections, undergraduate experiences at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and meeting the love of his life.

Chapter eight, which serves as the genesis for the title of the book *The Morning After the Night Before*, reflects his favorite landscape, or rather, soundscape—



**Vernon E. Andrews, *The Morning After the Night Before: Recollections of My Journey, A St. Joseph Son***

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music. In chapters nine through 16, the author shares experiences from his adult life that correspond with the physical, academic, and social growth of the East Caribbean Training School (now the University of the Southern Caribbean) and the Caribbean Union Conference (its parent institution). The experiences shared resonate with themes of dedication, hard work, human relationships, leadership, patience, prayer, resilience, tact, and God's providential leading, to name a few.

The book ends with eight appendices. These records are select writings, presentations, and correspondences written by the author as an educator, administrator, and former president of Caribbean Union College. The book also provides photos that reflect the various experiences identified.

**Digging a Little Deeper**

The author's birth occurred during a time of local and global tensions. The Moyne Commission, also known as the West India Royal Commission Report of 1938, revealed the social and economic conditions in the then British West Indies, which were devastated by the Great Depression. By 1939, World War II began escalating in Europe. He uses his parents' experiences during this period to paint educational landscapes. His father's formal education ended at the primary school level, after which he took an exam given to those desirous of entering government service. His mother, Winifred Beryl Stoll, was enrolled as the 76th student at East Caribbean Training College in 1928, one year after the school's establishment in 1927. This aptly

positions the author as one who can competently describe the growth and development of the East Caribbean Training School into the University of the Southern Caribbean, which coincided with the various stages of his life.

The author's traumatic experience on his first day in a government school served as a stimulus for his being among the first set of students enrolled in the primary school on the Caribbean Training College campus, which later became Maracas Seventh-day Adventist Primary School. At this point, we are introduced to persons outside his immediate family who significantly impacted his life and with whom he developed lifelong friendships, such as his elementary school principal, childhood friends, and schoolmates at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Through these stories, he reflects on "the value of Christian education unswervingly supported by two God-fearing parents, and nurtured by loving and committed teachers" (p. 20).

The author takes readers to Guyana and tells stories of riding large river vessels, such as the *Lady Nelson*, as well as tugboats and pontoons along the majestic Essequibo River (which flows 630 miles in a northerly direction from the Amazon to the Atlantic Ocean). In personal anecdotes, he transports readers by buses and trains across the island of Trinidad to the dedication of the San Fernando Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1949. He uses the story of that trip not only to share memories of the days of train travel on the Trinidad Government Railway but also to tell the story of a curious little boy (the author) being lost in San Fernando and, as a result, missing the dedication of the church. Andrews wittily and seamlessly fuses this experience with the hymns "Amazing Grace" and "Seeking the Lost" to draw a spiritual lesson from the experience.

The author shares recollections of his musical growth and acknowledges the influence of Bender and Frances Archbold on his career in music (although his mother was his first piano teacher). Bender Lawton Archbold served as youth and education director for the Caribbean Union in 1949 and later as president of Caribbean Union College. He became the first Inter-American Division president born in Inter-America (the island of Providencia, Columbia). His wife,

Frances Victoria Burke-Archbold, a licentiate of the Royal School of Music in Piano Performance, taught choral and piano music to the children at the Maracas school. Also included in his reflections is his experience with Cecil Warren Becker, the long-time organist at Andrews University.

This autobiography would not be complete without a love story. The author devotes an entire chapter to his lifelong partner, Phyllis Andrews, in the chapter is appropriately titled "The Lady in My Life."

*The Morning After the Night Before* is worth the read. Living history, in the person of Vernon Euclid Andrews, has been transformed into documented history. This memoir is a necessary resource for educators and educational administrators, students and teachers, and a wide range of audiences from policymakers to the members in the pews, especially when faced with the question, "What do these stories mean?" We have nothing to fear for the future, except we forget how we were led in the past.\* In that regard, this record of the past is a must-read for members of both church and society. ✍

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\* Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1991), 359.