PASTOR (PROF.) ADEKUNLE ALAGBE ALALADE  
(April 16, 1938 – Till Date)

Pastor Adekunle A. Alalade was born on April 16, 1938 to the family of Pa David Aremu and Ma Mariam Atoke Alalade in the village of Owobale-Odedeji, Erunmu in Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria. He is the last of eleven children. His parents were initially “ifa” worshippers, but his father was one of the first Adventists that were converted in 1914 when the Seventh-day Adventist message came to Nigeria.

HIS EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION: Pastor Adekunle A. Alalade started his early school years at his village in Owobale-Odedeji SDA School between 1946 and 1951. He eventually finished his primary education at SDA Central School, Erunmu in 1955. He proceeded to SDA
Modern School in Idito Erunmu now Idito, (High School) between 1956 and 1958, where he had his Modern III in 1958. The following year, he was admitted to the Adventist Teacher Training College Otun-Ekiti for Grade III Teacher’s Certificate course. This was just a two year course. He gained admission to Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA) in September 1969 to commence his theological education. In May 1973 he got his Bachelor of Arts Degree with major in Theology and minor in History. He travelled to the United States of America on September 23rd 1976 for further studies. He was able to earn three degrees after his studies at various universities in America. These included an MA in Religion with emphasis in Systematic Theology; Master of Divinity from Andrews University in Michigan, and a Doctorate Degree (D Min) at Vanderbilt University Divinity School where he studied Ethics and Christian Philosophy with a cognate in Church Leadership and Administration.

TEACHING CAREER: Pastor Alalade commenced his teaching career in January 1959 at SDA School Ataari in the Egbeda Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria. After his two year Teacher’s Certificate Course, he went back to teach in the same institution where he taught from January 1962 to September 1969. From 1963 to September 1969 he taught at the SDA School Abule-Oja, Yaba Lagos State. He also served at the Adventist Grammar School Ede, Osun State as a School Pastor and Bible Teacher. He served as Chaplain/Asst Church Pastor, preceptor and Bible Teacher at the SDA Hospital, Ile-Ife. He had successfully conducted series of evangelistic campaigns and Revelation Seminars. He has taught Christian Ethics; Pastoral Administration; New Testament Epistles; and Life and Teachings of Christ as well as Doctrines of the Holy Spirit; Ministerial Ethics and Church Administration; Biblical Eschatology; Conflict Management; Love, Marriage and Family, and Social Ministry at the undergraduate and graduate levels respectively.

The pericope Prof. Alalade loves to quote during his many years of administrative service is Micah 6:8 which says:

HE HATH SHOWED THEE, O MAN, WHAT [IS] GOOD;
AND WHAT DOTH THE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE, BUT TO
DO JUSTLY, AND TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK
HUMBLY WITH THY GOD?
HIS MARITAL LIFE: Pastor Alalade had his first marriage from December 20, 1966 to March 7, 1989 with Victoria Waleola Sobaki. This marriage was blessed with three beautiful daughters namely: Taiye Aborisade, Kehinde Abolarin and Idowu Nwankere (who is presently a lecturer at the Business Administration Department of Babcock University). He is also blessed with 5 grand children. The second marriage to Jean Samuel was on August 5, 1990. They were married for two decades before the unfortunate separation which finally led to a divorce.
HIS MINISTERIAL CALLING: Pastor Alalade was ordained on March 19, 1983. He continued his ministerial career in Lagos State as a District Pastor when he returned to Nigeria from the United States of America on November 26, 1981. He served in that capacity till July 12, 1983 when he was transferred to Adventist Seminary of West Africa (now Babcock University) as Vice President for Students’ Affairs and Chairman of the Theology Department until August 16, 1983. He was later appointed the President of the Seminary that same year till April 20, 1999 when ASWA got a charter to operate as a private university in Nigeria. He became the pioneer Vice Chancellor of Babcock University until June 2006 when he retired.

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR: Pastor Alalade was the President (Chief Executive Officer) of Adventist Seminary of West Africa from 1983 through 1999 and the pioneer Vice Chancellor of Babcock University for more than 23 years. He has taught generations of students who are well placed in strategic positions in industries, public/private organizations both nationally and internationally. He was also an astute administrator who has to his credit scores of publications, journals, sermons and speeches. He was a member of various local and international professional bodies such as:

- Bible Society of Nigeria
- Association of Bible Knowledge Teachers, 1974
- Association of Religious Ethics Studies, USA, 1981
- Christian Studies Association of Nigeria, 1987
- President of West African Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI), 1995 to 1999
- Vice-President of the Association of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities in Nigeria (AVCNU), from 2002 to 2006
Chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Registrars of Private Universities in Nigeria from 2002 to 2006
A member of the Governing Board of Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board from 2005 to 2006.

Some of his notable achievements and awards: In recognition of his meritorious services, diverse achievements awards were conferred on him for his humble disposition and commitment to service. Prominent among these awards conferred on him both national and internationally are:

- South-West Nigeria Conference Award in recognition and appreciation of his invaluable services as a pioneer member of the Executive Committee of the Conference from December 1998 to 2006.
- South-West Nigeria Conference Award in appreciation of his unforgettable service to God and Humanity in Evangelism from 2001 to 2004.
- National Universities Commission Appreciation Awards 2002 and 2004
- Gold Medal Awards by Association of Seventh-day Adventist (ASDAMEC) members
from East Nigeria Conference, Lagos

- Award of Excellence in Educational Leadership and Administration by the General Conference of SDA Church Education Department, Silver Springs, Maryland, USA
- Appreciation Award by National Universities Commission, 2004
- Merit Award by Babcock University Student Association
- Awards in recognition and appreciation for his contribution to Adventist Educators by the Adventist Educators Association of Nigeria, (ADEASON)
- The Distinguished Nation-Builders Merit Award (DINBMA), 2005

He was also awarded the traditional chieftaincy title of “Akorewolu of Ilisan” by the Oba–in–council with the Ilisan Development Council (IDC) in appreciation for his great contributions towards the development of Ilisan-Remo community.

“Akorewolu” means The Harbinger of Blessings.

SHEPHERDESS JEAN ALALADE: This story will not be complete without mentioning the supportive role of Shepherdess Jean Alalade. She played these supportive roles while Prof. Alalade was in active service both as the President and pioneer Vice Chancellor of Babcock University. She could be called
a typical mother in Israel to so many both on campus and without. She went contributed to the growth of Babcock University, by inviting different professionals who rendered assistance to the development of Babcock. She organized and invited medical professionals from overseas who came to Babcock to help improve the Babcock University Medical Centre. She was instrumental in ordering the National Geographic Magazine, a monthly/quarterly international magazine to enrich the library collections of the Babcock University High School. Her numerous contributions to the Babcock University High School made the administration to name the Girls Hostel after her.

**NOTABLE LANDMARKS DURING HIS 23 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP AT BABCOCK UNIVERSITY:**

- The establishment of the Ellen G. White-SDA Research Centre on Nov. 24, 1990
- Establishment of primary and secondary schools at Babcock University
- Commencement of the BU Stadium project with N150 million
- Building projects to house staff and faculty on campus was commenced
- Establishment of the Babcock University Parents Consultative Forum (PCF)
- Adventist University of Africa (AUA) Masters Programme was commenced
- Feasibility study for the Babcock University Medical School was done
- Science and Technology (SAT) building was constructed
- Establishment of the BU Medical Center after the Nigeria Union’s handover
- Education and Humanities (EAH) building was constructed
- Upgrading of the BU Library to its current status was accomplished
- Andrews University (AU) Coordinated D. Min Programme was commenced
- Nigerian government granted Babcock University the Charter to operate as a private University on May 10, 1999.
- Astronomical increase in the enrollment of students
- New dormitories constructed for both male and female students
- Increase in BU programmes and Departments between 1999 and 2006.
REGRETS IN HIS LIFE: Pastor Alalade is a human being who had several happy and memorable occasion as well as some unhappy ones. One of the unhappy moments was when he felt like giving up his career as a teacher because he took the examination four times and passed but was not admitted into the Teachers Grade II. These incidents which made him very sad also led him to enroll for the GCE ‘A’ levels papers. Another time was after the completion of his studies at ACWA, he was not employed by the Mission. This led him to make the decision to join the army but that was not God’s plan for him. Upon his graduation on May 27, 1973, he got a letter inviting him to serve in the Lord’s vineyard but he was unhappy when he discovered that his salary was far below those who were graduates like himself.
RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION: In addition to being a successful administrator, Prof Alalade also had time for research and publication. During the celebration of his 70th Birthday and Thanksgiving Service on December 19, 2008 he presented and launched the book titled: Limiting Factors in the Success of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Africa: The Nigeria Case Study. Earlier in 2006, Prof. Alalade authored Jesus at the Centre: Sanctuary Scenes in the Book of Revelation a treatise of 412 pages on the book of Revelation. Apart from these two major publications, The Man Alalade equally attended more than 100 academic and professional conferences in Africa, Europe and North America within the last two decades where scholarly papers were presented.
TESTIMONIES ABOUT PASTOR A. A. ALALADE: Pastor Alalade as an amiable and seasoned administrator cannot be forgotten by many who worked with him during his period of service. Some of the testimonies about Pastor Alalade are shared below:

Femi Afolabi, a graduate of Babcock University says this about him, “Prof. A. A. Alalade is a man of integrity, very firm, blunt and straightforward. Baba is a man that believes strongly in Church policy and also maintains it. He went further to say that, Baba is transparent in his dealings and he is therefore feared by dubious people.”

Mrs. Olubisi G. Makinde who worked with Prof Alalade as a Recording Secretary of the Board of Trustees informed us that “Prof. Alalade is a reasonable person who is committed to the cause of ASWA and Babcock University. He is also fair to everyone. His relationship with other workers is excellent. He will greet you on a personal level and would like to know how your spouse and children are doing. He was a hard worker. He gives others the opportunity to share their opinions and does not impose his views on other people. He, however, favors superior arguments.”

Another testimony about him came from Mr. Oni of Political Science Department, Babcock University who said “Baba, though passionately loved by me, he could not recognize me even as at now because we were not physically close while he was here. The qualities that endeared him to me from afar are his integrity, foresight, determination and zeal to succeed even at the age he was opportuned to preside over Babcock University. He is a highly depolitized personality. A very predictable man when it comes to policy issue although sometimes to a fault. He is not only straightforward but transparent. He is a true representation of his peers. Having worked in public school before I joined Babcock, I know that his person will continue to run into crisis with our generation because his pattern of life, belief and ways are different from the present generation which he presided over. I thank God that those who hated him with passion shortly before he left, later continued to talk well about him even till date. Only those who wish to cut corners may have crisis with Baba. He has no friends when it comes to policy issues. However, Baba needs to be less rigid and engage in counseling of culprits instead of “dealing” with them.”

Sister Chilaka Uzoma, Secretary to the Dean, Management and Social Sciences also testified to the good works of Pastor Alalade when she said “One thing I know about Prof. Alalade is that he is a Seasoned Administrator. To me he still remains the best administrator the Seventh-day Adventist Church has produced in recent times.”
CONCLUSION: Pastor Alalade is a man of policy and principles. He knew how to deal fairly with everyone irrespective of race, tribe, gender, and economic background. He believed in balancing justice with mercy, integrity, hard work, and single mindedness in everything he did. He was a man that upheld culture even in his dressing. He loves children and even shares his busy time with them when the need arises. Although he has retired from denominational work, he is not tired of using his time and energy effectively in serving God and humanity whenever and wherever duty calls. As Professor Adekunle Alagbe Alalade advances to the enviable status of becoming an octogenarian, may his eye not dim, and may his natural force not abate as was the privilege of Moses so long ago (Deuteronomy 34:7).

Sources:


Programme for the book launch and 70th Birthday of Prof. A. A. Alalade


Adekunle A. Alalade – Personal Interview held at the Ellen G. White-SDA Research Centre, Babcock University, Nigeria between 3.00 pm and 3.40 pm on Sunday, March 4, 2012 by the publishers.