I. Honoring Don Bankhead

Gerald Christo <geraldjchristo@gmail.com> April 11:
Don Bankhead--As I Know Him

Don Bankhead, at age 77, finally has an identity! Earlier on he was referred to as Micky's dad. Micky was the young missionary who works in the South Pacific Division office. Then after Marge was assigned work in the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) administrative office he was recognized as Mrs. Bankhead's youngish-looking old man. As a retired volunteer the head of the department assigned Dr. Bankhead two classes, 80% of a college professor's full load. Due to a shortage of faculty in the education department this was later increased to three classes.

The Institute faced a crisis. The High School needed a principal. The search for a principal proved futile and elusive till someone recollected that the volunteer professor had been a principal of a boarding school forty years ago who could be the very person they were looking for. One evening Don had a visit from the president. He was stunned when the president offered him the job. Pastor Bankhead citing his age as a reason initially hesitated. The president told to take his time and that he would visit him again. That's when Mickey's dad, and Mrs. Bankhead's old man, got his own handle-

-Dr. Bankhead, Principal of the High School on the campus of AIIAS.

Facing three challenges on his assumption of Principal, the Lord in three miraculous answers to prayer gave His approval of Don's mantle of leadership. A government edict made it mandatory for all high schools in the Philippines to have government recognition. The second challenge stipulated that all high schools switch from a ten year to a twelve curriculum. The last of three challenges the curriculum of final two years of the high school be approved by the government. Visits to local and state educators set up a school site visit. The inspectors were pleased with what they saw and granted immediate recognition. Although the government did not have a approved course of study for the final two years the inspectors recommended to the State that give approval to the courses of study which the school's faculty proposed. Three challenges and three miracles in a matter of weeks!

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I first met Don in the late 1960s when I, as Chairman of the Board of Assam Training School, visited the school. Then a young missionary married to one of the daughters of the legendary Oliver and Sylvia Lange, he always seemed to have some sort a measuring gadget and a notebook wherever he went, not accomplishing much that I could see. Following such luminaries like Fred Nash and Charles Boykin, Bankhead was appointed principal of ATS.

Unassuming, unobtrusive, displaying a humility that defies description and willing to respond where needed as a teacher, principal, OWPH Factory Superintendent, pastor, professor and vice-president at Spicer Memorial College, Secretary of the Division's Medical Trust, he and Marge have built lasting relationships which has endeared themselves on the several campuses on which they worked and under varying situations.

As I noted in my "Memoirs" when the invitees from the Sri Lanka Union to the 1984 Division Council nominating committee gave their description of the kind of person they wanted, as their president I remarked, "Only an angel would
fit your description." Pastor Bankhead was elected president a position he held till the Division was re-organized. Don and Marge are still filling needs.

II. Don Oliver <daagoliver@yahoo.com> April 13:

Dr. Small’s letter about Dr. McWilliams brought back pleasant memories of this dear woman and mentor. My brother and sister and I were small children on the Nuzvid compound when Dr. "Mac" started her career at the Giffard Memorial Hospital. A quiet, overwhelmingly competent, and caring doctor, she took time to teach a trumpet lesson most weeks to one or two young boys in our home. Additionally, she played for Sabbath School or church, sometimes accompanying the choirs, both Telugu and English.

She served long and loyally with many faithful nurses, doctors and other valuable hospital workers and was beloved by her patients. Our God was the important part of her ministry which she lived out for Him.

III. Letters

1. Edison Samraj <amc3@vsnl.com> April 11:

I want to commend and congratulate Dr. Johnson Choppala for his outstanding work with the eunuchs in Andhra Pradesh. Even so after his retirement he has done such wonderful work with the eunuchs. I pray that God will use him more in the days to come.

We thank God that the students in Kerala did not write their SSLC Maths exam on Sabbath. The government invention was also an interesting thought for the church to ponder on. We thank Dr. Shashi Tharoor for his intervention on this matter.

Congratulations to Pastor R. John for being conferred the award of Doctor of Philosophiae and publicly recognize Pastor Rathina Raj John for his services rendered in God’s service from the Bible University of Holy Spirit, New Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Chennai. I am happy to know that this university is situated in Chennai.

I commend Mrs. Birol Christo for writing in the 2012 Women’s Morning Watch on 2nd April. I am happy that indigenous writers are coming forward presenting their spiritual thoughts in the global stage. May God bless her as she continues to write.

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2. Dave & Sandi Reynolds <drey-olds@canby.com> April 14:

We will be having a Southern Asia Potluck at the Portland, Oregon Sunnyside SDA Church, Sabbath May 12, 2012. Anyone who can come are welcome.

If possible please bring your favorite Southern Asia dish. Sandi and I will be supplying mango lassi in both a dairy and a non-dairy (for those who are dairy free) version. Our mother, Betty Reynolds, will be visiting with us for this occasion. Please come if you can, even if you don’t personally know us. Think of this as an opportunity to meet new Southern Asia friends and families!!! The church is at 10501 SE Market St., Portland, OR 97216. Church lets out by 1 pm, so lunch will start by about 1:30, maybe slightly before, depending on circumstances.

IV. Adventist Literature in the Nepali Language

Umesh Kumar Pokharel <umsan@wlink.com.np> April 9:

On 7th April, 2012 Pr. Chuck Jenson unveiled "Steps to Christ", revised third edition in Nepali at the Seventh-day Adventist church in Katmandu during the divine service time. We have printed 1000 copies with the help of one of our friends. The book was translated by Umesh Kumar Pokharel, edited by Elder Bhaju Ram Shrestha and designed by Sujit Saha.

The Publishing Department of the Nepal Field is actively involved in the publishing work for the Field. Last year the publishing department published two other books: "Amazing Facts" and "Messiah" with help of our friends. At present we are working on Mrs. White's "Ministry of Healing" and "The Great Controversy"; we need you prayers and support.

Right now we are also publishing the Adult Sabbath School lessons and distributing them among the members of our churches as well as to other Christians, Hindus and Buddhist, and these have been highly appreciated by all the people who are reading it.

We need more literature so that we can be able to reach each house in Nepal with our messages. Kindly pray for the publishing work.

--Umesh Kumar Pokharel, Director of Publishing Ministry, Nepal ~~~~~~~~~~

V. Charles H. Shad Remembers His Father

Charles Shad <charles.shad@gmail.com> April 5:
My father, Pastor B. M. Shad, went to sleep in the Lord on April 19, 1998 while he was staying in Shanker, Punjab, India. We are not sure about his year of birth—either 1908 or 1907. We do know he was 90+.

Well, that does not matter. Dad was married in 1936 to Rosie Mall who was a teacher in Chuharkana Mandi (now in Pakistan). He started working for the SDA church at the age of 19 in the Moradabad area under the local worker Pastor Chander Sen. At that time he was just a high school graduate. He was sent to Krishnarajapuram near Bangalore where he finished junior college.

Later he was sponsored to Philippines Union College to pursue higher studies. This time his family went with him—my mom, me and my brother Johnson. Cecil was born in the Philippines and Delma in Roorkee after their return to India.

He served the Lord for more then 55 years including post retirement. He was a teacher, headmaster, principal, and departmental head for the Union for Lay Activities, Missionary Volunteers, Evangelism, Education, etc.

My mother, Rosie Shad, went to sleep about seven months before my father on September 1, 1997. Now they are both sleeping waiting for our Lord's return and I know they will be there in His kingdom.

Both my parents were a tremendous strength to us four, to our children and to the scores who came in contact with them. They had many special friends and among the closest was the Tidwell family.

[CHT/Sr.-- On a personal note: When we first-time missionaries arrived in India in 1953, we were assigned to be principal at Roorkee High School.

The Shad family were our next door neighbors, and church pastor and headmaster Pastor Shad's office was next to mine. He was a master teacher, advisor, and to me, missionary orientation provider par excellence. And he unconsciously taught me that he was as much a missionary as was I! When we went to do the annual "Uplift" (otherwise known as "Ingathering") he always introduced the two of us as "we missionaries." And indeed, he, and the other national workers, were certainly missionaries to their people--"ones sent".

VI. Large Telegu Church Dedicated in Gujarat (Part 2 of 2)

Samuel Raj Sodadasi <sodadasi.samuelraj@gmail.com>, assisted by Santhilal Gaddam

The Church Dedication, Sabbath, March 24, 2012

Dr. CH. Vasantha Rao recalled the beginning if the work here: "Thirty seven years ago I came here from Pune for selling books. I was still a student in Spicer Memorial College. I was sent here by Pr. R. D. Riches. I came first to METAS and lived there, met so many people in order to sell books. Once I met a Warangal man called Bokka Adam. He was a Baptist church member that time. Both of us regularly visited so many places and met people. Once, I asked him about starting a church in Man-darvaja. He agreed and both of us spoke with so many people. We even came to Lymbayat. One day a man called Venkateswarlu a Hindu came ravishingly to beat me by saying "You people can sing vandemataram and Janaganamana songs but don't preach Jesus here." I cried to the Lord and prayed a lot. After a month we conducted 21 days meetings in Man-darvaja with the encouragement of Pr. R. D. Riches. We had fought so many battles and with the help of elder Somaiah, Elder Racha Somdas; we started service. Sri Wilmot Jadhav baptized 31 members into the church. That led the church till here. From Man-darvaja Pr. Vasantha Rao came to Lymbayat. . ."
the school was started with 127 students. Then from there church also flourished and even the school. With the help of Bro. Prashanth, Secretary of the Hindu Parishath, and with the help of the Commissioner we constructed the building. I specially thank Pr. Sharan, Pr. Pankaj and others for helping us in many ways. So many people and so many schools came to help the church. I thank them all. Let us all be one and wait for the second coming of Christ."

Finally, the Conference president, Pr. Pankaj Parmar spoke: "I was born in Surat and grew up here. That time when METAS School started I was one of the students in the first group. It so true nothing great can happen without shedding blood and sweat. I thank all of them who helped for the growth of the church."

This was followed by main ceremony of the day:
Stone inaugurated by Dr. R. John
Stone recitation was read by Dr. M. S. Jeremiah
Dr. R. John cut the ribbon
The Devine Service started at 12 pm and welcome note was given by Pr. S. Samuel Raj.

Opening prayer offered by Dr. R. John
Pledging note read by Church pastor Dr. S. Samuel Raj
Pastoral prayer offered by Dr. M. S. Jeremiah
Special Prayer offered by Pr. Jadhav
Offerings announcement by Mr. Rakesh Chavan
Special song sung by Church Choir
Introduction of the speaker by Pr. Jadhav as follows:
"We have a great person; he is none other than Southern Asia Division president, Dr. R. John. He is a wonderful human being and a humble servant of God. He likes kids very much. He worked in many schools in southern Asia. He worked as president of the Karnataka Section. In 1998 he was elected South India Union president. Later on, in 2005 he became the executive secretary. Three years later, after Dr. Watts left India, he became president. He is very spiritual, loves God and he loves God's people so much. He is a good student of Scripture; that is why we have such a great person to share the word of God".

The message for the divine service was then delivered by Dr. R. John. He said; "I was surprised to see such a big church here in Surat. But I was worried by knowing that this church was not dedicated. When I visited the church last time, I advised the elders that it should be plastered." He took the reference from Haggai 1: 5, 6. It speaks of constructing the church-- re-building the temple.

Dr. John solemnly said "I like God; I also like God's people and God's church. I feel always we should have great churches to praise great God." He also questioned: "Why so late to dedicate the church? Do we leave our houses if they are like this? It is history of the Lymbayat Church that this church is dedicated today." . . .

"When we consider God as the First Person, He will bless us abundantly. Church dedication means dedicating our selves. We can understand that it's our prayer to God in this way"- "God, I am dedicating my self to You. Because I love You. Everything I possess today is from You. In this way we must dedicate ourselves and live by the Word of God. One must consider God as the First Person in his life. One should pray regularly, one should meditate the word of God and follow His commandments." He concluded by saying what God expects from mankind. how He wants to bless the people that He loves.

After the blessed message by Dr. R. John, closing prayer was offered by Pr. Pankaj Parmar. [The translation into Telugu done by church pastor, Dr. S. Samuel Raj.

[I want thank all the church members for their support, the conference officers, WIU officers, METAS officers, the Division President Dr. R. John, and above all the almighty God for making the programme a grand success.--Pastor Samuel Raj Sodadasi, Church Pastor]

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