I. Mourning the Loss of Josephine Francis

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   2. Nalina Robert Donald

III. Report of Church Growth in Nepal

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I. Mourning the Loss of Josephine Francis

Florence Fernando <flofernando@icloud.com> March 9:

It was indeed a shock to hear about the death of Josephine Dass Francis.

Our deepest sympathies go out to Tom and his family. May God grant them the strength and courage they need at this time.

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II. PhD Degrees Completed
   1. Vinita Gaikwad

      Former Spicer Faculty Vinita Gaikwad Completes PhD
      Rajendra Prasad <rajendraprasad2000@yahoo.com> March 9:

      Ms Vinita Gaikwad (nee Jacob) from UP was handpicked by Dr. Cherian to join the faculty of Spicer's English department right after her graduation in 1989. As a student she had proved herself as a versatile young woman both in curricular and co-curricular domains. After serving Spicer for 5 years she moved along with her husband Rajan Gaikwad, an MBA graduate, to Hosur in 1994 to join the Communication department of the Southern Asia Division.

      Later they both moved to Bugema, then to Uganda, Saudi Arabia and finally to China, where Vinita has been teaching in the centres of University of Nottingham (UK) and Kean University (USA). In the meanwhile she completed a master's diploma in Journalism and Communication from Symbiosis, Pune in 1991, MA degree in English from Mysore University in 1997 and MSc degree in Educational Research from University of Exeter, UK, in 2011. Vinita completed recently, in October 2013, her doctoral degree on the topic "Teaching English Grammar Using a Visual Approach in the Context of Teaching Writing" from the same UK based University of Exeter.

      But the Gaikwads have chosen the lovely ambiance of the well-decorated lawns and octagonal lavender-hue-dominating reception hall (reminding one of a similar structure from the popular movie, 'The Sound of Music' of "Crisp and Curry Garden Restaurant" in Pune for the grand celebration of this great achievement in her life on February 8, 2014. They invited their family and close friends including the chief guest Pastor Franklin Samraj from SUD, his wife Dr. Deborah, his brother & Master of Ceremony (MC) Dr. Edison and family, and her former classmate and colleagues at Spicer to the occasion.

      After the welcome speech by the hubby, Rajan Gaikwad, and opening remarks and prayer by Spicer's VPAA, several of her colleagues and students including the couple's own 9-year old lively and lovely twins Daniel Rishi and Daniela Rishida were lined up and interviewed by the MC where they spoke of several aspects of Dr. Vinita, all of them complimenting her on her impressive academic achievement, teaching prowess, versatile caliber, vim and vigour, winsome manners, and as her father-in-law aptly summed up, 'simple living and high thinking'.

      After the speeches, Pastor Franklin Samraj delivered a brief message and Dr. Vinita responded to all of them gracefully, thanked everyone for making it a great occasion. Following the cake cutting and dedicatory prayer offered by the chief guest, she welcomed all the guests to a lovely and almost mid-night dinner. But no one grudged as they were all glued to the interesting programme and lost track of time. As the VPAA and other professors expressed, Dr. Vinita Gaikwad's research though based on a limited and isolated population can and will impact the various other sections of
the society in improving the teaching and learning process gradually. We wish Vinita God's continued blessings in her teaching career.

2. Award of PhD Degree to Nalina Robert Donald
-- from the current New Southern Asia Tidings
Nalina Robert Donald was awarded PhD degree by Bangalore University on January 24, 2014. Her research topic was "A study on the contributions of the Christian hymns and spiritual songs to the development of Kannada language and literature". She is a professor of Kannada, working as the vice principal of APS College of Arts and Commerce, Bangalore University. She is a member of Central English Church, Bangalore.

Robert Donald, SUD

III. Report of Church Growth in Nepal

Umesh Pokharel <umesh.shantipokharel@gmail.com> March 4:
The last few months, the SDA believers got to experience the true nature of Ellen G. White’s statement, "Of all the Christians, Seventh-day Adventists are the most generous Christians," and what the Greek Philosopher and dramatist Aeschylus said, "When men work together, gods join in." It is the hope of the reporter that this crispy report on Nepal will warm your heart so that it can be enlarged (2 Cor. 6:13).

Churches Are Built:
1. Kaping
Within the span of few months three churches were built and more are coming. In spite of the Devil trying to put out the fire within, the humble retired worker now a layman from Korea Pastor Hae Seab Song came with his team and went up to Kaping, a village about 80 from Kathmandu toward the Chinese border. The church run by a Gospel Volunteer worker Bishnu Rokka and his family members have the membership of over 70. They were worshipping in a building that was getting smaller. So, Pr. Song under the leadership of Pr. Umesh Kumar Pokherel of Nepal Section built the beautiful church that looked like the marriage between Korean building and Nepal within 5 weeks, for Pr. Song himself was the expert carpenter and he had the team from Nepal Love Mission from Korea personally working. While the men worked on the building, the women spent time on cutting hair and doing massage to the villagers. The church construction as funded by the lady layperson, Jang Jim. The church is located about 2 hours walk up the hill for an amateur walker from the road that is 30 km toward the Chinese border. January 2, 2014 the beautiful and love's labor church was inaugurated amidst friends, believers and neighbors. Pr. Umesh Pokherel and Pr. Song cut the ribbon jointly to enter into the church. With exhilarated smile Bishnu welcomed the congregation, his daughter Sona and her group sang welcome song. The Korean group was honored with scarf. The note of devotion was presented by Pastor Umesh Pokherel praising God for the house of worship and thanking the Korean group for leaving their comfortable home to live in a village home disregarding all the comforts. Pastor Kumar Adhikari prayed the dedication for the church. Pastor Song gave the detail report of how the church was constructed amidst two hours walking up and down of the hill to get the materials. Special songs presented by Tumpakhar Church group and Kaping Church group.

It was a great day for the worshipper of Kaping to get the gift of new church from the Nepal Love Mission, the church that is overlooking the mountains of Tibeto-Chinese border.

2. Dapchha
The restless Pr. Song moved to Dapchha mountain area to build another church. Dapchha village is about 60 kilometer from Kathmandu. The rough bus ride does throws the new comers off the balance but the imposing range of Himalayan mountains that are seen from the village do make any visitor forget the rough ride. One of the focal point of this village is Sita whose hand was paralyzed a few years ago. She was at the verge of losing her entire arm for not Shaman and gods and goddesses even after offering dozens of chickens could not cure, nor by any hospital. No amount of money could buy her health back till someone suggested to go to the church run by a layman who was once lost his mind till he found in the Scheer Memorial Hospital Church. Miraculously her arm was healed within a few weeks bringing her drunkard, smoker and skeptical husband to the church. Similarly her two skeptical daughters and a son to the church to find out what was in the church. Today, they live in the village like a burning fire for the Lord. More than dozen villagers are worshipping in the church because of their powerful testimonies.
Yes, they needed the church in the land bought by the layman Ran Bahadur who was once lost his sense but found in Jesus Christ and handed to Nepal Section. Pr. Song and his wife urged by Bhaju Ram and approved by Nepal Section agreed to build the church. They lodged the kitchen room of Sita and her family. They had to fight with the cockroaches' nights after nights for over 5 weeks.

The contractor cum masonry Ran Bahadur and Pr. Song along with the believers working together the church was erected within 5 weeks. The opening of the church took place on February 8. The ribbon was cut jointly by Pr. Song and Pr. Umesh. Sita's daughter Sunita, the leader of the Dapcha Church welcomed the congregation. She especially welcomed Pr. Song and his wife for putting heart, mind, hand and pocket to make the dream of believers true. Pr. Umesh thanked Pr. Song and his wife for building the church and the believers of Dapcha Church for keeping the Gospel Fire burning. Sonia Cardona gave the special message from the book of Nehemiah regarding the building of the temple saying that one must build on for the Lord in spite of the opposition. Pr. Song called upon the people to be God's mobile temple. He hoped and trusted the Lord that the villagers see the temple of the Lord and would come to worship Him there. Prayer was offered by Pr. Kumar and the prayer of dedication of the church was done by Pr. Abirman Puri. Before conclusion of the church opening ceremony, Pr. Song was presented with a plaque of honor by Pr. Umesh, the president of Nepal Section and a gift from Dapcha Church. The dedicated layman, Ran Bahadur Tamang too was presented with a plaque of honor by Pr. Umesh on behalf of Nepal Section of Seventh Day Adventist.

Pr. Song and his wife left Nepal on Feb 11, leaving their foot prints determining to come back to walk on the same foot prints to build more churches in Nepal.

3. Kosi Dekha

During the divine message Pr. Daniel Devdas, the Ministerial Secretary of Southern Asia Division, said Kosi Dekha was the end of the world. Kosi Dekha too is about 80 kilometer from Kathmandu having the believers who were once worshiping the dilapidated place of worship for the number of years until Brother Gavin Simpson came to rescue. The rocking and dangerous bus ride and walking long way down the hill was what made Pr. Daniel feel it was the end of the world.

Bhim Bahadur B. K. was once a village drunkard and terror, till his wife became a heart patient. She was sicken unto death till her health improved by going to the church walking down for four hours down the mountain to attend the church once despised by Bhim. Upon improving of health, Bhim joined his wife to attend the church, slowly giving up all the habits that abused his body. Much prayers also brought help to do the open heart surgery of his wife. Today he says, he could give up his wife, but not Jesus. He donated a piece of land to build the church.

Since no help came from any sector to build the church there, the believers did not have any choice but to continue to pray to the Lord. Frequent visit of Bhaju Ram too felt the dire need of the church there. Since it was not his personal culture to ask money from friends, he prayed earnestly to the Lord and sent the report of the church to many of the friends. Out of them, Brother Gavin Simpson from Maryland, responded graciously to help. He is an interdependent layman for supporting the SDA Church. With his and his friends help, he sent the needed fund to construct a church under Bhaju’s supervision. Bhim’s personal heavy involvement in building, for he is the masonry, carpenter, ironsmith, social worker and farmer, the church was completed within three months. Therefore on March 1, 2014, the dedication and opening of the church was scheduled.

On this Sabbath a bus load of believers from Central Church, Gathaghar and some from Banepa along with Brother Gavin later joined by Pr. Daniel Devdas and Pr. Umesh Kumar Pokherel reached the church premises around noon. Pr. Umesh and Pr. Daniel in the presence of Brother Gavin cut the ribbon after welcoming the congregation by Bhaju Ram. A regular church program was held in the church. Sarah, the daughter of Bhim welcomed the audience. She is the church leader there. The testimonies presented by Sita from Dapcha and Bhim from Kosi Dekha were very uplifting to the believers. Pr. Umesh too had the testimony to share. He had the sick eye the day earlier and did not think that he could come. But the Lord had heard his prayer so that he could make a long trip to this village for the first time and expressed gratitude to the Lord for this event. Pr. Daniel Devdas gave powerful message on what it meant to depend on God’s promises. Special songs were presented by Gathaghar group including the children, prayer were offered by Sonia Cardona and David Armstrong before the program was finished. The local congregation was pleased for getting the gift of new church through Brother Gavin under the Leadership of the Lord.

Baptism Service
The highlight of March 1 was also the baptism service conducted by Pastor Umesh Kumar Pokherel, for the first time after he was ordained as the Pastor by the Division officers on February 18.

The candidates were Maya Tamang, the young girl who is studying in standard 7. Just a year and half ago, she was suffering from the devil's possession showing extra ordinary strength when she was in fit. She had learned partial witchcraft when she was still young, and the devil had claimed her to be his till she came into the contact with the believers.

While attending the church she would go into fit, shouting and yelling and going into convulsion not know what she was doing. After hours of prayer, she would come back to normal. All night prayer was held for her, the church support group kept the vigilant prayer for her. When Brother Gavin was visiting the church in Gathaghar to give the message on one Sabbath, he was flabbergasted to see the scenario that made him experience the lively presence of the devil and his power. Maya was the victim of poverty and evil spirit. The Lord moved Brother Gavin's heart to take charge of her life.

She was enrolled in Zenith School run by Pr. Naseeb and Rama Basnet. Maya was left under the mentorship of Bhaju Ram Shrestha. When Brother Gavin came back after a year and half, he was absolutely amazed to see the transformation of Maya Tamang. Maya is a bright girl with good Nepali language, she even helping to proof read Nepal Sabbath School lesson translated by Bhaju Ram. She expressed her desire to be baptized. So, on March 1 she was baptized by Pr. Umesh Kumar Pokherel in the midst of friends, mother and well wishers. It was a great day for Brother Gavin because, he experience that love's labor never gets lost.

Sujit Shah the young high school student, the right hand person in helping to get the Sabbath School and other printing material ready to publish by Bhaju Ram Shrestha too was baptized on the same day.

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Ministers Ordained

On February 18, The Division officers- Pr. R. John- the President of Southern Asia Division, Pr. Robert Clive-the treasurer of SUD, Pr. Daniel Devdas-the ministerial secretary of SUD, Pr. David Tamsang, Pr. Danny Kujur and Pr. Kumar Adhikari laid hands on Umesh Kumar, Kuber Lamichhane and Dili Ram Rai ordaining them to be the pastors of Seventh Day Adventist Church. In the solemn message, Pr. R. John said that making a pastor was the highest honor SDA Church can give to her dedicated worker, and challenged them and the congregation to lift Christ through words and life. Pr. Umesh Kumar Pokherel accepted the challenge to do the work as God gives strength. The respected spouses of Umesh, Kuber and Dili Ram were also present at the function.

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IV. Death of Pastor & Mrs. Sadashiv Bhaurao Shinde

-- from the current New Southern Asia Tidings

It is a rare occurrence that both husband and wife pass away within a week. Sadashiv Shinde passed away on 31 January, 2014 and his wife, Suman on February 7, 2014.

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Pr. Sadashiv Bhaurao Shinde

Sadashiv was born on March 06, 1924 to Padabai and Bhaurao Shinde in Chokak, Kolhapur district. He had his schooling at Lasalgaon high school and higher education in Spicer Memorial College. His commitment to the truth led him back to Kolhapur to work among his people. He married Suman Mahapure and they were blessed with three children--- son Shashikant, daughters Sheela and Sunanada. His interest to serve the Lord took him all over Maharashtra and he was ever willing to the task set before him. The Lord used his talents to serve the church in various capacities as pastor, mentor, teacher, departmental director, evangelist and chaplain. He was honest, diligent in his work that led to the establishment of many companies and churches and won many souls to the kingdom of God. After an active life in the church, he retired to a semi-active life for 30 long years and was living at Asha Park Housing Society, Market Yard, Pune.

His motto and advice to anyone was, "NEVER GIVE UP, KEEP LOOKING UP, JESUS IS COMING SOON". He rests with the assurance that when the trump will sound he will be among those who are waiting eagerly for that great day.

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Mrs. Suman Shinde

Suman was born on June 24, 1929 to Housabai and Chandrasen Mahapure in Pargao Kodoli, Kolhapur district. She did her schooling in Lasalgaon high school. On completion, she moved to Spicer Memorial College for further education.

She was married to Sadashiv Shinde. After marriage, both of them started their career at Kumboj district Kolhapur. She was committed to the Lord's ministry. She always supported her husband in evangelism. Her dedication and
commitment towards the church was her first priority. She was honest, diligent in her work and supported her husband 40 years in his ministry.

Suman was always a loving and caring person, jovial and cheerful. She and her husband were always found together, whether it was church service or functions or at home and even in death—a week apart. We look forward to meet her on that 'Great Day' of resurrection.

They leave behind their children—Shashikant; Sheela and Sunanda—daughter-in-law Nirmala; sons-in-law Johnny Sudhakar and Vinay Ohal; grandchildren Swapna, Swaroop, Veeraj, Sarang and a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers ~~~~~~~~~ To remove your name from the mailing list of this newsletter, simply reply to this e-mail and put "REMOVE" in the Subject line.

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