

Tribute to Late Dr R.A.D Jones (4577) by Mr J.E. Anderson (4492)

Christian friends it seems strange that I must start here with an apology to the late Doctor. You see, the late doctor and I are cousins, but right until his dying day I was never able to understand the genealogical connection between his family and mine. My mother and grandmother who first told me of the relationship when we were kids, have both long since passed away and it never occurred to me to pursue this point all these years. However I do not intend to concern myself with this right now. It is obviously too late for that. I shall instead concentrate on the long and cordial relationships we had during our school days.



It all started at the Holy Trinity Infant School in Freetown. This was a school that was headed by Teacher Carie. Teacher Carie also happens to be the aunt of the late doctor - Rogie as I always called him right through our student days. Rogie was one of five children amongst whom were Aureola, the only sister in the family, Ratcliffe, James, Emile (our resident and most popular canon here today) and Radcliffe. Following the early demise of their parents, it was down to Teacher Carie and an Uncle, Uncle Feyi, to bring them up. A task which was very well executed by Teacher Carie and Uncle Feyi. However my association with the family was very much focused on Rogie as he was directly my contemporary.

Soon after our infant school days we proceeded to the Holy Trinity Primary School and after five years at that level we entered the GRAMMAR SCHOOL through the then Common Entrance examination. This was back in 1951 and we became known as the Class of '51. This was a very exciting time to be known as GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOYS. Rogie and I were many a time together and we began to show more interest in our appearances than in our school work. Perhaps we had by this time just realised that there were so many pretty girls around and wanted to impress them. We would have some three or four text books on each side of our arms going about like some college professors. We also got involved in some pranks and some of the mischiefs we got up to does not make good listening just now. So I will skip that.

It didn't take us long to realise that bluffing was not in the school's curriculum and that we had to study hard to move forward. By the time we got to the third form, we had settled down in our studies. Rogie was becoming more of a literary student and involved himself in a lot of reading and news gathering. Again and again he would walk up to my house which was not far from his house, to call me to visit the British Council at Tower Hill, a site where The Paramount Hotel now stands or is it the Defence Ministry? Again and again, we would meet to go and see documentaries at the British Council (usually on a Friday evening). These were educational programmes tailored for secondary school children. Following these moves, it was not long before one of our teachers observed the potential in Rogie in this direction



and he encouraged him to be a member of the school's Quiz's Team. In those days there were the Inter Secondary School's Quiz's Competition and Rogie was groomed for this. Needless to say the many a time the GRAMMAR SCHOOL won that competition was down to his contribution.

Time dragged on and it was now time for us to put our school days behind us as we completed the fifth form. This was School Certificate Time (Senior Cambridge). Rogie was successful on his first attempt. I never made it and it was shortly after this my father decided to send me over here to the UK to do my GCEs (O and A Levels).

It was now 1958 and Christian friends, this was the parting of the waves in the first instance between Rogie and myself. It was to take 30 years before we saw each other again. I went to Freetown by chance to see my parents in 1988 and fortunately and unfortunately for me, my father passed away while I was out there. It was the news of this that prompted Rogie to come to my house to see and sympathise with me. Yet despite it was a sombre occasion, you can imagine the excitement we had to see each other after such a long time. In that long interval, Rogie had since graduated as an Agricultural Scientist in the United States and I believe also went to Canada for additional qualifications.

Earlier on, I mentioned about the Class of '51. This was the year Dr Jones and I entered THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL. The class was then composed of thirty-three students. Four years ago, I was back in Freetown and a colleague of mine invited me for lunch that was organised by the Class of '51. When I entered the room where the lunch was to be held, there were eight people there including Rogie. When I enquired about the rest, I was told that all twenty-five of my colleagues in that class had since departed. You can imagine the shock that ran through my shoulders. Of course I did know of the death of one or two, but not virtually the whole class. There was lots of news for me to catch up with and there again it was Dr Jones who led the reminiscing - a man with a remarkable memory. Alas he has now gone and there are only seven of us still standing.

Christian friends, in a world that is today riddled with wars, pestilence and diseases, I suppose we have to be grateful that we are here, for after all, even death itself is in the order of things. And while I once again extend my sympathy on behalf of my family to that of the late Dr's family, I can only hope that God will grant us faith and patience till we re-unite on the other side.

The late Dr is survived by his wife and three children, his sister and five brothers. May he rest in peace.

J.E. Anderson