

Extract of the Interview conducted for the 18th Anniversary Celebrations

The Bishop of Amazing Love Assembly, Bro. Amaechi Nwachukwu, together with Elder Chris Alagbu (church secretary) and Elder Mike Ugonu (church board member) spoke at length about the 18th Anniversary Celebrations.



Q: What is the essence of these annual celebrations?

Bishop: Each year we need to look inwards and evaluate our lives because a life not evaluated is not worth living. We ask: what have we achieved this year? Have we been vessels of honour or instruments of righteousness? Has God used us to expand His kingdom on earth? Have we been good stewards of His resources? Has God used us to enhance spiritual growth in others? Eighteen years is not too long and yet it is long enough for us to appreciate the goodness of God to this Ministry. Apart from Him we could have done nothing. It is in this evaluative celebration that we also ask: where did we go wrong? How can we improve upon what we did right? Where is God taking us from here? For where there is no vision, the people perish.

Q: What is the theme of this year's celebrations and what are you expecting?

Bishop: The theme for this year is: Enlarge His Kingdom. Arise and shine. Get beyond yourself and let God use you. You need to know that with all the instability and vagaries of life, only the love of God does not change. If you have found Jesus, you have found love. We are expecting the Lord to visit us as He has been doing, to bless His people and enlarge His kingdom through us. The Lord told us at the beginning of this year to make righteousness

our aim (Hebrews 1:8-9), for only in righteousness shall we be established. Our responsibility is to make sure that in all we're doing, the glory of Jesus Christ remains upon His people in righteousness.

Q: Before the 17th Anniversary, you told your members not to miss that celebration in view of what God was going to do. What happened?

Bishop: All I can say about the 17th Anniversary is that the Lord in heaven gave us a time of refreshing. Some years earlier, we'd been told not to miss it.

In the ensuing period, certain events made it seem as if even the 16th Anniversary would not be actualized. Some false prophets and brethren even predicted their demise, not ours. But to the contrary, because evil has an expiring date, the Lord extended us beyond our borders, into the media houses, for example. We don't have all the details of what the Lord told us but we can see an expansion and extension.

Q: Last year, you made mention of the 25th Anniversary. Why?

Bishop: Yes, He spoke and said no matter what you are doing, remember the 25th Anniversary which is in another seven years. What is going to happen if the Lord tarries? I don't know. The Lord who asked us to anticipate it will probably take us beyond ourselves. I believe that we are going to be seeing things that were we to be told of them now, we'd start asking, "How can this be?!" I believe the 25th Anniversary will see us in another watershed in this Ministry. Who knows what He is planning? With every fibre in me I believe we should plan along with Him. The Lord will see us through.

Q: June 14th to 20th is also a Missions Emphasis Week. How do you reach the society with your message of love?

Bishop: We reach out with the word of God through the web site, media houses (radio and television), publications, personal and bus evangelism, prison ministry, hospital visitations and our campus fellowships to all people. It is God's will that all creatures hear His gospel; we are letting the world know that God loves them more than the devil hates them. He will not take permission from your enemies before He will bless you. We are sharing an unchanging message: wherever you are, no matter the situation you are in, never give up. You might have fallen but you can rise again. We are reaching out to fallen humanity, to fallen soldiers of Christ with His valid claims of redemption and salvation through His blood that was shed on Calvary.

Q: What have been your major challenges these past eighteen years, as a Christian, as a Pastor and as the President of Amazing Love Ministries?

Bishop: They are too numerous to be considered on a programme such as this. As a Christian, I've had to ensure that I keep my eyes on the Lord Jesus and

walk worthy of my calling; no matter what happens, to remain a faithful servant of the Most High God diligently serving His people in humility. Personally, the greatest challenge, therefore, is to ensure that my personal idiosyncracies don't conflict with the leading of the Holy Spirit. I find myself submitting to Him, asking Him to take me from one degree of glory to another. There is the challenge of prayers, submission and allowing God to be God in my life.

As a Pastor, the most difficult thing to do on earth (in my own opinion) is to lead God's people because everyone potentially possesses the Holy Spirit. What you think you know, they probably know it better. You are not leading them because you are better but because of God's calling. How do you lead these people so that the Dothans, Abirams, Miriams and Aarons who think God hasn't only spoken to you, will give you a chance to lead the people to the promised land? It is an exercise in patience. It isn't about you but about God. If you are not willing to be trampled upon, scandalized, take the beatings and criticism for all that goes wrong while the people take all the glory for all that goes right, you can't really serve Him. It becomes excruciating in terms of emotional turmoil but His grace is sufficient.

As a leader of the Ministry, it is like one person wearing different caps; one individual who is flesh and blood, interacting with people inside and outside the church. Some come with prejudices, all sorts of personal opinions. You must remember that you can't please everybody. You seek to ensure that you are not responsible for what goes wrong. Most of all, I remember that the best of us, the Master Jesus, was maligned. It's tough but His grace has been sufficient. You must decrease for Christ to increase through you.

Q: You have several capital intensive projects. How much foreign sponsorship do you have?

Bishop: So you want me to tell you openly who my foreign sponsors are?! God is our foreign sponsor - but the reality is that He really isn't foreign; He is Emmanuel, God with us. Our sponsorship is completely indigenous, local, from within. If Jesus can't perform in our country and we have to import help from outside, then maybe that Jesus is not relevant to us. God has proven that what He is yesterday, He is today and will be forevermore. I thank God for His faithfulness and for our faithful members who fully identify with what God is *continued on page 25*

continued from page 17

doing, who are dedicated to voluntarily giving themselves, time and other resources to do God's work.

Q: Let us look into the church. How is the church structured?

Elder Alagbu: We believe in total mobilization of our members. Members are grouped into fellowships and the church flows from the following: The Men's and Women's Fellowships are for married men and women; the Youth's Fellowship is for unmarried men and women who are working; the Daniel's Fellowship for undergraduates in higher institutions, who meet both in the church and in campus fellowships; the Dynamic Visioner's Fellowship for those yet to enter tertiary institutions; and the Junior Fellowship International, an inter-denominational fellowship for our children who are raised according to the word of God as in Proverbs 22:6. The Church Board oversees all these fellowships and is headed by the Bishop.

Q: How do members actualize their God-given ministry in serving the Lord?

Elder Ugonna: For every believer, grace has been given according to the measure of Christ's gift. All believers have spiritual gifts which are expected to be utilized variously, particularly through the numerous departments or ministries in the church. The ushers department, prison ministry, publications department, choir, marriage committee, welfare, catering and restaurant services are some of them through which we can become what God has called us to be by serving God and His people.

Q: What is your message for those at home watching or listening to you now?

Bishop: Our God is no respecter of persons. If Rahab the harlot and Ruth the wife of Boaz became part of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, if Zaccheus the tax

collector could be saved, there is hope for all of you no matter where you are coming from or who you are. God can change your life if you are willing. Don't sit back whining about what people have done or how your life has become. Remember that if God is for you, no man or woman can successfully be against you. If you haven't given your life to Christ, what are you waiting for? It is one way to guarantee that God is successfully on your side.

As for the Anniversary, don't be told! Don't miss it! Join us to celebrate, for you are the reason God has called us out. God will bless you and we'll be glad you came.

Q: What is your message for the Nigerian nation at this time?

Bishop: For a time like this? Times keep changing. What is important for any nation to know is that the boundaries of nations have been apportioned by God Almighty. There is no authority except from God. When people acknowledge God in governance and in all they do, that nation shall be prospered. There is no veritable, viable nation that does not put the fear of God into all they do. It is righteousness that exalts. If we can come to God in righteousness, everything will be alright.

Q: Can we have a final word from our elders?

Elder Alagbu: I thank God for the opportunity to celebrate with Him. Don't forget Psalm 103:1-2 that is a reminder of our need to testify of God's goodness in our lives.

Elder Ugonna: I thank God for leading us these past eighteen years. God will bless you as you come; you'll be glad you did.

Q: And the final word from the Bishop.

Bishop: God is love. His steadfast love never ceases; His mercies endure forever. You can't get beyond God's love. Whatever love cannot do, nothing else can. We love you.

This interview was broadcast on television and radio.

