



Interview With Bishop Amaechi Nwachukwu

The LivingSpring Journal Team interviewed the Bishop on the state of Christianity and the world we live in today. Read On!

LivingSpring Journal: Is there a difference between church membership and “Christ membership?”

Bishop: This distinction though real, is unfortunate. Initially, it wasn't so. The church is an organic body, Christ being its head, so originally church membership and Christ membership were the same. A unit. But today, it is painful to observe that there are so many churches, institutional and otherwise, without Christ. Very unfortunate because the church, “Ekklesia,” is a people called out of the world to be Christ's ambassadors but everything has been bastardised. The enemy has planted tares indeed. A church is supposed to be a body of people who believe in Christ and who have Christ as their Lord, who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, totally committed to the things of Christ.

LivingSpring Journal: Zeroing in on our nation, what should be the role of Christians in contemporary Nigeria? What is the way forward

for both the church in Nigeria and the Nigerian political class?

Bishop: The way forward? Pray for those in authority that we may have peace, so that the church will carry out her evangelism outreach unhindered. This should be our major concern. The Christian is not called upon to start going around arming people to overthrow or change governments. That is not our business. Our business is to pray for a holy order. Any order comes from God. God can use anybody. He raised Cyrus when it was time for Him to effect some changes. Let us regain our lost ground. Let us return to the watch tower. Be intercessors. Cry out like Elijah. The same God of Elijah is still our God; He can withhold rain. The God of Amos is still our God; He can give them clean teeth. He can make even Nebuchadnezzar obey Him. We mustn't lose faith and resort to power and might. It is a spiritual battle not physical. We can change the nation because the hearts of kings are in the hand of God. He can turn each wherever He wishes.

Which way forward for the political class? We should get away from the thinking that for any change to occur, the political class is going to be

completely sanitised and they would all become born again Christians or that the society will be totally God-fearing. No! Jesus said that the present order is in the hand of Lucifer. He is the prince of this world, howbeit by stealth. In the words of Tom Skinner, we are to become “infiltrators in Satan's kingdom” and seek to change the order for Christ. On our knees. We are the salt of the earth. Salt, remember, is not the main food; you don't see it while in action, it's just the seasoning.

The way forward? Righteousness upholds a nation. Let's get back to God. That is the way forward, not ideology, not the America presidential system, not the French or British parliamentary system, or German or whatever. Not zero option or option A4 or A5. All these are irrelevant political jargon. The snag is that finally, all these things are to be operated by men, who don't know the Lord, who are basically selfish. It

you put your feet where you put them and where your next move will be. That's what discipleship is all about. Duplicating yourself. It is from the Greek work, *Mattathias*, . an adherent, a learner. One who places his feet where his master's are. Whomever the master is, wherever he is, you follow. Our commitment to this is through the word of God which is the prime motive of this ministry, teachings energised by the Holy Spirit and exemplary and honest Christian living. Show them the errors you have made and why you made them. Show them what you consider to be the right things you did and why you did them. And together, you grow with them.

It is this superstar syndrome, this wrong concept of being someone without faults that is making discipleship very difficult. If you are going to make disciples, you must also let them know that you can be tired, like Jesus needing to sleep off in the boat, and when the storm

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is only when the Lord builds a nation that it stands; when the Lord watches a city, it is watched. If we don't get back to God, no option will work.

LivingSpring Journal: As the leader of a vibrant church, what are you doing to make disciples?

Bishop: By the grace of God, our whole effort has been towards a ministry committed to discipleship. Honestly its easy to gather people and easy to have converts but the most difficult thing is discipleship. A lot of ministers run away from it because it is very expensive. To be a disciple maker is to place your life on the table, expose it for scrutiny, baring everything about you; for you must show your disciples your secret parts, your innermost being, your weakness and your strength so that they can know exactly why

comes, they are going to wake you up. You must let them know that you can get tired, thirsty and hungry, needing rest by the well at Sychar while they look for food. If you are going to be a disciple, you may have to be hungry and curse a fig tree. They may have to see that like Paul, you can contend with Barnabas and like David, you can fall into sin; like Peter, you can have tantrums, rages, fear and depression; like Paul, you can be sick while healing others. Like Moses, you can break the tablet. So the world will not stop if I err; rather if I go back to God, He can take me back and restore the joy of my salvation. That's what discipleship is all about. It is making the disciple see how you see God, with your failures and all your weaknesses. Elijah was a man of like passion yet God heard him. That same God can hear us.

So what have we been doing? Interactively teaching by the Holy Spirit, making ourselves vulnerable. It's a lonely path. Some will walk in, see how you are and be disappointed. Like Judas, they will betray you. Others will walk in, see how you are and like the Pharisees say, "If this guy was a prophet, he'd never hang around with this kind of people." Still others will walk in and call you a winebibber, a drunkard, a glutton; one who has a demon, even a bastard. And others will say, "Where else shall we go? You have the word of life, where you die, we will die." That's the risk of discipleship. But I tell you, nothing will beat a true disciple. Therein lies the permanency of God's work. And ten disciples are better than 20,000 mere converts. That's being generous.



LivingSpring Journal: Moving to a somewhat different concept, Sir, there is an obvious perversion of the concept of *anointing*. These days there is anointed water, handkerchief, laughter, oil, falling under anointing, being slain by the spirit, you name it. There arises an urgent need for a proper biblical interpretation and application of this concept. Could you come to our aid?

Bishop: Well, I am not sure whether I'll come to your aid as much as I need to be aided myself. One thing I must say is this: no matter what happens, let us have it on record that God is a supernatural God. He performs miracles. He is a God of anointing. A God who heals. He can raise the dead. He can stop the wind. He can make the sun not to shine. Our God is a living God and I tell you, it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. He is real, miraculous, supernatural, dynamite. Nothing is impossible for Him. Having said all that, I must quickly add that

anointing, theologically speaking, is not the way we have limited it today. If you read Exodus 40 and other relevant texts, you will see where God commanded Moses to anoint clothes, vessels and items, all in the tabernacle. Whatever you anoint is designated, separated unto the Lord. It becomes God's anointed and dedicated unto Him. Anointing is not as it were, something that proceeds from a microphone and

when someone says "Blaah!," you fall under anointing. It could be, though, that you did fall under anointing but I believe we should look for a better definition of what we are talking about.

Anointing is what comes when you have the presence of God. When Moses pleaded with God to go with them or he

would not move further, God said to him, "My presence will go with you and I will give you rest." Anointing therefore, is the presence of God in any situation. Where the presence of God is, the manifestation of God will be released. There is also satanic anointing which has nothing to do with God's presence. Well, people can claim to do all sorts of things in the name of God but at the end, He will say, "Depart from Me, workers of iniquity for I know you not." If you are talking about the anointing that has to do with God's presence, there are certain prerequisites. For instance, there has to be holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord. There has to be fruitfulness. You know, in the presence of God there is fullness of joy which is one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. When you come into that divine presence, the sense of your unworthiness will overwhelm you. That's what happened to Isaiah in the temple and to John at Patmos. We must get away from this erroneous idea that when someone blows into

the microphone and another falls, that is anointing from God. Or that when your TV spoils and you anoint it with the handkerchief you anointed in a crusade, "Wham!," it starts to pick CNN. Well, it may be, but most likely it's not. God is not a magician. Miracle worker? Yes, but definitely not a magician.

There is more power released in salvation than in all these that my friend will call "*razzmatazz of Christianity*." That's why the angels of God sing when a sinner turns back to God. The Bible says that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents. You never hear it said of a blind man healed or even the dead raised. Like Jesus said, which is easier to say: Take up your bed and walk or your sins have been forgiven you? Let me assure you, it is more painful, more difficult to say your sins are forgiven because without the

Pope, Canon or whomever) and Jesus says another, whatever Jesus says should supersede in authority. If somebody has said, and I do not know your source, that without signs and wonders people will not believe the gospel, I wonder how you will reconcile that with the statement of Jesus that an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign and none will be given them. This same Jesus went ahead to perform miracles. This same Jesus said that during the time of Elisha, there were a lot of lepers in Israel yet none were healed, only the foreigner Naaman.

No, I'd rather stick with Jesus. God chooses to do what He wants to do. You don't manipulate Him. You don't command Him. The Lord's prayer is so relevant here, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." It is the will of

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shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. When we avail ourselves with proper scholarship under divine guidance, we will understand what the issues are. Anointing is not what we have branded it. We, especially the clergy, have become more frivolous with divine issues. It ought not be.

Hear me, you can anoint anything from water to oil to a spoon. It is the presence of God that brings anointing.

LivingSpring Journal: In the media recently, some men of the Holy Order have been quoted as saying that without signs and wonders, people cannot believe the gospel and that poverty is a curse. How true is it?

Bishop: I don't need to answer that question because I know that when somebody says something, no matter who (Bishop, Archangel,

God that we should seek in every situation rather than just saying, "Thy will, Thy will" while we surreptitiously impose ours. Look here, God is sovereign. If He chooses to heal, then it is for His glory. By His stripes we are made whole. Let us get away from this idea that signs and wonders will make people to be believers. They will not, otherwise you and I would not be here today. The same people who saw the greatest signs by Jesus were the ones that crucified Him. John the Baptist did no signs but up till Acts 19, about 30 years after his death, his disciples were still found preaching. The Bible also says that everything he said came to pass.

The greatest sign today is the sign of a changed life. Let us stick with what God says. His disciples came back and were rejoicing that demons were subject to them but He said to them, "Do not rejoice in that; rejoice rather that

your names are written in the book of life." Let it not be said that on the last day, the Lord will say, "Depart from Me, workers of iniquity." Yet the blind saw, the lame walked. Let it be that our names are written in that Book of Life. The greatest sign is that a sinner can become a saint.

On poverty and prosperity, I must say that poverty is in the mind and that prosperity is scriptural. The Bible says in 3 John 2, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Godly prosperity has an order, a procedure. Spiritual prosperity is followed by material prosperity. Material prosperity does not show that you are spiritually prosperous or in right standing with God, neither does spiritual prosperity automatically result in material prosperity. Matthew 6:33 still says "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." This is true. One thing is clear after many years with the Lord: whatever He has denied me, I never needed. The same is true of you. Whatever He gives is what is needful. And like the apostle Paul said, we were naked, we hungered, we were sick and alone but in all these, we never denied Him.

Therefore, true prosperity is when the life of God is revealed in you. It will give you the right perspective as to how to measure the ephemeral material things of this world. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. If I look back at these years with Him and all I see is building block upon block, clothes, vehicles, children, a fat deposit account, then I will be the most wretched of men. Naked we came. Naked we shall return. Never forget that.

LivingSpring Journal: What is the message of God to the world?

Bishop: The message that God has given me to the world is, "Love one another for God is love." If you are not loving you are not living. Whatever love cannot do, nothing can do it. For if I speak with tongues of men and angels, without love I am nothing; if I could empty all the hospitals, restore all the distressed banks and our economy, without love it is nothing; if I give my body to be burned, without love it is nothing..." By this all men shall know that you are My disciples," says Jesus, "if you have love one for another." For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. The greatest is love.



The reason we don't love is that we have a wrong evaluative image of ourselves. We think the other person is not worth loving because we have forgotten our roots, forgotten that we are all debtors condemned by the decree of death, forgotten that we are all beggars, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Let us humble ourselves before the cross. The reason we don't love is because we don't know

how much we owe. If we do, the least we can do, the best possible way we can pray, is to love His creatures. Where there is pain, bring peace and harmony. Love is the greatest. God manifestly loves His creatures.

Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!" But the Lord said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not laboured, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left - and much livestock?"

Jonah 4:9-11

The Greatest is Love. God bless you.