



Interview With Bishop Amaechi Nwachukwu

LSJ: Once again, congratulations, Sir! We thank God for bringing us yet to another anniversary celebration. You prophesied that 2009 would be a “year of portents/ signs.” Is there any sign in this year's celebration?

BISHOP: God gives His grace to those who have seeing eyes and understanding hearts. That we are still here, thanking God for His keeping power and faithfulness is a sign of His grace that God is with us but we shouldn't take His grace for granted. It is only God's grace that has sustained us and brought us to where we are today, this same grace will lead us through to the end as we continue in humble and obedient service. After 23years, our testimony is “Amazing grace, All-Sufficient grace, Abundant grace!”

LSJ: Revivals are occurring all over the world. We hear reports of what is happening in the churches. Do living

churches really need revivals and how do you sustain the spiritual life of your members?

BISHOP: The promise of a spiritual outpouring upon all flesh (as we read in the Book of Joel) is for these times, so there is nothing unusual about revival. Don't you revive yourselves with food and drink, even rest, so that your work can go on? Revival is God's design for those of us who contend with the challenges of living in a decadent world, trying to keep ourselves unspotted. We require strengthening from time to time our spiritual vision must re-adjust and our hearts be cleaned. Revival isn't an indictment but evidence that there is still a place for the Spirit of God to do His work, so it is for the living and not for the dead. The greatest revival occurs when we become loyal and obedient students of God's word. That is how we sustain ourselves.

But you must remember it is God who initiates revival, He also sustains it. Our parts as a spiritual shepherd is to guide, instruct, admonish and encourage the sheep to make their relationship with Him top priority – through our emphasis on the study of the word and consistent faith-inspired prayer, our fellowship and service in different areas of church life. The rest, however, is their responsibility and we will each answer to our Maker for the way we have handled our commitment to Him and the grace He made available to us.

Too often, people are looking for someone to hang their lack of responsibility, spiritual dirty clothes and laziness on, and that someone is the Pastor! The fact is that God has given us all we need through the Holy Spirit - Ephesians 1:3. The people of God must learn that nothing can substitute for their individual, personal relationship with God, and that this relationship is their birth rights with the attendant responsibilities.

¹⁷That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not

only in this age but also in that which is to come - Ephesians 1:17-20.

LSJ: Looking back, can you say how much has changed in the Assembly? The increase in number of members, has it been for better or for worse.

BISHOP: Only God remains unchangeable, the true Constant. When He is at work, we expect changes for good and that is what we have been experiencing in so many ways.

God is still raising up men, women and younger ones who love Him and are seeking to be worthy vessels that are sanctified for His use. I don't expect all of our membership to love God this way but God always gives the Timothys, Aarons and Hurs, the Priscillas and Aquilas, the Barnabases to keep us doing what should be done.

LSJ: Why, of all things, is your church hosting an art exhibition?!

BISHOP: And why not? Does the Spirit of God run out of inspiration? We chose a theme, "Discipleship: Past, Present and Future," that reflects the essence of our ministry. Our Lord mandated us to go and make disciples of all nations. As we learn how to become Christ's disciples, it was a wonderful idea to enlighten the public through the art media.

Discipleship is not something of the past. There is a difference between the Christian and secular art. Let me not say more other than invite you to be a part of this experience.

LSJ: Sir, can you comment on the economic crunchdown and issues surrounding the world and the nation Israel in particular?

BISHOP: What do you want me to say? The Bible clearly tells us not to call conspiracy what others call it (Isaiah 8:12), so this is not a time for panic, no matter what you hear and see. We are too close to the end of time and this world state of affair is merely prompting us to reassess and reorder our priorities – if we have not already begun to do so.

As for the nation Israel, it remains a key that is spiritual, political and otherwise. Israel is God's own country and He has begun the long-awaited spiritual awakening of the very people who first rejected the Messiah. As I said before, we are in the last days and the primary sign of the Lord's imminent return among others was the restoration of Israel as a nation state. If God spoke with such exactness concerning this land and its people, and we have seen those words come to pass, why do we imagine that other pronouncement of divinity are mere words? The time of the Gentiles will not last forever, and when the breath is put into the dry bones that have come together, Ezekiel 37 refers, then our time on earth would be greatly limited indeed. Let the hearer understand.



LSJ: We congratulate you specially on the birth of your son. Do you think there is anything that 'qualifies' us for such spectacular deliverances?

BISHOP: There is nothing that qualifies us for any form of God's miraculous intervention. What was special about Mary that she was chosen to be the mother of our Lord, or the murderous Saul that he became God's messenger to the Gentiles, or even blind Bartimaeus that Jesus stopped to pay him special attention? All deliverance, all divine intervention is just as it sounds, at the mercy and sovereign instance of God. Did we know there was a serious medical issue, a life-threatening one? Of course not. When we found out, all we could do was call upon God for mercy. And we received it.

LSJ: Do you have any encouragement for women in your church, or should we say, women in general, who have gone through the trauma of loss? What of others who are almost giving up on God?

BISHOP: I wonder why you are singling out the women when there are major challenges facing every level of my membership! There is always special grace required to get through such difficult issues without disappointing God, as it were. My encouragement to all, members and non-members, is for them to keep holding on to God with all the faith they have, no matter

how mustard-seed-like it is. We ran into needless upheavals when we ignore the reality of His sovereignty: God has a plan for each of us and we cannot cajole or bribe or vex Him into bringing forward His set time for each event in our lives. It is hard to handle this when those around us are getting the very blessings and breakthroughs we think should come to us. It is hard not to lapse into self-pity or to become offended because of what God seems not to be doing but we must learn that God is God and works as He thinks is best for us. Let us continue to pray; there is no better foundation for a blessing than the earnest prayer of faith, and it is such faith that God honours. Sometimes, I wish I could ask God questions especially when I make special requests for certain members. I also am trusting God that He will respond to our individual and corporate prayers knowing that we are not judging His ways or rejecting the grace. And He has promised we shall not be tempted beyond what He knows we could bear. No matter what, God is ever-faithful.

***LSJ:* You believe in godly covenants and recently you have returned in a new way to the one-hour prayer covenant of ALA. What is this all about?**

BISHOP: When we started, and it was clear that prayer would be one of our spiritual pillars, God told us in definite terms of a covenant of prayer. He said that He would meet us on our knees, one hour before each of our church programmes. We tried to honour it as we understood it to be. With time, it seemed to have become a function

for the Intercessors. Later, we cut it to thirty minutes even at that. Then God, in His love and mercy, brought light to us once more. He wanted us to draw near to Him in true spiritual communion: expressing without reservation our deepest needs, whatever they are. I shudder when I think how we complicated what was actually a very straightforward issue. Well, we are getting it right now and God is meeting us in ways that could never have been imagined, sometimes immediately. I anticipate the testimonies that are being made through this obedience.

***LSJ:* Finally, Sir, what is your Anniversary message for the Assembly?**

BISHOP: We have access to God's abundant, amazing grace so that we can function here on earth as His point men and women. Let us not disregard the grace that is given to us for all things. Secondly, nobody and nothing should stop us from holding firmly to God and His word. Nobody and nothing should keep us from our steadfast commitment to serving Lord and the Lord's people and honouring the spiritual leaders He has set over us. Above all, let us put our houses in order for the Lord's return. Maranatha!

***LSJ:* Happy Anniversary, Sir, and may the Lord grant you many more of such celebrations.**

BISHOP: Thank you and Happy Anniversary to you too. It has been a team work under God.