



N100

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# Election Campaigns or Soap Opera?



**Find out why  
this belle can't  
stop smiling**

*Ajifa Atuluku (P. 12)*



**How Does  
It Feel To  
Be A Queen?**



**Helping  
Marriages  
Work**



**My Year of God's  
Open Door**





# My Turning Point

By Omawumi Akinwande

**A**lthough I am now married, I started praying for marriage when I left the university because I had friends who got married immediately we graduated. I wanted the same but that wasn't for me. Not that I was not getting suitors, I was but it just happened that I never got married to any of them. Little did I know that God was preserving me for his own choice for me and not my choice. Looking back to my past suitors, they were men I 'picked' (men of my choice I thought were good for me).

I got born again (genuinely) in 2009 after a relationship that went sour. I got to understand the workings of God after quitting the relationship and God started taking me through a journey. I discovered I lacked knowledge of who God is and how he operates. I was really heartbroken and needed the assurance of a loving father who would just love me and guide me through life, and God really showed up. This was the time I participated in MasterLife Discipleship Programme. He started speaking to me through His word, sermons, Christian literatures, etc. And whatever I have become now is a result of these sources of knowledge because ignorance of God's standard of living can really mess you up and that is what I see happening in the lives of God's people

especially among the youths, between 20 to 40. We follow the trend thinking we are in vogue but that is just Satan's trick to get us 'hooked' on a lifestyle that is not consistent with God's standard.

Another area I got to have deep understanding and revelation was that of spiritual warfare. I desired to be married and since it was not happening, I started asking God questions and finding out what could be responsible for a young beautiful woman who desired to be married but was not getting it. I had to change the way I prayed and the revelations I got were mind-boggling. I started taking out time to go on prayer marathons with fasting. I would do personal vigils for some hours during the

***I desired to be married and since it was not happening, I started asking God questions and finding out what could be responsible for a young beautiful woman who desired to be married but was not getting it***

night-time, combined with fasting. Some months, I did prayers during the daytime, combined with or without fasting, as the Holy Spirit led. I did this for about two years consecutively. I later discovered that I started getting answers to some other prayer requests relating to my job, finances, visa applications, etc.

Like I said, it was a journey God was taking me through and I am glad I went on the journey with him. I can assure you that people would say that they are praying for you, and would really be praying but it could never be compared to the kind of prayers you would do on your own and the lessons and revelations you would learn while you did it yourself (DIY). For me, that is where my testimony lies, because I have come to know that the more I prayed and sought knowledge in the area of need, God always came through and my faith continued to grow from strength to strength. My confidence increased and I have become a believer of every promise of God no matter the circumstance that may come my way today.

Some anchor passages during those times of waiting were Romans 5:3-5, 1 Peter 1:5, and James 1: 3-5. All of these passages centre on perseverance, character, virtue, hope and God's love, which eventually brings us to breakthroughs in life's challenges. If when asked what lesson would I want young people to learn from this, it would be that they must trust and love God from their hearts and never ever compromise his word (standard). ■



# My Waiting Time

*Psalm 21:1-2 says, "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withheld the request of his lips."*

**By Oyenike Alaka**

**T**oday, I rejoice in the Lord Almighty that I am among the very many who have seen the Lord's goodness and His mercy. Indeed, God has not withheld the request of my lips. I waited upon the Lord for years for marriage and it appeared as if it would never happen. I kept on waiting in faith, dwelling on and drawing strength from the word of God such as Isaiah 40:30-31, Psalm 9:10, Peter 2:5ff amongst others.

My background as a Baptist Lydia Auxiliary member was of immense help to me in my period of waiting. In our time, great measure of discipline was inculcated in us as Lydia members. In our resolve not to defile ourselves, some of us took an oath that we would not defile ourselves and that we would wait for God's own time. The project was tagged 'True Love Wait'.

I was in a relationship in the year 2003 at the age of 36 and thought it would

happen, as the wedding date had been fixed and everything was set by human standard. When the wedding plan was halted, I was broken down, but the Lord lifted me again.

My resolve became very strong after this period and despite the fact that I was getting older and different counsels were coming my way to marry anyhow, even if it is just for marriage sake, I resolved to get married only in accordance with the word of God. I continued in prayer and was also rejoicing in the Lord. Many times

***'I waited upon the Lord for years for marriage and it appeared as if it would never happen... My background as a Baptist Lydia Auxiliary member was of immense help to me in my period of waiting'***

when I prayed and took care to listen to God speak to me, the voice I hear was "I shall do it" and that God wanted me to pass through this way in order that I might be a testimony of God's ability and power to do that which seems impossible before men.

It came to pass in 2012 that God brought His word to pass in my life. He kept the one he has had for me until it was time, and we were joined in holy matrimony. Not only that. God in His infinite mercy has granted us fruitfulness according to His word. He hath made everything beautiful in His time (Ecclesiastes 3:11a).

The journey has not been easy; it was characterized with pains and temptations, but God supplied the grace to wait for His own time. I admonish everyone waiting upon the Lord for one good thing or the other to be steadfast in the Lord, be faithful and tell God your heart's desires. He will surely answer at His own appointed time and according to His will. ■





## Dearly beloved!

**S**ometime last year, the leadership of the Publicity Committee bought me a new year gift: a pair of shoes. The gift was lovely except that it wasn't my size. I therefore appreciated them for the kind gesture but went ahead to reject it. They didn't give up. Individually, they assured me it would fit into my legs if only I first accepted it and, that based on their relationship with me, they strongly believed I could walk well on them. They promised to be around me always and even offered me their shoulders to cry on in case the footwear ever ached. I think I'm actually learning the ropes.

I'm actually talking about my new position as the Editor of your lovely The Bell magazine. As always, The Bell team has put together a rich edition in this first quarter of 2015. The interviews are informative as they are enlightening; the stories have been well selected for all categories of people, so that whoever you may be, there is something to liven up your quarter; the Pastor's Corner now comes in the form of an interview as we have new reporters to handle such duties; we have also not forgotten to include leisure pages, moving testimonies as well as funny and lovely photos. As you read, don't forget to let us know what you feel about the magazine and what we could do better.

Happy Easter



Ise Okhueleigbe

## 2015

### My Year of God's Open Door

#### Events for Second Quarter 2015

##### April

Thursday 2	Purpose Team Meeting
Friday 3	Good Friday
Saturday 4	Children's Easter Outreach
Sunday 5	Family Service (CiC)
	Easter Sunday
	Easter Concert (Evening)
Monday 6	Easter Monday (Church Picnic)
Thursday 9	Vision Team Meeting
Tuesday 14	Diaconate Meeting
Friday 24	All Night Prayer
Sunday 26	Lord's Prayer
Monday 27	Church Council Meeting

##### May

Thursday 7	Purpose Driven Team Meeting
Saturday 9	Evangelism Outreach
Sunday 10	Mother's Day
Thursday 14	Vision Team Meeting
Tuesday 19	Diaconate Meeting
Monday 25	Church Council Meeting
Friday 28	All Night Prayer
Sunday 31	Lord's Prayer
	Children's Musical Concert

##### June

Thursday 4	Purpose Driven Team Meeting
Saturday 6	WMS Conference
Sunday 7	Family Service (CiC)
Sun. 7 – Sat. 13	Youth Week
Thursday 11	Vision Team Meeting
Saturday 13	Evangelism Outreach
	Special Prayer for Children
Sunday 14	Father's Day (WMS Choir)
Tuesday 16	Diaconate Meeting
Saturday 20	1st VBS Training
Friday 26	All Night Prayer
Sunday 28	Lord's Supper
	Community Hymn Singing (Evening)
Monday 29	Church Council Meeting

#### About Ikoyi Baptist Church

### New Members Are Dear To Us

*If you just stopped over to worship, we pray that the good Lord grant you safe trip to your destination. In case you have come to stay, ensure you belong to a Sunday school group for deeper knowledge of God's word. But don't stop there!*

*Also ask for age-grade or gender-based fellowships such as Youth Fellowship, Men's Fellowship (MMU), Women's Fellowship (WMS), Teenagers' Class, Girls Auxiliary, etc.*

*Locating a home fellowship nearest to you will no doubt help you in several ways.*

##### Our Vision

Building intimacy with God and reaching the lost with the love of Christ.

##### Our Mission

Reaching the lost for Christ, grooming them to Christ-like maturity through the power of the Holy Spirit, and inspiring a great fellowship for worship and ministry to the glory of God.

##### Our Weekly Activities

<b>Sunday</b>	8.00 am First Service
	9.30 am Sunday School
	10.45 am Second Service
<b>Monday</b>	6.30 am Monday Morning Encounter
<b>Wed.</b>	6.30 pm Midweek Bible Study & Prayer Meeting

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# Why We Are Introducing Annual Appreciation

– Abayomi Lawal, Pastor, Ikoyi Baptist Church

By Judith Ogedegbe

**T**he church theme for the year is 'My Year of God's Open Door'. What do you expect from members?

It is a matter of individual, spiritual maturity because when the Lord sends us to get something for you. It is left to you to embrace it or neglect it. We will not force anybody to key into the theme, but we will try as much as possible to see that there is a reminder of what the Lord God Almighty has actually told us, in the sense that He said that He wants to bless us. He wants us to know that opportunities for service are there. When we take a theme in this church, when the Lord uses me to actually arrive at a theme, He has for us more of what we need to do than what we need to gain. What we need to gain are there already, but He is asking us to team with him.

I will open the door of service to you; I will open the door of opportunities to you. We should actually reach out, but the door of blessings is there already. It is important for me (as a member of IBC) to now see that nothing goes for nothing. God rewards faithfulness, not just only hard work. You may be working hard doing nothing, but faithfulness will give that essence of God, and I know that I cannot deceive Him. Busybodies will not do it, so we want to call the attention of people to the fact that God is still at work. He has opened His door for us to join Him. The rest of the blessing will come without any effort because God will not shortchange His people.

**You plan to introduce an annual appreciation for outstanding members. Have you considered the downside for members who do not get appreciated?**

What is the concept of this annual appreciation? Appreciation is largely misunderstood among members. In the film industry, you have awards – the Oscars, Grammy, Emmys, etc. About five to six artistes will be nominated and only one will win. We will not in any way be partial in terms of those that will win it. And it is not only one person that will be appreciated. No. If 20 people are worthy of being appreciated, nothing stops the church from appreciating them. But you must have worked diligently. You must have actually shown that you are committed.

It is not about how much you give. It is about your availability for programmes in the church, what you do to support, how you do it. Is it something that comes naturally to you? Do you do it with joy in your heart? The perception of people being left out cannot be overemphasized, but it is about being an all-rounder. We are taking about the five purposes of the church – Discipleship. Fellowship, Evangelism, Ministry and Worship and not just leaving ourselves to one. For instance, we have midweek service, and people don't come, night vigil, you don't come, special programmes and evangelism outreach, you don't come. So why should you feel bad when you are not nominated? What we need is service. Service is a price you pay for the space you occupy. You have service to give in whatever occupation you are in.

**Will there be criteria for members to be nominated?**

There will be. There must be. As a pastor, I cannot say I like Mr. A, so let us give him to encourage him. No. We are not giving anything to encourage anybody. By the grace of God, the Lord will actually show it to us, to show that she or he deserves appreciation.

**What does 2015 hold for youths in IBC in terms of empowerment?**

We pray that the youths will rise up to the challenges of our



**Why should you feel bad when you are not nominated (for the annual prize the church is introducing)? What we need is service. Service is a price you pay for the space you occupy**

time. We have a number of people that are ready to help the youths in terms of job placement. It seems as if many of them want to have things that are very easy. When they come to me for assistance, I get to the people that can help easily. If I can vouch for the youth, I will introduce them to the people, because if I know they will not go and disgrace me, I will reference them. By the grace of God, we have enough resources to make them benefit from jobs, job placement, investment jobs. It is a matter of reaching out to tap these resources.

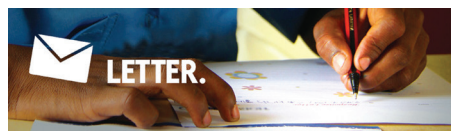
They say you can force a horse to the stream but you cannot force the horse to drink. Some of these youths just want easy money. What they easily rush to do is estate agency, though I don't blame them. But how long will it last and be the sustainable income for you for years to come? There is what they call retirement, if the Lord tarries. You cannot do it and if there is nothing coming in and everything you have stored in the barn is going down. So it is not about making it now, it is about having it as a sustainable means of life.

Also, some youths need to empower themselves by furthering their education. OND and HND is beginning to be liken to primary school certificate of the olden days and only few people will take up people with HND when people with BSc are also available. It is important for them to know that the church has variety of people that can help and minister to them but the youths of IBC should not in any way wait for people to spoon-feed them.

**What watchword would you encourage members to hold on to in this crucial year?**

We cannot depend on politicians but God. Let us pray for good leaders. Let us do our best to cast our votes. If we all do our part, we will be satisfied that we have done our part. To think that they will not rig is still far-fetched in Nigerian politics. So let us come out and vote. We should not worry about all the troublesome things we hear, because the Lord God Almighty is still our provider and our helper and has not left the stage and He will surely do it for us, so we need not worry. My watchword is to pray. Depend on God and you will never be disappointed.





### I need advice as class prefect

*I'm 18. Throughout SS2 I was the class prefect, but I never enjoyed the position. I had too many problems with fellow students who ended up calling me Idi Amin. Surprisingly, I've just been given one more term. What should I do better, or are they just being nasty?*

**Counsellor:** Your story reveals God's involvement. There is a lesson He wants you to learn. He may be taking you to a leadership position in future. For you to be re-elected despite all your weaknesses, there must have been some positive qualities of a leader in you. And to be nicknamed Idi-Amin, there may be a dictatorial trait seen in you. You must look inwards critically and make amends. A leader is not an ordinary being, hence he must have certain qualities such as humility, gentleness, firmness, tolerance, caring and, above all, the wisdom of Solomon. Ask God and He is a faithful giver. See Ephesians 3-20.

### How can I have tall kids?

*As a girl I'm not as tall as I would have liked. Although there is currently no relationship even at 26, how do I ensure my kids are tall? I learnt it is possible.*

**Counsellor:** My dear, just accept yourself as you are. Keep telling yourself I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. I'm an image of God. With these affirmations, peace will set in. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart" Psalm: 37:4. As regards life partner, he will come at the appropriate time. Keep telling God and He will cause you to meet him. The one that will love you in your totality. The stature of kids may be genetic and it may likely depend on their intake of nutrient especially protein. This is very vital in their development. See a paediatrician for more enlightenment.

### What skills do I need for life abroad?

*I have the opportunity of travelling to Europe or US in the near future. I'm told the system there works far better than here and that skills count. I'm in my second year in school. Apart from my certificate, what skills should I learn that will be useful abroad? Are Nigerian certificates of any value outside here?*

**Counsellor:** It necessary to first ponder and understand yourself very well. Not everybody can cope with the systems abroad. Yes you are at a greater advantage if you are skilful because skills count. You may consider having skills in any of these areas: hair dressing, sport, playing a particular musical instrument, etc. Discovering and developing your natural talent like singing, acting, artistic drawing and painting are also of great advantage.

Nigerian certificates are valuable abroad provided they are obtained from



Mrs Ogunrinde

either a well recognized tertiary institution or university. With this you can further your education, earn their degree and then you can begin to look for a white collar job, though it is quite tough these days. But most importantly, commit your future into God's care. See Jeremiah: 29:11.

### Qualities of a life partner

*What are the qualities one should look out for in a potential partner? I've always thought I would recognize them easily but not so any more.*

**Counsellor:** Most of our youths these days have gone completely gaga in this aspect. Choosing a life partner is considered a serious issue. One has to depend solely on God for one's very own. Ask Him for the spirit of discernment because He is all knowing. First of all, a potential life partner has to be a child of God. I mean a practising Christian, mature-minded both in character and composure. Other qualities either physical or material now depend on your judgment. Commune with God in all sincerity; He'll not confuse you. Put Him to test and He'll remain faithful. This is a practical experience with Him.

### Where can I work after school?

*I'm still in 300 level in school and would like to know where a graduate of philosophy can work, as well as that of Social Work. Any additional info on skills acquisition would be appreciated.*

**Counsellor:** Both areas of discipline are related. A graduate of Philosophy or Social Work can also look into taking Law or Accounting courses (provided he or she is good in figures, for Accounting). A graduate in any of these disciplines can also seek for job in a bank, since it is an establishment where people are trained on their jobs.

### What alternative can I use for catarrh?

*Please, I would like to know how safe it is to apply rub to hot water and breathe it in as a way of curing catarrh. I sometimes prefer it to taking drugs.*

**Counsellor:** What works for Mr. A

may not for Mr. B. Human body systems are different. Sometimes reaction like this could be psychological. You will need to consult with an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist (E.N.T. Doctor).

### My spouse is too jealous

*How should one cope with a jealous spouse who wouldn't even want to see you discussing with another man both in church and in the neighbourhood? It's a serious challenge that is really posing a challenge to my Christian life.*

**Counsellor:** Personally, I think in any relationship, trust is a very vital ingredient. Wherever trust is lacking in a bond, there will always be problems. You need to look inwards and see how you relate with members of the opposite sex. You will also need to assure and reassure your spouse of the totality of your love for him. And above all, take it up to God, for Him to cause a situation where his trust in you will be provoked and this will definitely cement your relationship. It calls for serious prayer. Call on God and He will answer as promised. See Jeremiah 33:3.

### I'm not good at buying things

*I always return from shopping regretting being cheated and handed low-quality clothes at high costs. How do I recognize quality clothes and shoes at fair prices, and when is the right season to shop for things? Also, my partner doesn't always like the idea of fairly used clothes. Are they that bad?*

**Counsellor:** Every product has a label where its contents and the raw materials used in making it are written. The same goes for dresses and shoes. Make sure before buying you read through the label. There you can have an idea as to the quality. As for fair prices, it depends on your bargaining power. Well, as regards the right season for shopping, I will suggest a month after any festival. Whether any used material is bad or not solely depends on your judgment. I'll strongly advise you to always please your spouse with your dressing; he or she is your first admirer.

**Responses by Mrs Bridget Ogunrinde, chorister, Ikoyi Baptist Church.**



# 8 Health Benefits of Rest



**S**leep makes you feel better, but its importance goes way beyond just boosting your mood or banishing under-eye circles. Adequate sleep is a key part of a healthy lifestyle, and can benefit your heart, weight, mind and more. There are also spiritual benefits to rest as well. The Bible has several references to the value of rest and restoration. Exodus chapter 20:8-11 describes how God himself rested after he completed his work in 6 days. If God Himself rested, who are you not to rest?

1. Resting makes you friendlier to be around instead of snapping at everyone all the time because you're tired.
2. Decreases your risk of making mistakes because now that you're rested



- and relaxed you are able to focus better.
3. Makes you look more beautiful. A tired face with baggy eyes is not attractive.
4. Less likely to get illnesses related to stress on the body like migraine, hypertension and stomach ulcers.
5. Rest improves your psychological coping skills so that you are in a good frame of mind to relate well and achieve more.
6. It sharpens your attention, enhances your memory, spurs your creativity and improves your grades as a student.
7. You'll live longer and not die suddenly from some unknown causes.
8. Adequate rest improves your chances of being a winner in sports. ■

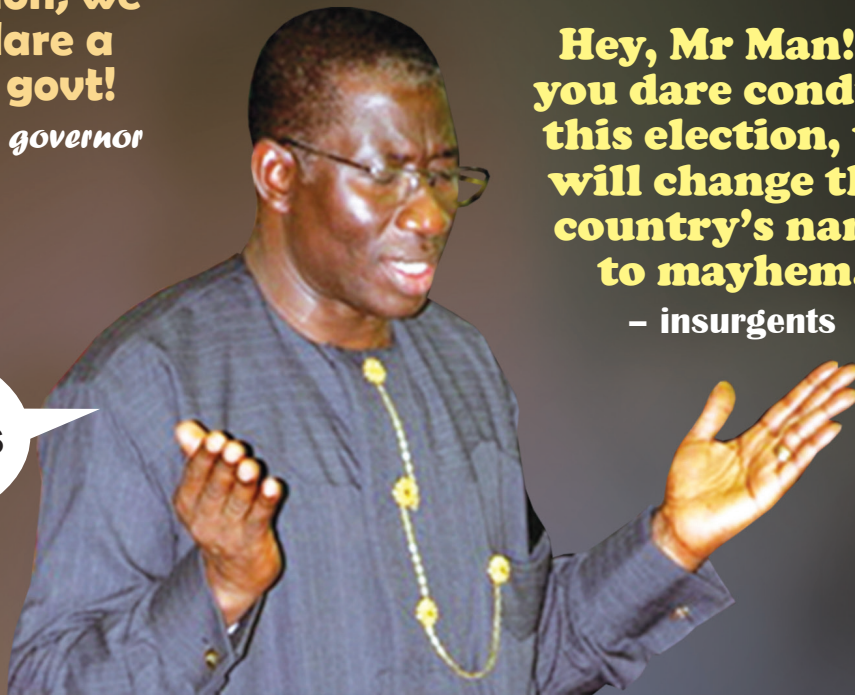


**Mr President,  
if you dare win  
this election, we  
will declare a  
parallel govt!**  
– *opposition governor*

**Baba, let  
this cup pass  
over me...**

**Bros, if you dare fail to be re-elected,  
this country will be history! – *militants***

**Hey, Mr Man! If  
you dare conduct  
this election, we  
will change this  
country's name  
to mayhem.**  
– *insurgents*



# Election Campaigns **or** Soap Opera?

By Ise Okhueleigbe

**N**ot a few Nigerians have come to terms with the fact that since January, what they have been watching is not a series of well curated drama plots but ordinary campaigns ahead of the 2015 general elections. From Kaura Namoda to James Town, and from Mambilla to Lafiagi, it is the same story of people's inability to differentiate

between campaigns and theatrics. While a good number of adults in the country are used to political campaigns, not many have found activities associated with the current campaigns too dramatic or Nollywood-like to believe.

First, events of the past few months have simply reminded Nigerians of that old saying that uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. And even time has not proved this time-honoured bit of ancient wisdom wrong. For many people therefore, this is certainly not a good time to be a Nigerian president. Nigeria's fourth democratically elected president in 55 years is currently in a quandary or dilemma of sorts as Africa's largest democracy faces another crucial test which keen observers believe will either make or mar it.

First it was a governor, an APC stalwart, who threatened that his party would set up and run a parallel government should APC lose the presidential election. In order words, APC must be declared winner, even if they lose, whether INEC likes it or not. Shortly after that, a group of militants in the Niger Delta came on air, in company of another state governor, urging their fellow countrymen and women in their own interest (that is, if they love themselves) to vote for the PDP presidential candidate, who is the current president of the country. And if they don't? They promised that Nigeria will become history.

Someone might have asked to know what it means to "become history." Unless the meaning changed after this magazine went to press, the last time a dictionary was consulted, to become history is "to be dead or no longer important, be perceived as no longer relevant to the present," or become a write-off—a forgotten entity, a country missing from the comity of nations or yanked from the world map, a land and its people that cannot be accounted for, probably bombed out of existence or picked



up by some UFOs.

Just while Nigerians thought they had been dismissed to go back home and dwell on the 'advice' from their compatriots, an insurgent group in the North came out on social media, led too by their 'governor', threatening to disrupt the elections if it ever holds and also distributed leaflets, urging those who wish to stay alive to stay away from polling centres.

So what should the president do in a country where the part is almost becoming bigger and more powerful than the whole? If he goes ahead to hold the election, it may be disrupted, with many people losing their lives in the process. If he doesn't, by May 29 he has to vacate the State House in Abuja, willy-nilly, for an interim ruler who will conduct a presidential election.

If he succeeds in conducting it and he makes the mistake of winning, sorry for him, as the opposition will form their own government, such that one president will be in Abuja and another elsewhere—Sambisa or wherever. If he conducts and fails to be re-elected, he should not only avoid Otuoke his village, the country will be history. Worse than Hobson's choice indeed. But many people have said man is not God who can decide the fate of nations.

That has not been the only drama that has characterized the current campaigns ahead of elections. How about the posters that have smeared every nook and cranny of the country, as if competing for a space? In some cases, the two key political parties superimpose their individual candidates' posters on opposition party's posters as if there is no more space to paste them.

How about the well photoshopped pictures of the candidates that make them look as if they have no confidence in their natural beauty? Never will one see a politician who is not smiling in their campaign posters or on television. One wonders if after the elections such smile will continue for those who lose.

Women seem to be making inroads into politics, as they are now the choice running mate of some governorship candidates, and they look pretty much like they are posing with their spouses in the campaign posters. A foreigner to Nigeria may initially make the mistake of thinking it is husband and wife united on the same platform against a common political foe.

How about grammar? One politician is reported to have said he would "provide unemployment" if (re-)elected. That makes one think the constitution should compel some of them to speak their mother tongue while an interpreter will finish the job. Although Nigeria has many challenges, unemployment is perhaps one of the worst among these social problems. Providing more unemployment will simply be overkill and will no doubt bring the youths to their knees and impoverish thousands of families who depend on them. Also, the accent of a particular politician has not failed to interest or annoy many Nigerians, depending on



**Who's the beautiful bride? Time for Nigerians to decide.**

which part of the country one is from. Is it true that some people pronounce PVC as fibisi? This is for those who don't get carried away by the obvious dramatic activities in the campaigns, but take time to listen to the nuances of the various speakers as well as the entire gamut of interpretations that can come from their utterances and actions.

**A**nother interesting comedy in the ongoing campaigns is the uncanny ability of some campaign managers to go into history and archives to ferret information out about some opposition party loyalists, including the contestants themselves, and use such against them. For many such politicians, the chickens have come home to roost, as their utterances in the past are being used against them in the current campaigns.

The use of artistes by politicians and their campaign teams is another salient feature of the 2015 election campaigns. Since many Nigerians have their favourite stars, politicians have quickly latched on to this to make them part of their stump as they transverse their constituencies in the countdown to the elections. However, such artistes may actually be more interested in pecuniary benefits than in the success of their temporary employers.

How about public support by wives of many male politicians who accompany them round their constituencies to drum up support for them? The president's wife did it earlier in 2011 and is repeating it, with the wife of the APC presidential candidate doing the same to support her hubby in becoming Nigeria's number one citizen. And they look really good in their attire. Thanks to politics, Nigerians wouldn't have known how lovely some

of them are. Spouses of the governorship candidates have not been left behind as well. However, one is yet to see a man coming out to support his wife who is vying for any political position or is a deputy governorship candidate.

While the comic has taken much of the space in the campaign adverts and rallies, violence has also not been absent. From Rivers to Bauchi, and from Taraba to Lagos, supporters of one party have promoted violence and free-for-all to the status of a pastime. Not even the president has been spared. His security details have however been very mature and continent in their conduct.

There is no beauty devoid of blemish. Thus besides the attendant melodrama and comedy, the countdown to the elections has also witnessed the use of caustic language. Name-calling, libellous comments, distasteful documentaries, shredding of party membership cards from Ogun to Gombe State, shooting in rally venues, and mutilation of campaign posters by members of rival parties have painfully signposted this year's political campaigns. The elections were postponed once, with a lot of financial implications for businesses and lovers whose day was almost rubbished, and some Nigerians are worried it may be shifted again.

As the March 28 and April 11 dates for the presidential and governorship elections approach, prayer and watchfulness have been some of the contributions of the Christian Church towards peaceful elections. Nigerians are also hereby urged to eschew violence as well as collect their voter's cards and ensure they vote for the candidates they are sure will perform and will govern with the fear of God.



## How scriptures have worked for me

Prior to enrolling in this discipleship course, when I needed to find out a particular passage in the Bible, for instance, "Do not be afraid, I am your Lord; be not afraid for I am with you," I would call a friend or relative to enquire where it could be found in the Bible. They would tell me to hold on, and that they would reach me. Two to three days later, they would call to let me know. When I enrolled in this course, because I didn't know how to search the scriptures, I would leave that part alone. I didn't know the facilitators observed this. I would put down my prayer requests in my prayer journal but wouldn't know how to search for the appropriate scripture passages for support.

One day, one of the facilitators asked me to see her after class if I didn't know how to search for the Bible verses. I did just that. Today, I'm able to search for all the passages in the Bible to add to my prayer requests, and I don't need to call anyone.

Another benefit was the memory verse that participants needed to memorize. I had thought memory verses were for youths and not for senior citizens like me. When I got to class, our facilitator would ask that we recite these memory verses. I would say, "All these?" She would insist, "Yes, all that. You have to!" From there, I went home and worked on myself. Today, I can recite all the scriptural passages that we needed to learn in the programme.

The third point is a particular debtor who just refused to pay me. Now that I can search the scriptures, I put a particular scripture to test by writing in my prayer journal, with the scripture (Romans 13:8) attached, "Lord, minister to this person's heart to pay me." Since I've become versed in scriptures, I added more relevant passages – Matthew 19:26 & 7:7. I put that in prayer and in a matter of days, I got an alert and the money was paid!

Beyond this, once you've completed this discipleship course, you will be able to develop a stronger and more intimate relationship with your Creator and Lord. Also, you'll be able to see from God's point of view what He has for you. This discipleship course is edifying, motivating and it's a wonderful course.

By Funmi Taylor

## Why I can't stop laughing

Before enrolling in this discipleship course, Experiencing God, I did MasterLife twice. I told myself I had reached the height of my relationship with God, and I was sure God and I were then on the same page. I didn't need to get any more knowledge. But how wrong I was! Experiencing God was a different experience for me. It gave me an overwhelming realization that God is real. He is not just some phenomenon that we pray to and is in the clouds somewhere. No, He is real and personal and craves a relationship with us mere mortals.

The programme has seven realities which are the fulcrum on which it is based: 1. God is always at work around me. The course opened my eyes to where God is at work – in my home, at my workplace and so on. 2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with me that is real and personal. Note the active verb pursue. Can you imagine the maker of the universe pursuing you for a relationship! I'll make example that will help you appreciate the extent of God's interest in you. I dislike cockroaches. Once, I was sleeping in my room when once disturbed me. I fled the room to join my mum in her room. I then prayed to God, "Before I get back to that room, let that cockroach be dead." Amazingly, I returned to my room and met the cockroach and it was just lying upside down on the floor! I simply prayed to God to give me an opportunity to know Him for real and He did it.

3. God invites me to become involved with Him in His work. 4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes and His ways. 5. God's invitation for me to work with Him always leads me to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action. 6. I must make major adjustments in my life to join God in what He is doing. In other words, you can't stay in your comfort zone and work with God; you must take a step to join Him. 7. I come to know God by experience as I obey Him and He accomplishes His work through me.

I close with an invitation to you to come and know how to have a personal relationship with God – one that's real and personal.

By Ajifa Atuluku

For Enquiries on how to participate in any discipleship programme in Ikoyi Baptist Church (whether you're a member of not), call 08035350700.







### I was really blessed

After enrolling in this discipleship programme, continuing was a challenge. But by God's grace, I persisted. Look, God over-blessed me (is there any word like that?). I didn't just get a job, it was a nice one indeed, and the course came with many other open doors (is that the theme for the year 2015?). Wao! Now you understand how God is using the church leadership. Please, take your excuses and challenges to God and enrol in a discipleship programme. God is at work.

– **Shalom Edet**, *graduand, Follow the Master discipleship programme*



### I benefited a lot

I learnt so much from the discipleship programme. Today, I'm able to keep a place and time with my Lord. Also, I'm growing spiritually and learning how to intercede for others in prayer.

– **Joy Tyokegh**, *graduand, Follow the Master*



### I've learnt to mind my mind

The discipleship course opened my heart to the consciousness of how crucial the mind of man is to God and Satan. It is the 'engine room' of the entire being called man, and much of life's wrestling with the devil takes place in the mind. Hence God's directive that we should pattern our minds after that of Jesus Christ. It is a lifelong journey with Christ until I quit this part of eternity. Please, endeavour to attempt the experience; it is worth the sacrifice.

– **Stephen Olusola Dada**, *graduand, The Mind of Christ discipleship programme*



### I've been taught who to prioritise

I learnt so much in the course of my discipleship programme. First, I learnt that our significance in life does not lie in our earthly possessions but in our relationship with God. I also learnt that everything that we have in this life, including our loved ones, have been given to us by God. Therefore, we shouldn't let them take His place in our lives.

– **Ose Okpere**, *graduand, Serve the Master*



### I'm so grateful

MasterLife course has benefited me so much, especially in the area of life discipline. I can now spend time with the Master, live in the word, pray in faith and minister to others. I'm forever grateful to God for impacting my life through this programme and for using those wonderful facilitators who gave us their time.

– **Jennifer Frank**, *MasterLife discipleship programme*



# Do New Year Resolutions Work?

## My 2015 new year resolutions

### Things I must not do again:

No make-up—I think I'm fine enough  
No flashing—poverty no be madness  
No quarrel with neighbours—I'm not the only one here  
No gossiping—Sunday school has been hammering on it  
No borrowing of money—I'll make do with what I have  
No use of high-heels—years after, they still refer to me as that short girl  
No impulsive buying—it's a way of avoiding regret  
No talking without thinking first—it keeps landing me in trouble  
No lateness to work and church—punctuality pays  
No eating in the restaurant/eateries again.  
No robbery again—I'm tired of taking God's tithes

### Things to do:

I'll smile more and be loving, jovial and caring  
I'll change my name as part of being a new person  
I'll exercise every morning (and evening, if possible)  
I'll always pray for fellow church members and northern Christians  
I'll become a member of evangelism team or tract club  
I'll start attending either Bible study class or prayer meetings  
I'll reconcile with my co-workers and ensure no fresh quarrel  
I'll stop visiting Tim to avoid immorality  
I'll buy and read two novels before August  
I'll be more organized

*Signed: Sis. Agnes*



### I don't believe in new year resolutions

I don't really believe in it. I stopped that long ago because I believe you just leaving one day at a time. You're still in the first quarter of the year and you're no longer abiding by it. So, it's better for you to just live one day at a time.

**Iyabo Lawal**



### Resolutions outside God will not work

It depends on a lot of factors. New year resolutions that are not based on God's principles will falter and fail. Even those that are based on godly principles, you don't have to do it in your own power. You have to channel yourself into the power of God and the Holy Spirit to empower you to carry out the godly agenda you have. Any resolution outside God will falter along the way.

**Babatunde Oladipo**



### I don't make new year resolutions

I don't make resolutions. But I prayerfully believe that this year these are the things I am looking unto God for. God, I want to be able to do this; Lord, I want to be able to do this. In my house at the beginning of the year, during our morning devotion, I told them, "This year, when you look from January to December, what are you believing God for. But you, before you write what you expecting from God, what are you going to do for Him? It is not about making resolutions but being committed to God, for Him to lead you and take you through."

**Mary Katugwa**

### New year resolutions work

Yes, for me new year resolutions work. Each year, I try to recap what happened to me, what I did with the Lord in the past year, and see how I can improve in the new year. Each year, I try to tell God to open my eyes to see new things to for Him. Like this year, I told God I want to have more time with Him in prayers. So, each day I try to see how far I have gone, if I have been keeping to my promise to God. That is what I do every year and it has worked me.

**Princess Grace Dada**



### New year resolutions work

Yes, very well. Last year at the Citadel of Praise, I made up my mind that I had to be committed to singing. I don't have a nice voice and couldn't sing well. But the Citadel of Praise has taught me that it's not about nice voice; rather it's about your spirit in tune with God and you ministering to people.

**Boluwaji Adegun**



### You have to work with your resolutions

It depends on the individual. If you want your new year resolution to work, you too have to work along with it in every aspect and prayerfully. You pray and then follow it with action. A situation where you just pray but still live the same life, God will not come down to change you. You have to work towards it and be determined that this thing must be fulfilled, that's when it will work.

**Omolara Oyelade**



### Resolutions don't have to be at the new year

It depends on the person, really. You don't have to wait till the new year to make a resolution; you can make a new day, new week or new month resolution. It all depends on how you live your life. If you live it in years or if you live it in minutes, or break it down to hours—it all depends on how you live your life, in my opinion.

**Ijeoma Ihuegbu**



# How I Came To Know Christ

I grew up in a culturally traditional Middle Eastern home in the US, and Islam was our cornerstone faith. I believed that Allah was the one and only true God, and Mohammad was His messenger. I was not allowed to question God, the Quran, and the Islamic faith. "Read and believe" was the motto, and that was the end of that. As a child, I was very inquisitive about God and his nature. There was no mistake about how powerful, mighty and majestic he was. But I constantly wondered if Allah loved me – just as a father loves a child. The Quran also states Allah's very nature to be transcendent and distant from his creation. There was no way to bridge the great divide between humans and himself. But in my heart, I didn't believe that. I knew that if God knew how much I loved him, he just had to love me back and become my friend. I also knew in my heart at an early age that in order to have a fulfilling and satisfied life on earth, I would need to be in tune with God.

So I began my personal quest to discover God, and for God to discover and notice me. I wanted to be special to him, so I begged my father for a translated version of the Quran. My father complained time and time again that it was too expensive and thought that I would just forget about it. But I was persistent and finally got my first Quran. I read furiously through the book, but my hunger was never satiated. My primary question of why God kept himself so distant from his creation was still baffling to me. If I pursued him tirelessly, why would he not pursue me back? Unsatisfied and left empty, I put my quest on hold.

A relationship of mine had gone very sour my junior year of college, and my need to pursue God was resurrected. One evening in the student union, I was approached by two of my closest friends. We were chit-chatting about superficial stuff, when all of a sudden I said, "I'm not sure that Islam is cutting it for me. I'm just not satisfied, and I don't think that the problem is me anymore." They both turned to each other in shock. Little did I know that my two closest friends were Christians; it never came up in previous conversations in my two years knowing them. Also, shortly before our meeting in that student union, they were praying for my salvation. I noticed that they were nervous to talk to me after that revelation, but they both knew that there was a wide open door for them to talk to me about Christ. And when they did, I became very hard-hearted.

Ever since I was a little girl, I was raised to believe that Christianity was just plain wrong, misleading, and if I ever converted to Christianity, I would go straight to hell. Well, going to hell would definitely be a damper on my quest to befriend God, so I didn't want to hear what they had to say to me that evening. But I was challenged to just "talk to God." What? No, no. You don't understand, I said. You don't just talk to God. You have to become ritually clean before prayer. And even during prayer, you only recite the Quran. There is no window to have a conversation with him. And if there was an opportunity to do that, he's so distant from me... would he hear? But my friend was persistent and continued to challenge me – the God of the universe is a God of love, compassion, and desires a relationship with all his people. Ah, and there it was. Relationship. The one thing I was desperately seeking. And the stark realization that my quest for God's love could possibly be found through belief in Christ left me paralyzed with fear.

I did talk to God that night, confused as ever as to whom God really was. Could God really pursue me the way I've been pursuing him? I stared at my dorm room ceiling half jokingly and half serious. I called out, "Okay God, here I am and I'm talking to you. Not in Arabic, but in English. I'm not reciting anything; I'm just talking to you plainly. Could you please tell me who you are? I'd really like to know." And that was it. There was no flash of light, no booming voice from the sky, nothing. And I fell asleep.

About a week later, I was walking to the mail room to pick up my mail, and my friend who had challenged me to talk to God was there. Before she could say anything to me, I approached her and said "Can I come to church with you sometime?" And as soon as I stated that, my hand went right over my mouth in disbelief. It was as if someone else had talked right through me. My friend also stared at me in a bit of shock, not believing that I said that too. After a bit of stuttering, she agreed happily and invited me to accompany her on Sunday.

The drive to church was painstaking for me. I had never been to

a church and did not know what to expect. I don't remember the sermon message that day and I did not accept the alter call, but I remember the congregation – warm, inviting, hospitable, relational, and genuinely happy to speak with me even if I did not believe what they believed. It was as if they were living out their faith, and I now know of course that they were modeling the body of Christ.

It was now Winter break, and I was home with my family. My "challenge friend" (whom I'll call Mary for the sake of conversation) called me and invited me to accompany her to a Christian youth conference that was taking place over New Year's. I declined right away, telling her that outside of school, my parents are very protective and do not allow me to go anywhere overnight. She begged and begged, and I finally gave in. While I was contemplating how to ask my dad about going, Mary and her small group at the church were praying furiously for me. I finally gave up trying to come up with the perfect way to ask, expected a resounding NO, and walked downstairs to ask. "Dad, can I go to a youth conference with my friend. I'll be gone for 4 days and 4 nights over New Year's." And as I turned away from him because I already heard the answer echo in my mind, he cheerfully said "Yes! Sure, have fun." WHAT? ARE YOU SERIOUS? I thought he didn't hear me, so I repeated the question, emphasizing that I would be gone overnight and for a few days. And again, he said yes with no hesitation. Well, I was ecstatic, but he did rethink his answer and told me to make sure it was okay with Mom. Darn, well, I'm sure that'll be the no I was expecting. And, again, the answer was yes!

I went to that conference full of questions. I had never seen so many people filled with such spiritual satisfaction and love for God and life! I learned about sin and why it separated us from God. But even more important, I learned about Christ's mission and about His death and resurrection bridging the great divide. I learned about His pursuit for mankind and that every individual matters to Him and has a purpose here on Earth in the great mosaic of life. And then I finally knew that I had found what I've been searching for since my childhood. I gave my heart, mind, body, and soul to Christ at that conference.

I knew that my acceptance of Christ would lead to my disownment from my family. That was especially difficult for me since I was the oldest of four siblings, and I practically raised them during my adolescent years. Disownment meant separating myself from my siblings which was terribly painful for me to think about and actually do. Even after my conversion, I was wary about my decision, for my family was also my God. I was on the brink of giving up Christ for fear of my sibling's future when I was away. No, I just can't go through with this, I thought one evening. And that same evening, I prayed to Jesus to help me know somehow that the decision I made was the right one. After that prayer, I went out with a friend for a bite to eat. In the restaurant was a homeless man named Fredrick. My friend was drawn to him and began talking to him. I was nervous and avoided eye contact. Quickly, my friend got up and excused himself to use the bathroom. Now Fredrick and I were sitting alone. I met his eyes, and he smiled the warmest smile I had ever seen on a human being before. He pointed his finger right at my heart from across the table and said, "I know that Jesus Christ is in your heart." And just like that, I knew that God had given me my answer. I was filled with unshakeable, warrior-like courage at that very instant. My friend came out of the bathroom a bit disoriented. "Well, didn't you use the bathroom?" I asked. "No," he replied, "I actually forgot why I went in there." And again, I knew that moment what I just experienced was hand-wrapped by Christ just for me. Fredrick asked for some money for a bus ride home to his family. He needed only six more dollars. My friend pulled out all the money he had, and wouldn't you know it – it was exactly six dollars. We left that restaurant without any food that night. I was already full.

I shared my faith with my family, and I was disowned. But I was blessed with a new family – both earthly and divine. My Abba father takes care of me daily now, and we talk. We talk all the time. We live life together. I finally found what I was looking for. Finally, a relationship.

Martha July 9, 2008

*Culled from the net.*



# A Lovely But Heartbreaking Experience

– Ijeoma Ihuegbu, Member, Lydia Auxiliary, Ikoyi Baptist Church

## What made the Lydia Auxiliary of Ikoyi Baptist Church tick in 2014?

I've been in Lydia for approximately a year now. It's been interesting, and we've had very practical and helpful discussions, not just spiritually but all round.

## Would you recommend the Lydia forum to the young women in Ikoyi Baptist Church?

Definitely, I will. In Lydia you are taught how to live life as a young Christian woman—basically how to live life and not just counselling for a particular problem.

## What was interesting in your December 2014 outing to the motherless babies' home?

It was lovely but heartbreaking seeing those children in Olive Bloom Orphanage in Ajah. It is also uplifting to know that there is a place that cares for them and is concerned about putting them in happy homes. Speaking to their facilitators, you could see they have this passion for helping these children, which was really good to see.

## Many people celebrate their birthdays and anniversaries by visiting widows, orphanages, motherless babies' homes, homes for the elderly, and hospitals or prisons. Having visited one yourself, what have you to say to fellow Christians who have never considered it?

It's definitely worth going there; it really opens your eyes. You hear about these things and you may know about it, but actually seeing it brings a different perspective to what you already knew.

## Do new year resolutions work?



It depends on the person, really. You don't have to wait till the new year to make a resolution; you can make a new day, new week or new month resolution. It all depends on how you live your life. If you live it in years or if you live it in minutes, or break it down to hours—it all depends on how you live your life in my opinion.

## Have you ever made a new year resolution and it worked?

(Laughs) I actually don't remember but I know I used to make them when I was younger and I can't remember if they actually worked... I try to break my life down into days but I realized I could achieve more if I break it down into hours. (Meanwhile) I do have some resolutions for this year and I also try to break the resolutions down, to see how I can achieve them rather than waiting to the end and looking back to see

if I achieved them. I break them down to make more achievable target like goals rather than this big thing that you have to wait till the end of the years to have a review... these resolutions are personal. I wait till the end of the week to see if I can be closer to achieving these goals and whatsoever action that I need to take.

## What's your expectation in 2015?

A closer walk with God—more than 2014.





# I Feel Special

– Grace Saleh, Queen, Girls Auxiliary, Ikoyi Baptist Church

**H**ow does it feel to be a queen and what are your plans for the Girls Auxiliary (GA) in Ikoyi Baptist Church?

I feel special and outstanding. I hope to teach others the word of God and, also, bring more girls to the Girls Auxiliary so that they too can learn from what I have gained from this association.

**What in particular have you learnt from GA that you wish to see others benefit from when they join the body?**

Improvement in my prayer life and ability to memorize scriptures are some of the things I have benefited from GA. These have helped me grow spiritually in Christ.

It has also helped me in the area evangelism, as I now tell others about Christ. It has improved my prayer life as well. I now pray more and have time for God in terms of communicating with Him. Before now, I could just pray for three or four minutes. But now, I pray more and even pray for others.

**What advice do you have for girls of your age who are not part of GA in Ikoyi Baptist Church?**

I wish to encourage them to join. Even if they are boarding students, they should just try and come once in a while because they will learn a lot from our mentors. It's not only about the Bible that we learn at GA, we also learn about educational issues as well as how to overcome the challenges girls face when they grow up and get married.

**What special word do you have for your mentors and counsellors?**

May God replenish them and bless them and their endeavours.







# Helping Marriages Work

## – Princess Grace Dada

- Chairperson, Marriage Counselling Committee
- Member, Women's Fellowship (WMS)
- Teacher, Sunday School
- 21 years old in IBC and 46 years old in marriage
- Former church, United English Baptist Church, Kaduna

**H**ow would you describe your current place of worship to someone out there?

Ikoyi Baptist Church is a unique church. You have different tribes and nationalities worshipping in IBC and enjoying their worship every Sunday. I've found a very good fellowship in this church. Despite being a multi-tribal congregation, we love one another. It however didn't start out like this, but by and by things started improving and I can see how people relate, most especially the discipleship programmes which have transformed the minds of people in this congregation and have improved our relationship. This has made the church to become a big family and I appreciate God for it.

As the Chairperson of the church Marriage Counselling Committee, what has been your experience and what would you

say is the relevance of this committee to the body of Christ?

It was a good thing the church thought of inaugurating this committee because we had many challenges among our young couples. When the church started, we tried to see what we could do in the lives of couples in this congregation, such as nurturing the new couples who are just coming up. However, we are still at the teething stage and trying to collate information about the newlyweds. Of course, prior to their weddings, the Pastor counselled them but we are coming on board now to take over that responsibility. We are starting that this year. We've already in the process of creating good rapport between us in the committee and the new couples who got wedded last year by reaching out to them via phone calls. This will enable us visit, encourage and pray with them. By the grace of God, we are hopeful we will achieve more this year.

Both in my married life and my children's marriages, I've learnt a lot that will enable me mentor young marriages, lead them in the light of God's word, make them know they have to build their homes on the solid rock Jesus Christ, seek to do His will, live happily with each other in spite of individual weaknesses and try to see how to help each other make the marriage work.

Also, as the Chairman of this committee, I need to be close to God in prayer for the success of every marriage in the church and also be in contact with the couples. And to successfully do this, I need to have more time and communion with God and to tap power from Him for success. ■

***'As the  
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couples'***



# How Marriage Has Changed Us

*Are you a young couple or one hoping to tie the knot soon? The counsel below from those who have travelled the same route should not be ignored.*



Mrs Akinjoyegbe

## I've Compromised A Lot For My Marriage

**M**arriage has changed me in many ways. For instance, as a spinster I could decide to go anywhere I liked without taking permission from anyone, unlike now that my husband and even our children must know about whatsoever I want to do.

There are compromises I have made for the sake of my marriage. For example, I was a staunch member of Cherubim and Seraphim "AYO NI O" movement where I loved to continue after marriage. But I compromised my denomination and became a Baptist for the sake of my marriage. Likewise, I had planned not to start having and raising children until I finished my first and second degrees. This idea was compromised to keep my marriage as I had my first child at the completion of my first degree and went back for my master's degree as a wife and mother. I used to be an introvert before marriage, but this I have pushed aside and

followed my husband to social gatherings and other outings for peace in my marriage.

Many changes have indeed been made over time. In addition to the aforementioned compromises, I gave up having an intimate friend, and my best friend I open up to now is my God and my husband.

My advice to young people and would-be couples is that they should cultivate the habit of fasting and praying on marriage issues. They must not be unequally yoked. They should not rush into marriage. They should make happiness in marriage, instead of wealth, their focus. They should learn not to insist on having their way at all cost; rather they should be willing to shift ground for peace to reign. They should learn to be cheerful and wear a smiling face always.

**By Margaret Akinjoyegbe**

## I Don't Have To Enforce Some Things

**M**y wife and I are two different individuals from different backgrounds and cultures. My wife and I do not like doing laundry which I knew when we were courting.

I did not have to enforce it just because I am the head of the family; I choose doing the laundry myself. Change is constant in every living thing. Every man or woman is created uniquely. As a youth, before we

consider changing because of marriage, we have to understand ourselves first. Try as much as possible not to be selfish in your reasoning and decision making. These are applicable to young people and would-be couples preparing themselves for married life.

**By Collins Ika**



## I've 'Lost' Some Friends For The Sake of My Marriage

**M**arriage is confirmed to be the only institution that one is given a certificate on the day of matriculation instead of on the graduation day. Once you are certified, you begin to learn new things; from that point you have no decision of yours and not to talk of your time, everything becomes joint and changed. If one thinks that once he gets married he will still continue to be who he was before marriage, such person is not ready to settle down hence that marriage will not last.

I will share just a few of my life story. Before I said goodbye to bachelorhood, I used to hang out with my guys a lot and also keep a lot of lady friends. As at this moment, I don't know where those guys are because I lost contact with them. And for me to have a friend (male or female) such a friend must also become a friend to my wife, and this has totally changed me. Do you know that for you to spend money as a married man, you have to sit with your wife and plan, unlike before that you could spend as you liked on things you wanted? Now we spend on the things we want. My want does not take priority but WHAT WE WANT does.

Furthermore, I must confess at this point that the Bible is very correct where it says he who finds a wife finds a good thing and will obtain favour from God. Life as a married man has been so interesting, it makes one very responsible. Ever since I do not hang out with friends, I have chosen to hang out with my lovely family and it is always fun when we are together with our lovely kids running around us. I want to appreciate God for his abundant

blessings to our family. Our marriage which will turn eight years on 2nd of December 2014 has been blessed by God. Most interestingly, as a bachelor then I could keep late nights and no question came from anyone. But now, not just my wife knows my closing time from work, even my kids know when I should return from work and if I do not return as supposed, I should be expecting phone calls from either my wife or my kids. Once you realise that someone is at home waiting for your return, you feel excited and eager to hurry home as compared to before that you could keep late nights and return home any time you pleased and no one cared to know if you were back.

As a matter of fact, young guys should hurry up and get settled down into creating a family and taking up responsibilities as life without a spouse is incomplete.

**By Tony Archibong**



The Archibongs

## Marriage Has Made Me A Better Christian

**M**arriage as an institution is a legal relationship between a husband and wife. The marriage of these two personalities from different backgrounds, culture, upbringing, value system, etc can be challenging and problematic, especially if not driven by love between both parties. As the Lord is the head of the church, so the husband is the head of his family and be respected just as the wife who is his helpmate must be loved too.

As a wife, I have to adjust to being a helpmate, a good companion and a good mother. Marriage has its implications of changing me from being an individual to that of becoming a family woman. Marriage has therefore transformed me and made me to be more tolerant, patient, understanding, trusting, forgiving, transparent, loving and calmer. Marriage has also made me to become a better Christian and to know God more especially when faced with the challenges and problems associated with marriage as an institution, such as motherhood and raising or managing the family.

**By Deke Ajibade**



## Before Marriage, I Liked Long Working Hours

**S**ince marriage, I haven't had to do everything alone. Planning is made easier as I have someone I confide in and her advice is candid as it is always done in 'our' best interest. Marriage made me more complete as two sane heads, they say, are better than one.

I gave up a lot of things as a newlywed to help my marriage work. Just few very important examples I can remember vividly. Before I got married, I liked long working hours, which was part of my lifestyle and work habit then and I enjoyed it. So it became a habit getting home late from work, but I had to adjust

after marriage. Also, before I got married I could not drink from the same cup with someone else, but I gave up that also for love. I gave up eating spicy food (pepper) as my spouse was pepper-less. I tried to recognize my spouse's differences so I don't have to complain all the time. I passed from thinking for one person only, which used to be me, to thinking for two, for in doing so my wife felt secure and relaxed and this helped my marriage work. Thus because of love, it was no big deal to compromise these and others and move on. Now I am happy I did.

**By Matthew Anuyah**





# Easter: The Season of Forgiveness

By Jumoke Fagbure

**W**e have all been there, we have sinned and turned to God to ask for forgiveness. And knowing Christ died for us, we know God will forgive us.

Now, let us turn things around. Someone offends us, or cheats us, or takes away an opportunity from us, or does not greet us, or talks behind our back...and of course we declare to ourselves or to others: "I will never forgive that person."

Does this sound familiar to you? It definitely sounds familiar to me. I have been in many situations where I think I am not going to forgive. I have to remind myself over and over again that God loves me and forgives me all my sins. Who I am then not to forgive?

Let us examine the meaning of forgiveness. The word forgive, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is to "stop feeling angry or resentful towards (someone) for an offence, flaw, or mistake." Looking at this definition in more detail, forgiveness depends on you! You have to make the conscious decision to let go of your anger towards someone for hurting, offending, or lying to you.

But why is forgiveness so difficult to obtain? Of course most of us think that if we forgive someone, we are allowing

the person get away with what they have done. Forgiveness is not that, neither does it mean that we forget what has been done to us, it does not mean we trust an untrustworthy person again or mean we are saying what the person has done is okay. Forgiveness simply means we release them from the wrong they committed against us. "Why should we do this?" I am sure you are wondering, the simple fact is that we forgive because God forgives us.

## The Bible tells us this:

- We forgive because we have been forgiven by God (Ephesians 4:32).
- We forgive in obedience to God (Matthew 6:14-15)

Easter is a celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus. We all know the famous Bible verse which states, "For God so loved the world that he gave us his only begotten son. That whosoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Jesus died and rose from the grave so that you and I can have a relationship with God. So we can ask for his forgiveness and we know it is given.

Our God, who is love, displayed His forgiveness as He sacrificed His only son for us. Through Jesus Christ, we

have eternal life and through him we are forgiven. Rick Warren preached a sermon where he said, "The Resurrection changed everything." And it did! Through the death of Jesus, through the fact Jesus allowed himself to be sacrificed for us, we receive God's incredible forgiveness that frees us from sin and shame. When we know we have this, how can we decide not to forgive someone and then turn around and ask God for forgiveness?

Easter is the season of forgiveness. We thank God for the forgiveness afforded to us through the death of Christ on the cross. What is important to remember is that Jesus act of forgiveness was an act of His will and we also make the choice whether to forgive someone or not.

What we are driving at here is that in forgiving someone, you are actually freeing yourself from anger and hurt. Give yourself an Easter gift this season: release to God those who have hurt you. You can trust Him to handle the details of justice in a completely righteous manner. A pastor preached a sermon about how someone was spreading lies about her. She prayed to God about the situation and left it in His hands. She said when God started dealing with the person, she had to intercede on the person's behalf. That is the God you and I serve! Forgive someone, leave it to God and you will be free!



# Tribal Marks: Do We Still Need Them?



The first and most important point is that the Bible abhors markings on our bodies. I also do not think that tribal marks come out complimentary most times. I would think twice before I advise anyone to put on any nature of tribal mark in this age. For me it is a no!

By Uche Udeoji

## Funny And Annoying Things Christians Do In Church

...continued from last edition

**109.** Someone ending a prayer session with "in Jesus' name I pray" when he or she wasn't the only one praying.

**110.** Someone coming into the church auditorium with unfolded umbrella as if it is still raining inside.

**111.** A member sitting on several seats/pews like a test run before finally settling for one.

**112.** Instrumentalists anticipating the next song a song leader would introduce through familiarity with such musical collocation without hinting the song leader.

**113.** Someone using a stationary microphone to speak without caring to adjust it to their mouth or detach it from the stand until someone else comes to help.

**114.** Someone searching for where their spouse is seated in the church auditorium and thereby distracting other members.

**115.** Someone shouting "amen"

when occasion does not call for, probably because they are far away from the person praying or not listening.

**116.** A song leader singing with eyes closed so that they do not get signals, usually, to stop.

**117.** A short member sitting far from the pulpit/speaker and sulking that people are blocking their view (when they possibly could have got a seat in front).

**118.** Visual display projecting poorly edited information and lyrics (and thereby interfering with the flow of those relying on it to sing).

**119.** Song leader raising 'self-edifying' songs during praise/worship rather than focusing on praising God.

**120.** Someone repeating or punctuating their speech with "amen," "hallelujah" or "praise the Lord," probably unconsciously, as a meme or a means of getting listeners' attention.

**121.** People bringing pieces of paper containing info for someone making

announcements, or talking to them distractively, rather than doing this earlier.

**122.** Someone (who has been called upon to pray) praying in such a low voice that even when they end the prayer, many fellow prayers\* do not realize it.

**123.** Some members expending their energy dancing during praise/worship only to fall asleep during sermon and/or announcement.

**124.** A preacher calling on someone else to pray for people who came out in response to altar call instead of praying for them by him/herself.

**125.** A pastor or service leader (coming on stage too often) announcing the next activity in the programme instead of allowing a seamless flow of each person coming up to act their part, with minimal interventions (especially where a person doesn't turn up).

(\*Someone who is praying is also called a prayer.)

...to be continued



# LA NAISSANCE DE JÉSUS CHRIST



## La célébration de la naissance de Jésus Christ est Noël.

C'est une importante occasion que nous avons l'envie de toujours célébrer. C'est plus joyeux moment de chaque année avec des célébrations partout dans le monde entier. Sa naissance s'est produite sous le règne d'empereur Auguste César qui commandait que tout le monde à partir de Galilée à Bethléem de Judée se fasse recenser. Dans l'obéissance à cet édit, Joseph et Mary sont allés à Bethléem pour se faire enregistrer tandis qu'ils se tenaient dans la foule, Mary a été pressée par la douleur de l'enfantement et ne trouvant aucun lieu décent dans ce voisinage; le sauveur du monde, le prince de la paix est né dans une crèche.

Cette naissance humble nous enseigne l'humilité, la patience et l'endurance.

**Mrs. Regina M. Baiye**

*You desire to speak French and broaden your opportunities in life, join us at the French class on weekdays and on Sundays at the Sunday school, Ikoyi Baptist Church.*

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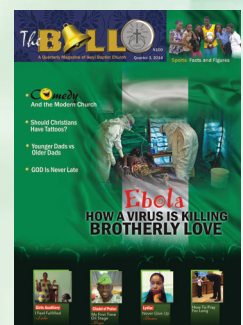
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# Funny and Unwise Things People Do







37

## Questions Teenagers Ask...

*This is a list of responses by teenagers in Ikoyi Baptist Church recently to the question, "What one question would you ask God if you have the opportunity to come into His presence today?"*

"How can I consistently operate in Christ's kingdom?" - Nicole Ediae • "What will the coming of Jesus Christ look like?" - Samuel Orji • "Are you always with me?" - Bitrus Watrahely • "Why do some people get to suffer for nothing?" - Aderinto Ronke • "Is my name in the Book of Life?" - Mary Istifanus • "Why are we suffering in this world and why do people fall in love?" - Elizabeth Aniefiok • "How many people will enter Your kingdom?" - Princess Nlemogu • "How can I bring peace and joy to my family?" - Anyobe Ajima • "What have I done to deserve all these good things from You?" - Matthew Godgift • "Why can't my dad have a good job?" - Jerry Friday • "When is Jesus coming and why did You create the universe and humans?" - Olufolabi Damilola • "Can you take me to greater heights with my voice?" - Louis Alex • "How did You come into existence?" - Pelumi Amoo • "Why did You allow Eve

to be tempted by Satan?" - Esther Ibikunle • "How can I overcome temptation and how did You come into existence?" - Moses Orji • "Why is there so much violence in the world?" - Timothy Ogbemudia • "How can I achieve all I have in mind this year?" - Abigail Ibrahim • "What was Your intention for the slave trade? Why did You allow innocent people to suffer? What was the plan?" - Faramade • "Who made You? How did You come into being?" - Oluwasubomi Oyelade • "Why are the ladies no longer covering their heads in worship based on 1 Corinthians 11?" - Eucharika Lukpata • "Why is it so hard to obey the Bible and why is it that only mortals suffer in their life?" - Jacob Miracle • "What's Your plan for my life?" - Oniete Awani • "Why are the people You made departing from Your way and going their ways?" - Jedidah Kure • "When is Jesus coming back?" - Chelsea Anowi • "Why do You allow Your

children fall into temptation and evil ways and how do You show us Your supremacy and kindness?" - Deborah Mary Ita • "Will You order my steps?" - Peace Akpan • "Are You human or a spirit?" - Onyinye Ndubueze • "Will You bless me, my friends and family members?" - Dorcas Olatunji • "Can I be saved?" - Cecilia Moses • "How can one fall in love with You?" - Janet Jinad • "When is Jesus coming?" - Friday Sossa • "How can I know Your way and You more?" - Emmanuel • "Why do bad things happen to good people?" - Christopher • "Why can't You show us how our future will be and why do some people miss out of becoming what they wish to be?" - Muyibat Diyadu • "Why do You not answer prayers early?" - Jane • "Why don't You answer my prayer at the particular time I need it?" - Susan Olugua • "How do You feel about people's behaviour and why do You still have mercy to forgive?" - Thomas





who design various means of increasing their sales among them. If they succeed, there are concerns that tobacco-related deaths among women will rise.

• **Health** WHO recommends 11,000 steps by everyone each day to avoid diseases such as diabetes.

• **Human right** According to WHO, approximately 40 million children below the age of 15 throughout the world are subjected to child abuse every year and nearly 53,000 die as a result of such abuses.

• **Demography** In spite of its enormous size of about 170 million people, Nigeria constitutes only about 2.36 per cent of the world population.

• **Linguistics** There are approximately 7,000 languages globally. About one-fifth of these worldwide languages is believed to occur in West Africa alone.

• **Linguistics** All languages in the world are believed to be related, except Basque, a language spoken by the Basque people of Spain and France, which has no known relation to or link with any other language.

## Statistics

# Facts & Figures

• **Teen** About 16 million women between the ages of 15 and 19 give birth each year, which compounds the problem of teenage pregnancy worldwide.

• **Teen** Half of all adolescent births occur in just seven countries of the world: Bangladesh, Brazil, Congo, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, and US.

• **Teen** Aside from the fact that babies born to teenage mothers are more likely to have low weight and health challenges, babies born to teens face 50% higher risk of dying in the first few weeks.

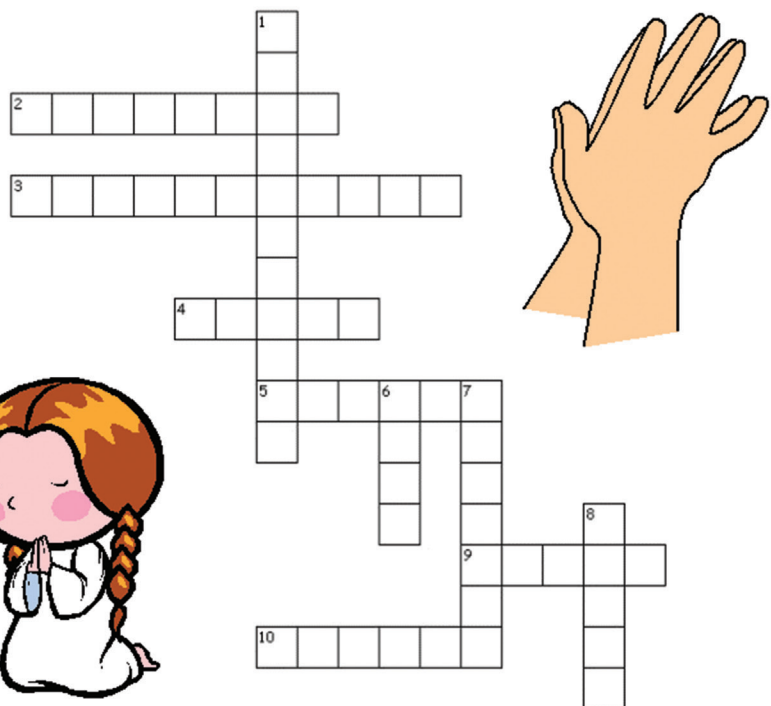
• **Teen** Teenage mothers have a tendency to drop out of school and have fewer skills and opportunities for gainful employment, which compounds their economic conditions.

• **Teen** According to the Time magazine, teenagers who are exposed to sexual contents on TV are twice more likely to become pregnant before reaching 20 than teens watching less of such.

• **Teen** According to the National Population Commission, one in every three teenage girls in the North has started bearing children compared to one in every 10 in the South.

• **Health** The world has 1 billion smokers out of which about 200 million are said to be female. The fact that less than 10 per cent of women are smokers is seen as a major attraction for tobacco companies

## Lord's Prayer Crossword



### Across

2. We can pray anytime and \_\_\_\_.
3. Prayer is the special way we \_\_\_\_ with God.
4. We fold these out of respect and to avoid distraction when we pray.
5. Instead of using fancy words when we pray it's best to keep it this.
9. Praying has a lot of this because God can do anything.
10. Include this in your prayer to God because he deserves to hear it.

### Down

1. An important part of prayer is to ask for this.
6. God wants us to do this all the time. When things are good and bad.
7. The Lord's Prayer is an \_\_\_\_ so we can know how to pray.
8. God always \_\_\_\_ us when we pray.



## Jokes

### Who is the funniest?

1. HAUSA man who removed his shoes to enter a taxi...
2. IGBO man who went to the bank with a spanner to open a bank account...
3. YORUBA man who went to bed with a ruler just to know how long he slept...
4. A TIV man who watched the news and waved at the newsreader.
5. An EFIK nurse who woke up a sleeping patient simply because she forgot to give him sleeping pills...
6. An IGALA man who lowered his TV volume because he wanted to read a text message...
7. An IKWERE man who polished his shoes to take a passport photo...
8. An ISOKO man who climbed a mango tree to check if the mango was ripe enough, then came down and started stoning it...
9. A FULANI man who chose to drink Fanta because he thought sprite was unripe...
10. An IDOMA man who put his radio inside the refrigerator because he wanted to listen to Cool FM...

### How can I ever forgive this?

It was offering time on Sunday in church. The offering basket was passed around.

Despite d Pastor's charge for good offering, I still secretly pulled out N50 from my pocket and dropped it. Just then, the person behind me tapped me on the shoulder and handed me a N1,000 note. I smiled, then put the N1,000 majestically in the basket and passed it on. I then turned and thanked the man seriously for being so generous. Somehow, I was happy because no one saw him give me cash for offering. He then replied, "Don't mention. Be careful next time; it fell from your pocket."

Whaaaaat????!!!!!!...

Usher please wait, wrong transaction.

### My next door neighbour

A man is getting into the shower just as his wife is finishing up her shower when the doorbell rings. The wife quickly wraps herself in a towel and runs downstairs. When she opens the door, there stands Kenny, the next door neighbour. Before she says a word, Kenny says, "I'll give you N100,000 to peck—just a peck." After thinking for a moment, the woman pecks Kenny.

After a few seconds, Kenny hands her N100,000 bundle and, before leaving, offers her additional N1,000 with a broad smile. The woman cleans her lips and returns upstairs.

"Who was that, Baby girl?" her husband asks.

"Kenny, the next door neighbour," she replies, hurrying inside the room to keep

the cash before her husband is done with washing.

"Great!" the husband says, "Did he say anything about the N101,000 he owes me?"

Moral of the story: Share critical information with your spouse to prevent avoidable behaviour.

### For Men Only

Are you a female, you're strongly advised not to read this. Please, pleas, plea...don't! Okay, since you want to continue against all advice, no problem. I'll see where this takes you. A store that sells husbands has just opened in town, where a woman may go to choose a husband. Among the instructions at the entrance is a description of how the store operates. You may visit the store only once.

There are six floors and the qualities of the men increase as the shopper ascends the floors. There is however a catch. You may choose any man from a particular floor, or you may choose to go up a floor, but you cannot go back down except to exit the building! So, a woman goes to the Husband Store to find a husband.

On the first floor the sign on the door reads: Floor 1 – "These men have jobs and love the Lord."

The second floor sign reads: Floor 2 – "These men have jobs, love the Lord and love kids."

The third floor sign reads: Floor 3 – "These men have jobs, love the Lord, love kids and are extremely good looking."

"Wow," she thinks, but feels compelled to keep going. She goes to the fourth floor and sign reads: Floor 4 – "These men have jobs, love the Lord, love kids, are good looking and help with the housework."

"Oh, mercy me!" she exclaims, "I can hardly stand it!" Still, she goes to the fifth floor and sign reads: Floor 5 – "These men have jobs, love the Lord, love kids, are gorgeous, help with the housework and have a strong romantic streak."

She is so tempted to stay, but she goes to the sixth floor and the sign reads: Floor 6 – "You are visitor 4,363,012 to this floor. There are no men on this floor. This floor exists solely as proof that women are impossible to please."

Thank you for shopping at the Husband Store. Watch your step as you exit the building, and have a nice day!



...still wondering why they are not walking in on their heads



Record breaker or back breaker?



# Living With People: The Truth, The Falsehood

**L**ois (not real name) always studied her Bible and other Christian literature to find consolation her Christian family denied her. She was a shopkeeper on the premises where I worked. I remember going out sometimes to buy things and also spend time chatting with the young convert. It was in the course of such close contact that I got to know much about the Kogi State indigene.

As ideal as Lois' quiet and introverted nature was, it was actually deceptive, as it concealed much of the distress she was going through in the hands of her adoptive family. Soon after she became a Christian through a young evangelist in her school, her parents didn't only disown her, they threw her out. She came to a church where the pastor announced her situation to the congregation and a family adopted her. There, she bore abuses from the man's wife who also threatened often to return her back to the church. Left with no alternative, she bore the burden associated with her newfound faith.

From enjoying balanced diets as a Muslim girl in her parents' house, Lois began to subsist; and from being a student as a Muslim, she became a shopkeeper who never heard thank-you from her boss who was also her madam at home. "What to do?" she once told me. "It's difficult but it's a course I've chosen and I've to bear my cross." I walked away to my office, not for lack of concern for her straits, but as a quick means of preventing myself from becoming emotional as the young woman fought back tears.

Some five years later, I stumbled on Lois who was still struggling to eke out a living as a shopkeeper but for another person. She was no longer with that family. For spiritual encouragement, I promised to visit her often. But like her adoptive family, I too failed her. The tyranny of my work hindered me. When eventually I turned up, the FCT administration had bulldozed and reconstructed the business centre. So, with the reconstruction came loss of contact. Lois' case typifies the agony of living with people.

If being a girl was to blame for Lois' vicissitudes, Jerome was a boy. Yet one tiny but unyielding thread ran through their lives. On one hot afternoon, an unwanted guest encroached on the privacy of a family somewhere in Delta. Somehow, news had filtered in that an assassin was lurking around for a marked man. So everyone was wary and cautious. Just as the intruder walked into the apartment of a church deacon, the couple's firstborn son was heading to the door. The parents whispered for him to retreat while they all herded into a room for safety. But they soon realized they had acted in error, for if the intruder didn't see anyone in the living room, he might be tempted to go from room to room to scour the apartment for residents. Thus the couple called on Jerome to go and attend to him. Jerome was the son of an elder sister of the deacon's wife.

Sheepish and naïve, Jerome faced the intruder. But the boy successfully dismissed him, probably telling him that he was alone at home and that the man he sought to kill didn't live there. The couple kept their three sons and a daughter away from harm's way and sent the boy living with them to face an attacker. After all, if he died, no one would know what happened. It's whatever she told her elder sister that she would take. For the couple, blood is really thicker than water. Again, it's one of the many hazards of living with people.

Those were Lois' and Jerome's experiences, just two in hundreds of such cases. Some people have therefore come to believe that people's attitude in church and home differs considerably. For some people, when they see members of a family, they can easily spot the odd one among them—the housemaid or one that is not a child of

the couple. If his or her ruffled clothes don't scream it, the low-end and oversize footwear would. How about the low self-esteem that hangs around them like a stench? It's a wound that time may heal but whose scar will never go even years after their 'freedom'. But are hosts truly the devil they have been painted to look like?

My wife and I have just closed a case with the police. It all began on a Tuesday morning. Our housemaid's phone rang repeatedly. Sister M, as we used to call her, regretfully forgot it at home. I later decided to pick it.

"Where are you? Are you playing with me? If you no bring that N35k before 9, you go see!" the caller threatened and dropped the call without even listening to know if it was M he was talking to. I was still trying to reconstruct the developing plot when my wife called to ask for M. I reminded her I was supposed to be the one asking her for M's whereabouts, since she was the one who gave M her ATM card to go and make withdrawal from her account to send to her mother whom she told us was ill and needed N35,000 for a surgery. It was then she informed me M had just withdrawn N100,000! I then informed her of the call I just received through M's phone and advised her to quickly call her bank to block the ATM card.

We informed the police, submitted her photo to them along with the phone number that called M that morning. The caller was eventually caught along with M. Days later when her poor family in the village heard the news, they were distressed and travelled all the way to Lagos to beg for our forgiveness and her reinstatement. We did the former but couldn't attempt the latter.

Who was Sister M, by the way? My wife had just put to bed and when I muted the idea of someone who could help look after the baby in our absence, a friend of mine recommended M, a former neighbour's daughter in a Lagos suburb where they once worked. M's family is poor—down poor. Asking them to give us one from their kids was like doing them a favour. The agreement was for M to care for our baby in the morning/afternoon hours for 1½ years and learn a craft in the evenings, which we would pay for, and then open a business for her thereafter based on the craft.

We were also to feed, clothe and give her a stipend. Nobody ever accused us of failing in these. Once her

mum visited us and was glad to see the changes in her daughter. In fact, my wife pampered her. We never told anyone she was a housemaid. (My wife used to jokingly refer to M as her co-wife.) We even paid a female English teacher to brush her up on weekends.

M started off as a nice girl. Along the line, I felt she lost her innocence and during the same time things started getting missing at home. Today, it would be cash, tomorrow would be jewellery and just like that. On the eve of that Tuesday that she suddenly disappeared, she came to my wife crying that her mum was on admission and needed N35,000 to be operated upon.

At the police station that day to beg for her release, M wept inconsolably like one who just realized her future had just been snatched from her by a boyfriend who wasn't worth it at all—a secondary school dropout! That day, I couldn't fathom where my wife and I went wrong. I've heard people say they will never stay with someone again, that hosts are bad. I think such guys lack experience. People who accommodate others aren't saints but those who live with people, like that Ugandan nanny I watched on YouTube, need to understand the golden rule: Do to others what you want them to do to you.

*Do you have an experience that will impact lives, encourage someone and help others avoid making the mistakes you made, feel free to email it to bell.ikoyi@gmail.com (2 typed pages maximum).*

**People who  
accommodate  
others aren't  
saints but those  
who live with  
people, like that  
Ugandan nanny  
I watched on  
YouTube, need to  
understand the  
golden rule: Do to  
others what you  
want them to  
do to you**



# I've Been Praying For My Pastor's Salvation

I had heard many stories about Lagos, from lawless thugs popularly known as agberos, skyscrapers that dot the skyline, cars parked bumper to bumper in the popular go-slow, to the crowded streets where people walk shoulder to shoulder. I was told the thieves in Lagos could steal the shirt on your neck and you would not even be aware until you arrived home. I heard so many stories about Lagos, from the incredible and unbelievable to the hilarious. Lagos must therefore be a very interesting place, and I would like to go there and see for myself. This had always been my thought. Fortunately for me, my aunt living in Lagos sent for me. As a working class woman, she wanted me to look after her kids and, in exchange, she would send me to learn a trade. I jumped at the opportunity.

Lagos was an entirely new experience. There was so much to see and learn. I held tight to my bags before bandits could make away with them. I successfully found my way to my aunt's residence and started life in Lagos. I located and joined a church and began fellowshiping with them. A few months later, my aunt found a good tailor and registered me as an apprentice. Though my aunt's one bedroom was cramped, we all lived in peace.

Three months after I started my apprenticeship, the youth pastor of the church I was attending, Pastor Divine, requested to see me. I wondered why he wanted to see me and therefore waited behind.

"Sister Glory," Pastor Divine started, "I went into a period of prayer and fasting a few weeks ago, and I got a certain revelation that I got it expedient to share with you."

What could this revelation be? Who am I that God could speak about to His servant, a poor apprentice at a tailoring centre? Mum was therefore the word, and my Pastor continued.

"God," he announced, "told me categorically that you are my wife. After I got this revelation, I waited to get a confirmation and God confirmed it to me."

After he finished, he called me by name and asked me if I had anything to say. I stammered like a dimwit, not knowing what to say.

"Please," I begged, "give me a little time to think about it, and I will give you a reply."

"Okay, thanks. I will be expecting your reply."

I went home that day with my heart thudding like a talking drum. I was so excited. I could fully imagine Pastor Divine receiving a revelation from God to marry me. I walked home that evening on a cloud of euphoria and smiled goofily at everyone I passed on the way.

After two weeks, I eagerly accepted Pastor Divine's proposal. Together we went to see my aunt to let her know of his intentions to marry me. Unfortunately, the proposal did not go down well with my aunt.

"I think Glory is too young and new in town to know her left from her right," she began. "She is not the best judge of character. I think you should give her some space and time before proposing marriage to her."

My aunt's response was a huge disappointment. Pastor Divine is a man of God, I reasoned, and I trust his judgement. He is devoted to the things of God. My aunt knew all of these, so I wondered what she was talking about. I could tell from Pastor Divine's face that he did not like what my aunt was saying.

A few days later, Pastor Divine called me and told me he had been praying about my aunt's response and the Holy Spirit impressed it upon his heart that the Devil wanted to use her as

a stumbling block to our marriage. He therefore came with a brilliant idea.

"I think it is best for you to leave your aunt. I have made arrangements for you to move in with my sisters until the wedding," he told me.

I eagerly accepted. My aunt tried to talk me out of it but I refused. How did she want me to pay her any attention when the Devil was using her to stop me from getting married? How? That day, I packed my things and moved in with my prospective sisters-in-law. His sisters were really nice and they made me feel welcome. After my relocation, I asked my would-be husband when he would start the marriage plans so we could get married and start to live as husband and wife. He suggested we shouldn't hurry into marriage. He said we needed to know each other better so that the Devil wouldn't deceive us. I totally agreed with him.

Two years later, he was transferred to the Republic of Benin, and he had to leave Lagos for Cotonou. Three months after he left, he called me to say something very serious had come up.

"What's it?" I sought to know.

"I met a powerful prophet of God here in Cotonou," he began. "I told him about us and asked him to pray and check if all is well, if the coast is clear so we can get married. After serious prayers, he returned and said that he prayed and God showed him that we should not get married."

At first, it was incredible to me, and I did not say anything until I dropped the phone. How can Pastor Divine do this to me? What man of God is this that has told him this thing? I didn't tell anybody about it because I strongly believed he was my husband and that no one could take him away from me. The next day, he called to say that the man of God had been praying ever since then and had come back to say God had given us the go-ahead. So we could then go ahead and get married. I knew it! I said to myself. My God is too faithful to disappoint me! I was very happy but worried that no concrete steps had been taken towards our wedding.

After then, my fiancé began inviting me to visit him in Cotonou. I was reluctant since he lived alone and had nowhere else I could lodge. I didn't want to be forced to cohabit with him. I knew this was dangerous. Nevertheless, I decided to visit him a year later. I had no choice but to stay with him. I successfully resisted the temptation of the first night. But he persisted in his advances as the days went and I barely escaped from Cotonou with my virtue intact. As a result of this, I had to return to Lagos earlier than planned.

A day after I returned from Cotonou, Pastor Divine called to say that the man of God had prayed again and God had told him categorically that we must not get married. He was therefore backing out. I laughed it off and felt it would resolve itself like the former occasion. But I was wrong. Shortly after, he asked his sisters to send me out of their house. This didn't happen immediately. But when all entreaties to change Pastor Divine's mind failed, I was asked to leave a few months later. I didn't know where to go or what to do, certainly not my aunt's house which I left some four years earlier with the hope of marrying this man.

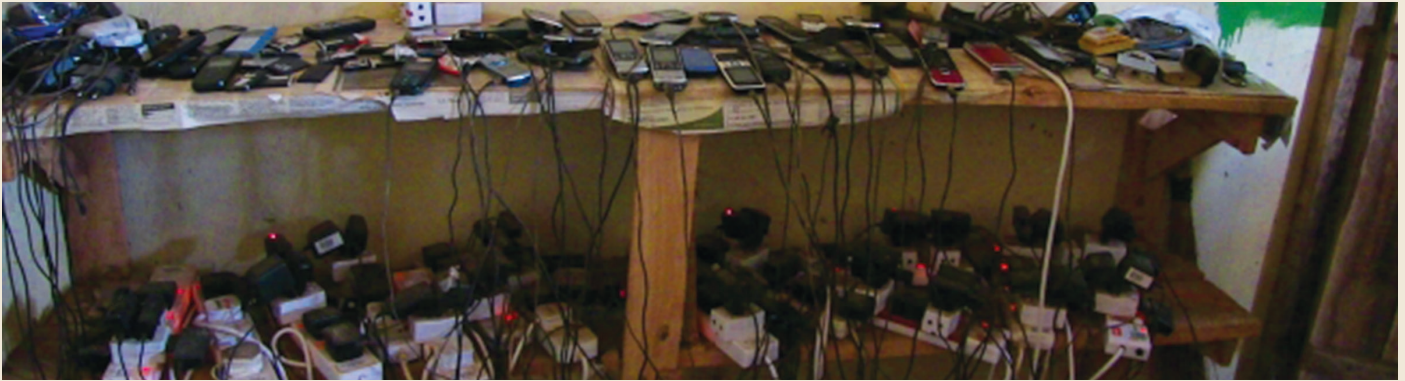
Was this my fair share of the popular Lagos experience? May be.

**Culled from Pastor Chris Ojigbani's  
Singles and Married school**

**How can Pastor Divine do this to me? What man of God is this that has told him this thing? I didn't tell anybody about it because I strongly believed he was my husband and that no one could take him away from me**



# 20 Places Your Phone Must Not Ring...



## • During interview/exam

Be it aptitude test, job interview, interview for visa or exam, your handset should be switched off, kept away or on silent mode to avoid any rude distraction. Despite the embarrassment and avoidable apology that may follow, you may as well count yourself unlucky on such occasions.

## • Library

A library, anywhere and at any time, is expected to be silent or serene. It is usually shown on the wall at the entrance that use of phones is banned. Having your phone ring while in a library may just amount to unnecessary distraction. As a Christian, you are therefore expected to be law-abiding.

## • Church

No explanation is required!

## • Religious meetings

Bible study, prayer meeting, choir practice, group meeting, drama rehearsal, house fellowship, church leaders' gathering, etc are not periods to allow your phone embarrass you, especially when the ringtone is 'ungodly'. It disturbs the flow of events, especially during prayer, when the Spirit is expected to move.

## • While on air – radio/TV

Switch off your handset before going on air either as a broadcaster or as an invited person.

## • In office with boss or meeting with a leader

When discussing with your boss or pastor, that should not be the appropriate time to have your phone ring or even attempt to answer call. It shows disrespect in every way. Never forget that familiarity breeds contempt.

## • Classroom/lecture hall

Ever heard a phone ring during a seminar, conference, lecture or in class and the owner starts searching the

recesses of their bag or pockets to locate and silence it? Did you 'pity' the person or consider them a social nuisance? Just the same way others feel whenever yours – or you – misbehave by not attending to your phone before a lecture or a forum. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

## • At night in a shared room

If you share room with someone or people, ensure you understand and adhere to the unwritten code to switch off your phone at night or put it on silent to avoid disturbing others. As a child of God, you are supposed to be concerned about other people's feelings. The fact that the apartment is yours is irrelevant.

## • While addressing public

Besides interfering with the audio devices and equipment, having your handset ring while you are preaching or addressing a group of people shows you as uncultured, forgetful or unorganized. And if some of them are meeting you for the first time, it is an impression that will surely last. So, avoid putting thoughts in people's minds by attending to your phone before such occasions.

## • On public transport

While it may not be a rule to reduce the volume of your ringtone on public transportation such as buses, trains and boats, it does seem civilized to so act. A loud and harsh ringtone portrays you as uncivilized and probably crude.

## • While refuelling

Places where premium motor spirit (petrol) is either being loaded or offloaded, like at petrol stations or while refuelling a generator set, it is not safe to have your phone ring or even attempt to answer it, as it has been reported to have the potential of sparking a fire.

## • Where it is so designated

Some places, such as hospitals and fuel depots, have signs that prohibit use of phones. Please endeavour to obey.

## • During medical attention

Having your phone ring or ringing repeatedly during medical examination may be distractive to both you and the medical expert. Also, most hospital equipment come with a prohibition of phone use. Obey please as one unanswered call will not take away all your opportunities in life.

## • During a photo session

A ringing – or even vibrating – phone in your pocket or elsewhere while taking a photograph will no doubt be distractive and even take the smile off your face.

## • King's palace

No explanation is required!

## • During a military-like parade or march

Imagine marching according to the beating of drums or commands as issued by your commander and then your phone starts to ring, altering the swinging of your legs as you have two sounds to respond to!

## • Wedding event

No explanation is required!

## • During sensitive moments

If you are a woodworker, printer, factory worker or you work in a sawmill, in charge of counting money or operating on a patient as a medical expert, you have to be careful not to sacrifice one for the other. The ordinary sound of a phone ringing aloud can interrupt the train of thought of a writer, proofreader or speaker.

## • Prayer/quiet time

No explanation is required!

## • While lullabying a baby

Your phones ought to be far from you or on silent while attempting to lull a baby to sleep. Having your phone ring aloud while lullabying a baby can be very frustrating. So, avoid this unless you too have nothing important doing. ■





*Amazing bond –  
Love is a ring and  
a ring has no end*



# Why I'm Still Single...

**M**y man was too overbearing, wanting me to listen to 'healthy' music that he liked and watch his preferred programmes. Again, we were together for ten years without marriage. § My last relationship ended because he insisted on sleeping with me first before marriage, and he was persistent. I refused and he left. § Both of us were jobless for a long time. Wisdom required that we advised ourselves. § I'm hoping for a relationship soon. I left the last one when my guy impregnated another lady. § I waited for two years in my relationship and nothing was happening. I had to quit. § I told her I have a child and that was my undoing—she left. § She left because I had no car (I was reliably told by a confidante), but wanted to return more than a year later after I got one. § I'm taking my time and also waiting on God to direct me. § We went for general blood tests and discovered she has HIV positive. I had to leave. § I discovered he was married before, though he called it convenience marriage, to enable him become a citizen abroad. § I couldn't stand his infidelity. § I just seem to

be unlucky with men. § After a year together, we went to see her dad and was shocked to hear that she must first acquire her masters before marriage. I knew I couldn't wait because she was still in school. § I got to know her past and had no option but to end the whole thing. § We discovered we were the same genotype. § She was down too materialistic and only smiled whenever I was able to buy her something. § Her parents said they didn't want me for their daughter because she was earning better than me. The one before that, they said I wasn't from their ethnic group. § Although he apologized in the few occasions he yelled at me, I felt it was a sign of things to come, which could end in battery. So, I left quietly. § I became a Christian exactly seven years ago, and since then no brother has approached me for a relationship. § Every guy that comes is only interested in whether I work and how much I earn. § What am I expected to do if no guy is coming? Approach one? § I just left one and want to pore over what happened so I don't make another mistake. § I'm still underemployed and managing, and

wouldn't want to compound my life with a woman and then a baby. § No job/biz. § No responsible guys are coming. § What I watched men in my extended family do to their wives leaves me in shock and fear of marriage. Is it a must? § I don't know if there is something in my workplace that attracts tall girls. I'm not that tall and can't go for them. § He seemed to prefer my friend. My interest died when I found out and I've found it hard trusting men. § Many of these girls are just after your money. Imagine a lady asking you how many cars you had before the current one, as if she's coming to marry my car. § All he wanted was just sex. § It was a distance relationship. We couldn't sustain it over time. Issue of trust and all that. § My last friend was nice but his English was atrocious. I was always scared introducing him to anyone. § My parents insist on getting someone from my tribe but it's hard getting a responsible one. § I warned myself not to marry a woman from a background poorer than mine, so I won't have to be caring for an additional family. ■

*Culled from radio programmes*



## Public Complaints Commission (PCC)

**Purpose:** Attends to complaints against organizations and offices free of charge.

**Experience:** "As an undergraduate, I participated in an essay writing contest and saw my name in the newspaper as one of the winners but I was never given my prize. I reported it to PCC. They showed me how to write the letter of complaint to them, after which they travelled to Ibadan and brought the cash prize for me without asking for money. I didn't believe it. The Commissioner shook my hand as he gave it to me. It's unbelievable yet true, and I've heard of similar stories about them." –Mr Ek

**Lesson:** Rather than fighting over a wrong, call PCC and make enquiries.

**Contact:** 07058280009.

## Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS)

**Purpose:** Attends to all tax-related matters.

**Experience:** "Sometime last year, I had a little challenge. I called my friend who works in FIRS for help. He was surprised that I was calling him, just the way most Nigerians always look for someone they know to help. He urged me to simply go to FIRS office. Reluctantly, I went. Look, right from the gate, there is this air of politeness that is completely unNigerian. The security men were so courteous and patient, so also were the staff in the main building. Within a short time, I was done. Look, I didn't believe I was in Nigeria. I wish all government offices were like FIRS. The place is something else." –Mr Sowemimo

**Lesson:** Instead of thinking of how to pay your way through tax issues, call FIRS and make enquiries. Even Jesus paid tax.

**Contact:** 08115900002, 08115900017

## Consumer Protection Council (CPC)

**Purpose:** Attends to complaints about consumer goods and products—from gadgets to food items.

**Experience:** "In July 2014, I bought a mini pad phone from Tecno, with a warranty of 13 months written on it. Two months later, the phone stopped working. Before then, it would freeze and even restart itself. I returned it but Tecno refused to change it. I petitioned CPC. I didn't even go to their office; I just sent an email along with copies of my receipt. Communication continued on phone and in about three weeks, Tecno called me to come and pick up a new phone as replacement. When I tell people, they are shocked that such is possible. They quickly ask me for CPC's phone number. Ignorance is closely related to poverty, and I think both are bad." –Miss Kate

**Warning:** Please, don't damage your product or refill your can of drink/food and start calling CPC. Obtain and keep your receipt.

**Contact:** 08034954632, 08147170730.

## National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

**Purpose:** Attends to cases of human right abuses by individuals and organizations such as the police, company, government, etc. You may petition it based on abuses against you or another person—or even a whole community or family.

**Contact:** 09-4135274.

## National Identity Management Agency (NIMC)

**Purpose:** Provides bona fide citizens of Nigeria with means of identification.

**Experience:** "Some years back in Abuja, a friend and I walked out of the library where we were reading for a roadside kiosk to buy something. The seller is from Niger. As we were arguing about his citizenship, he ran his hand into his pocket and produced a Nigerian national ID card to prove that he's a Nigerian (although he's not). My friend and I who were claiming to be Nigerians couldn't prove our citizenship as we had no national ID card. We just stood there staring at each other like morons. We walked away cold like men from no identifiable country on earth." –Mr Tunji

**Lesson:** Except you take a bold step to visit NIMC and obtain an ID card (or INEC for a voter's card), you may never tell what you'll lose through such negligence.

**Contact:** 07040144452, 08057163476.

## Mirabel

**Purpose:** Are you a victim of rape or you know someone who has suffered such indignity? The influence and affluence of the perpetrator doesn't matter. What matters is that someone has been violated, and Mirabel can help in several ways. If you keep quiet to avoid stigmatization, the rapist will go ahead and violate another person—probably your friend, sister, child or even mother! Remember, silence emboldens criminals and cowards. So, speak out by reporting to Mirabel.

**Contact:** 08031230236.

**Caveat:** It is not known if Mirabel seeks redress for cases of males who are raped by females, as the Nigerian law has no provision for such.

## National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)

**Purpose:** Attends to complaints against traffickers in human beings, who usually promise young girls job offers abroad only for them to end up as sex slaves.

**Experience:** "I was managing a hairdressing salon after secondary school when this customer told me I could earn better doing the same thing in Europe. I jumped at the offer, and left with her months later without telling my mum where I was going, because I signed an oath of secrecy not to say anything to anyone. A week later, I was in Libya where I spent the next 1½ years as a prostitute attending to several men in a day to settle a debt I didn't owe the woman, until my womb dropped and I had to seek medical attention... Girls, please be careful. All that glitters is not gold." –Miss Chika

**Contact:** 07030000203, 08077225566, 08062540376, 09-5241498, 09-5241584.

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