

GREAT EXPECTATIONS:

PROPHECIES OF A CHRISTIAN MOTHER OVER HER DAUGHTER

On a Sunday morning, as we arrived at our designated location, I made my way towards the back of the church, location of the classrooms, where I will later be teaching Sunday school. You disappear to go find seating with the smaller crowd as it is tradition. Upon completion of preparatory worship and prayer, I make my way now into the main auditorium where I join everyone to praise and worship. It is so easy to lose myself and eject all praises hidden deep within my soul and the atmosphere of our sanctuary is readily accessible for all to do as such. Then the choir starts singing one of your favorites "I Know who I am" by Sinach, therefore prompting me to seek you out. There you are! Not where I expected you to be, I spot you over there, at the entrance door accompanied by one of your friends positioned to hand out church flyers. I watch you from a distance, both hands raised, I zoom in on the large smile on your face that is oh so contagious, you too losing yourself as you offer praises in God's presence. Like an epiphany it hits me: "I vow to model an exceptional life of faith and spirituality that will influence you in more ways than one".

"Train a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6. My dearest daughter, presently in our world, my observation is that godly ways and biblical truths are under practiced and ignored. I have also examined that by way of new found worldly tactics such as social media, pop culture, fashion, television, internet and a multitude of others, both old and young Christians risk getting swallowed into the hollow of worldly ways. Hence the importance of godly influences passed down from one generation to another is most critical today. That said, I wish I could testify to the phenomenon of generational evangelism. Unfortunately, yet fortunately, I can truthfully admit that of the three generations in my family known to me, I am the first one who's come to be a Christian, owning all of my own imperfections. Therefore I seek your forgiveness in advance should I fall short in teaching you all that you could have potentially learned of God and his ways. I prophecy that my daughter shall never fall short of the knowledge of God's word nor shall she deviate from it once learned.

It is my greatest wish for you to surpass all that I will ever become and bypass all the faults I wish I could have avoided. I am aware that this is a commonality that all parents share. The difference, I assure you my girl is that I will never cease to prepare you until your godliness is manifested. This desire causes me to actively seek new fire and an abundance of grace enough to lure you into the life that God wants for you. I am now aware more than ever before that if you are to attain, maximize and keep your spirituality, I must model those exact behaviors before you. Whether it be by prayer or action I know that this I must do for myself and for you. It is my prayer that God grants me partnership with him to nurture your will and your devotion to do his bidding. I say this having had the knowledge and experience that my being is most at ease and fulfilled when I willfully do his works and devote time to my God. I have found favor in the truth that I am granted blessings and favor more fluidly when my works are in direct alignment with God's direction. I prophecy that my daughter's life will never lack God's grace, his direction and abundant flow.

Upon discovery of your role in God, it is my desire that you will find and keep reasonable balance between ordinary and extra-ordinary. As an upcoming Christian, this goal has proven to be very challenging in my walk. In your day, you will have mastered the art of divine perseverance without losing sight of your personhood. I have had the privilege in my time to encounter

and learn from some very spiritually articulate individuals. God has already designated your own mentors who will teach you far more than I will know, may you come in contact with them earlier in life than I did with mine. By your time, you my child will have regularly referenced from the bible to know how a woman of your godly morals should carry herself; much like the wise woman in Proverbs 14. You will have maintained an integrity much like Ruth and the consistency of faith that was with Queen Esther; you, a reminder of Abigail in your acts of wisdom and godly determinations.

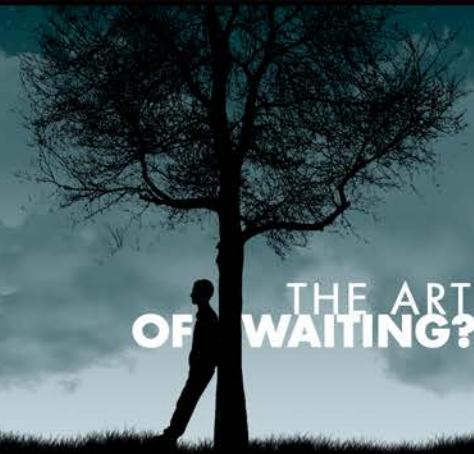
I pray for divine common sense in the actions I take that will most impact your life i.e. monitoring the whos and whats in your life, setting boundaries on the television shows you watch and the internet information you're exposed to, as you already know too much and I could do a much better job on your restrictions. May you relate more to God's rights and wrongs than you adhere to the relativism of your world. I prophecy that my daughter will know early on in her life who she is as a Christian in this world.

With the very strong possibility of you my daughter, becoming a leader in your generation, here are my hopes for your life. As our present world teaches our young that self-worth is only equivalent to your outer appearance, I hope that going forward in your life I do well in teaching you that it is rather who God knows you are inside that matters. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, made to lead and not follow, made to love and be loved, made to respect yourself and others as you are to be respected and expect to be respected. I hope to be a better demonstrator of responsibility, honesty and generosity, for all these are biblical principles that allow for us to be made prosperous and honorable when followed. Moreover, may you acquire the skills and grace that will cause you to be an exceptional counselor, a wise sister. I hope that your influence is such that others become drawn to God by your mere presence.

I ask God to grant me all the necessary tools and information derived from his word that will allow me to help you understand your sexual purity and the reasons why it should be kept as such until marriage. Lord help me! I attest that loyalty and godliness are forever part of your character. "Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life." Proverbs 22:4. I prophecy that my daughter's loyalty and humility in God will reward her a place in his kingdom.

It is Saturday evening and I've arrived at my destination. Joy bubbles in my heart as I find myself an unnoticeable seat, awaiting the start of a yearly popular conference for all women. As the crowd gathers, I grow impatient, waiting to savor the word of God. Singing and praises fills this auditorium, one can almost see heaven. The multitude of people grows larger and they too are impatient and excited. As the M.C takes over the microphone, I'm prompted to seek you out. There you are, I easily spot you, exactly where I expected you to be, bible in hand, looking grown and beautiful, a lot like me when I was 25, you're waiting excitedly to be handed the microphone, ready to share the word with all of us. You're as articulate and passionate about your role as one with experience in God would be. Wisdom and power shows are visible on you. Suddenly it hits me like an epiphany; One Sunday morning ago, in the presence of God as you my daughter danced a joyful dance unto the Lord. I prophecy that you my daughter and I your mother will see that day become manifest.

Josie T. Cherenfant



FAITH FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

THE SWORD
OF THE SPIRIT
Volume Eight



LOOKING BACK ON 2014

2015: THE NEXT CHAPTER

Sophie Njau

"Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him," Psalms 105:19. In 2011, the theme for the year was favor and the Word that came from our beloved the Late Bishop Walter Smith was that the LORD would open for us a place in the city. That the LORD was moving us from our current address (70 James Street) to our new address (484 Main Street/25 High Street). And the word of the LORD has truly been tested since; and so much more in 2014.

Never will we mention 2014 without reminiscing about our New Home, New Location! As Charles Dickens would put it, "2014 for FF were the best of times and the worst of times." The spiritual warfare onslaught of 2014 seemed to stand as a paradox to the prophetic word that it was our year of divine favor.

The year was divided into 3 parts where we started off on a high note with Judah Shall Lead 3 in February, training for the "4 for 14" purpose, only to get to April when we hit a snag. It seemed as though all the progress we had made came to a standstill. It was time to enter into a concentrated period of prayer and fasting. We stood at the mid-night hours and prayed, we worshipped, we did consistent 3-days of dry fast and yet, it felt as though nothing moved. And suddenly in the waning hours of August, the waters parted and one blessing after another began to be released by our Faithful

However, there indeed, is an art to waiting. Waiting takes intention. One has to actively wait or else one will passively move. It is a part of the Laws of Motion. Sir Isaac Newton, an English physicist, mathematician, and one of the most influential scientists in history, discovered and defined the First Law of Motion as follows:

1. An object that is at rest will stay at rest unless an external force acts upon it. And,

2. An object that is in motion will remain in motion unless an external force acts upon it. (Bear in mind, that the external force could be gravity or inertia)

-Tamara Durr

Our Pastor led us through a 3 day intense teaching and prayer in-house Easter Fire Conference as we experienced God and His glory. He taught us that Jesus is the sign, the benefits of the blood and application of the blood in prayer. Pastor Zenzo during the Worship Seminar in July, taught about the presence of God being progressive, referencing the tabernacle, as one moved from the kabod, to the shekinah and finally the doxa (opinion of God).

The Men of War Conference was cautionary. Pastor Gerald prayed that the LORD cause the men to awaken from sleep and recognize the times they were living in. It seemed to closely follow the message of the year before, "Whilst men slept..." 2 years in a row the LORD had spoken

about men arising from slumber. It is important that this message be taken as a manner of urgency. The Women of Faith Conference reminded the ladies to choose the best part and that part could only be found in Christ Jesus and also, that it was time for the sleeping giants to arise and do great exploits.

Gratitude for Altitude, our Thanksgiving Worship Experience, was a blessing. Our invited guest was the renowned Minister Micah Stampley, who could not get over the excellence of the sound system. We had Churches within the Worcester county and surroundings, come celebrate Jesus in song. We saw Pastors come together. We saw the gathering of the remnant in united worship, not caring about tribe, culture, differences, color and gender.

The Women's retreat in June was a scene from the divine album of eternity as the ladies learnt about grace. The highlight of the summer was the annual cook-out in July, which saw FF family come together in music, sports, food and lots of laughter while the children swam.

We had the opportunity to give back to the community in the month of October, during "Pink Sunday" which we donated to the American Cancer Society, Hope Lodge Worcester. We were also able to donate to the Veterans Inc. Worcester clothes, shoes & house-hold furniture throughout the year.

cont. on next page

WHO WE ARE

FFMI is a multiethnic and multicultural church. We exist to disciple Christians and fit them for the master's use irrespective of race, tribe or culture.

"Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy."

Revelation 22:11

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

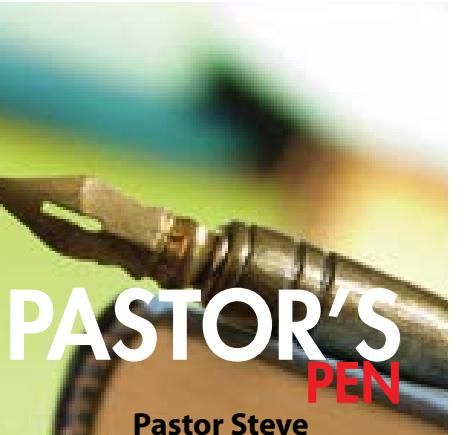
- Looking Back On 2014
- The best and the rest
- How Time Flies!
- Great Expectations
- The Art of Waiting

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11:6



"Good, better, best. May I never rest, until my good is better and my better, best." Growing up as a child, I recollect often reciting this poem. It became a source of inspiration, a foundation for bigger and better things. Its thrust is simple, one must strive for the best in life, always. In any endeavor, the best is the crème de la crème of the competition. The best is the champion, the winner, the one that came first place after all is done and the dust settles. The best, the first is separated from the chasing pack, differentiated by success and celebrated as a winner. We all want to win, we all want to be first, and we all want to be the best.

Who or what then is the rest? This can be understood in two ways. In the first way, the rest speaks about the others. Anything from second to the very last makes up the rest. The rest also competed but did not win the diadem. The rest were also afforded the opportunity but did not make it to the apex of the challenge or contest. In other words, if you did not win, you were not the best and you merely competed or made up the numbers. We are told that success has many fathers and failure is often an orphan. The rest are crammed in the base of the pyramid where there is limited space, resources, crowding, struggle, jealousy and strife. Indeed the apex of the pyramid (reserved for the best) is clearly less crowded and only for the winner. The second or other meaning of rest suggests coming into a place where the presence of God is evident, the glory of God is established upon our lives and FFMI- and we exit the seasons of strife, turmoil and pain entering into his divine rest. 2015 is our year of rest.

We want to be the best, not numbered among the rest. Yet we strive to enter into God's ordained rest. So, the rest of God is reserved for his best to enter into. How do we enter the ranks of his chosen best (his anointed/chosen ones), so we can be assured of his rest? In the victory of Christ Jesus upon the cross, he contended, contested, challenged, fought and won against a powerful adversary. He became the "head of all things given under his subjection and for his body-the church" Ephesians 1:22-23 and "first born of all creation" Colossians 1:15 right there on that old rugged gory cross. By that victory he completed all our war and left us to go through the motions of each battle and enjoy his victory. These include- salvation, progressive Christianity as we walk by the power of the spirit and final translation into heaven. We are his best and therefore entitled to his rest. A place where divine providence has ensured that all our needs and comforts are met- "what a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear..."

In Luke 10 Jesus starts the expansion of the kingdom via evangelism. He states in verse 19 that he is here to seek and save the lost. Subsequently he sends out the 72, harps on the importance of salvation, the revelation of the mystery of the gospel and the importance of love for God and man. In verses 38-42 of that chapter, he arrives in the home of two sisters i.e. Mary and Martha; who live together with their brother Lazarus (the Lord will help) in Bethany (literally the house of figs). So three people who know God live together. One has property but is bitter, the other has no property, carries her own baggage and is also bitter and a third whose presence suggests that God will help them to get to their rest. Bethany indicates the struggle of man to restore himself to glory or redeem himself from the consequences of wrong action -sin. In Genesis 3:6 Adam and Eve attempted to cover the loss of grace by covering their nakedness with dresses sewn from fig leaves. Thus the fig tree/leaves indicate man's attempt at restoration outside of God.

Interestingly the root word for the names of these ladies is "marrar" i.e. bitterness. Mary connotes rebellion and stubbornness stemming from bitterness. Martha means land lady/mistress but still goes to that root word of bitterness. Martha owned the house and often took Jesus in. Mary had similar issues as Martha as per name but was focused on sitting at his feet. To sit at a person's feet was a sign of worshipful attention, devotion and discipleship. It indicated a prioritizing of what the Teacher had to impart and suggests a need for his wisdom to help the "pupil" chart a course out of their life's entrapment. In Acts 22:3 Paul indicates that he sat at Gamaliel's feet as a student. Martha is oblivious to the power of the master's teaching to transform that bitterness into a conduit of blessing. She acknowledges his presence but busies herself with all but paying attention to the word that is being taught. In response to her complaint Jesus utters these revealing words: "Martha, Martha you are worried [anxious] and upset about many things. 42 Only one thing is important [necessary; needed]. Mary has chosen the better thing, and it will never be taken away

from her." Luke 10: 42. Her choice pleased him. Do your choices please him? Mary had rightly prioritized that which would deliver her from the predicament and give her the life she desired. Note that both women loved the person of Jesus and were in awe of him. But his presence in their home meant nothing if one was not prepared to sit at his feet. We can be in church and see signs of the presence yet lose out on what is best because we prioritized wrongly and did not focus on what is needful. The word was the light needed for their darkness, the surgical instrument to remove that cancer of bitterness but Martha missed it. When we prioritize the presence we tap into the secrets, flow of grace and mysteries of the principles of the kingdom. These translate into wisdom and provide keys that give us advantage over the adversary. When we behave/operate like Martha, we suffer from anxiety because we do not feed on the word; our faith is stunted. Jesus also says she gets upset i.e. loses control of her emotions -presumably angry. Genesis 4:6-7 warns Cain about not heeding what has been directed. Cain was not in communication-at the feet of God and he missed presenting an unacceptable sacrifice. He does not go to God to enquire why but acts angry and is warned to muster his emotions because sin was crouching at his door. Mary later buttressed her love and appreciation of him by anointing him with spikenard and wiping it with her hair. Thus she became forever embedded in the narrative about Christ's ministry.

If we want to be the best and have blessings that are inalienable, we must appreciate the presence. Give reverence and priority to the presence and word of God. We must sit at the master's feet when he visits so we receive the word in season. We must be settled and focused, intent on his word. Nothing must matter more than his presence and instructions. Then we gain acceptance, favor and the blessing that ushers in rest. As we enter the last month of the first quarter of 2015; may we strive to give rightful place, honor and regard to the presence. Only then will "our good become better and our better best."

WOMEN IN ACTION!

LEADING LADY MONICA ARYITEY

HOW TIME FLIES!

Time is one commodity that everyone wants more of but no one seems to have enough. We are already at the end of February. I know many are wondering how we got here so fast. Some of us are still figuring out our personal visions for 2015; others have figured their visions and are still figuring out how to achieve these goals. Before you know it December 2015 will be upon us and our plans may still have many blank spaces to be filled in.

Often we women are overwhelmed by too many things but as Martha found out in Luke 10:40-42, in order to fulfill all your goals and see your plans come to fruition, you must prioritize, i.e. you must first attend to the most important, and then all the others will fall into place. Show me one woman who is not multitasking and I will show you a hundred who are. Being busy as a woman comes with the territory these days. Whereas in times past, all we had to do was to care for the home, which in itself is a multi-faceted task, these days we are working out of home more and attending school so as to help improve the standard of living in our homes while still taking care of the home!

We must know how to apportion our time if we are going to achieve our goals and plans. Ecclesiastes 3 makes me understand that there are times and seasons for all that we need to accomplish in this earthly life. Verse 2 strikes me as interesting though, it says "there is a time to be born and a time to die". Now in the period between birth and death, there are many things to accomplish. Interruptions, good or bad, wanted or unwanted will also happen in that space. It is how you manage the time between these two periods and how you handle the interruptions that will determine how much you will achieve within this time.

In order to prioritize effectively, you must determine what is important to you. Once you do then you can begin to apportion your time, determining what activity will take precedence over what. As Christian women, the first place we go to seek help in managing our time is the Word of God. The bible contains guidelines setting out God's order of priorities and we will do well to work with it.

Your first priority is your relationship with Christ. Matthew 6:33 tells us to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and all other things will be added unto us. Seeking God first should be high on our agenda, not just generally but on a daily basis. Set time aside to spend with your heavenly Father daily to be refreshed and recharged. Jesus would wake up early in the morning to spend time with the Father so He could effectively go about His tasks. Seek Him daily and ask Him to help you order your life daily, monthly, yearly and always! Moses wrote in Psalm 90: 10 that "Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures..." and wrote in verse 12 "so teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom". Once we understand that we are all here for a season we realize that we need wisdom to effectively manage our time and our affairs. God says in Psalm 32:8 that He will teach us and instruct us in the way we should go. He is willing to teach, we must be willing to learn. We must let our time on earth count!

Secondly, consider your relationship with your family-husband, children and other relatives. With us women working more and more out of the home, the family tends to suffer. It is important that we put family high on our list. Those with children, be reminded that Psalm 127:3 says children are a heritage and a reward from God. For those who are not yet parents, there are other familial relationships that should not be trampled over in our quest to achieve our goals. Give these relationships a good place on your list of priorities. Always put people before things and this will require investment of your time and your energies. After all if anyone does not know how to manage his (her) family, how can he (she) manage God's church- 1 Timothy 3:5 and whoever does not provide for their relatives especially those of their household has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel-1 Timothy 5:8.

Next in God's order of priorities for you is your responsibility to your employer and your job. You need the job to survive, take care of your family and even your church. In 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, Paul instructed the Thessalonians to take their work seriously so they may gain respect and not be dependent on anyone.

Then finally your service to God through your work in your church ministries.

With these in mind, make a list of all the tasks you need to perform daily, weekly, monthly and even for the year if you are so minded. Consider them prayerfully and arrange them in order of importance, then start off with the most important. In order not to make time management overwhelming, start by planning your day on a daily basis, building in a quiet time with your Lord, a time of rest, nourishment and exercise. Remember the "woman of substance" in Proverbs 31:15 rose up early to plan her activities for the day.

Do not allow others to determine your priorities and know that it is okay to say no. Jesus sometimes had to say no to the crowd who wanted Him to stay with them longer, so that he could go on to proclaim the gospel in other places. He knew his purpose, the goals He came on earth to fulfil, He knew His time was limited and therefore had to prioritize-Luke 4:42-43.

The year is still young; it is early days yet, so let's get going and make the best of 2015. If you have allowed the first two months to pass without meaning, it is not too late to put in place a plan to make what is left of the year productive. I hope these guidelines help. May this be your best year yet.

Blessings,

LOOKING BACK ON 2014

cont. from previous page

In the spirit of team build up, most of the departments began to meet regularly to equip, talk and train, because in FF our service to God and to one another is worship and emphasis was made that we should serve in excellence.

We cannot forget to thank the able Capital Campaign team led by Sister Tamara Durr, Sister Njeri, Brother Alfred Agyakwa, Sister Joana Mantey, Sister Stella Ampadu, and the Accounts Department. Thank you all for bringing us to our New Home. Capital Campaign had a great run. And to the congregation at large, thank you for making the vision a reality as you continued to give selflessly, faithfully and joyfully.

Firsts

In FF the Lord has continued to expand our tents. We had for the first time, "From my heart to yours: celebration of love", Children's Fashion Show, Summer fair which concluded the Capital Campaign run, the Children participated in a Children's Conference in Upper Room, Christmas Celebration FF style: Children's play, dance, song and sermonette by Lady Monica, the creation of Faith Pantry, Fire Safety and Dance Worshipers group, Singles' Mingle, in-house CD launch, Oktoberfest Outreach and Movie Night to counter Halloween Night for the children, a Management meeting and a Church luncheon.

Celebrations

We had 2 weddings, 7 babies born, 5 baby dedications. There were various breakthroughs from new jobs, promotions and papers. We also celebrated our Pastor during Pastor's Appreciation, and Lady Monica for holding on to the vision, faithfully.

Losses

Our brothers Eric Dwomoh, Kwame Antwi, Stephen Yeboah & Samuel Adu-Boahen and sisters Esther Mensah & Magdalene Ngendo lost loved ones.

Invited guests

We blessed God when Bishop Amoako Atta walked through our doors to join us for worship for we had held him in prayer when he came under severe attack. We blessed God for Rev. Theo Archie Mills (March (leadership training), Easter Sunday), Rev. Isaac Antoh (July, Doxa Escatos), Pastor Gerald Plange (August (Men of War Conf.), December (Pastor's Appreciation)), Prophetess Sarah (summer) and Pastor Theresa Laryea (October, Women of Faith Conf.). We thank God for what they deposited in our lives.

The heartbeat

The heart beat this year was the obvious healing might and grace of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. We saw 2 of our brethren move from deathbed to recovery. We saw God extend mercy as we continued to pray on, believing. Pastor placed an offering on the altar as he believed God for their lives. And before the year was out, both brethren were in the house of God celebrating God and His goodness.

Most importantly, we bless God for both Pastor Stephen and Lady Monica. This year we saw both Pastor Stephen Aryitey and Leading Lady Monica Aryitey invited for speaking engagements throughout the year. It was a blessing to see Lady Monica back and running things after a hard pregnancy. We celebrated with them when their latest bundle of blessing, Faith Naa Norley Aryitey, was born on 25th July. We rejoiced with Lady Monica during Crossover Service as she shared how one year ago she was in hospital very sick. We continue to celebrate God for our spiritual covering who are selfless, dedicated and hard working. We continue to hold them in prayer as they manage a bigger home, more responsibility without faltering in their commitments to the Church and the congregation. We continue to bless and thank God for them.

All in all, we can only bless the Most High God. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God," Psalm 20:7 (KJV).