

Profile: bishop richard l. johnson



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Profile Story- Bishop Richard L. Johnson JRN 337: News Reporting & Writing
Professor Nelly Aguilar T. Faith Harkness June 27, 2010 Johnson 1 Richard L. Johnson sits completely at ease in a black Jacket, black slacks, and a black long sleeve turtleneck when others would be sweating in this El Paso heat, drinking a venti white chocolate mocha from Starbucks. His only adornment is a simple watch and a silver cross that hangs from a silver necklace. He sips his drink and watches the people coming and going, smiling pleasantly when one of his fellow patrons happens to meet his gaze.

But it's not his appearance that draws one's eyes to him—even though he is a dark man, wearing dark clothes with a shock of white hair and matching goatee. Mr. Johnson just seems to command attention and is sincerely at ease with being at the center of it. And he should be. He is the bishop and founder of Destiny Family Christian Center at 961 5 Dyer St. Bishop Johnson knew he was different from an early age. He knew that he was destined for great things. To hear him tell it, “ I knew that there was so much more for me out there. God had determined it and I knew I had to see it through.

I just, I guess, in the beginning I was scared. I doubted in a small place in my heart. ” He said he was called to the preaching ministry while he was young, but he “ heeded and understood” the call when he was in his teenage years in East Orange, New Jersey. There he regularly went to church with his family where his father was an elder. It's obvious the bishop is used to teaching, for he explains the term without even being asked to. He describes an elder as “ a man, highly versed in the teachings of the bible who is blessed with the obligation to help and guide the flock.

This person would be just under the pastor and co-pastor of the church, but would have practically the same duties. And it was under this same guidance that a young Richard Johnson learned to love God and want to serve him in some capacity. Whether it be by divine intervention or just fate, the military draft brought Bishop Johnson to El Paso, TX in 1965. He did not want to be drafted. He strove to avoid it on the grounds that it violated his religious principles. Bishop Johnson picks up his King James version of the Bible that has been lying on the table in front of him and quickly flips to Isaiah 2: 4.

He passes it over so that I can read it and recites, and he will certainly render judgment among the nations and set matters straight respecting many peoples. And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against Nation, neither will they learn war anymore. ” “ I registered my voice and complaint as a religious objector to the war, but in those days, no one cared about objectors. The government felt they had right on their side and as the old saying went, ‘ Might is right’. But I refused to carry that gun.

And when they made me, then I refused to load bullets in it. If might makes right, then God’s right is mightier than theirs and trumps it in my opinion. ” Bishop Johnson laughs at his own joke and nods at the people who turn to regard this man with such a deep, rich, rolling laughter. Johnson 2 In 1967, just two years after arriving in El Paso, the 20-something year-old Johnson meets Pastor Clayton Carr and starts attending his church. By then, he is out of the military having served his mandatory time and while going to the church, meets Pastor Carr’s family.

A family that includes five daughters, but only one holds his attention” the youngest, Adele. He sees in her the same that she sees in him, a calling by God to do his work. They marry soon after on January 13, 1968. In the early stages of his ministry and marriage, Richard Johnson served under his father-in-law in many capacities for 19 years. His duties included being an organist, minister of music, assistant Sunday School Superintendent and an assistant. Pastor Adele Y. Johnson recalls, “ He never once complained. He toiled for y father in love and with respect.

I am reminded of the scripture in Colossians 3: 17 that says, Whatever it is that you do in word and work, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, thanking God the father through him’.” Bishop Richard L. Johnson knew, however, that there was something else waiting for him in the wings. And in January of 1988, after fasting and praying, he says, the Lord confirmed he had reached the right time and place. In February of that same year, Christ Cathedral New Life Worship Center came to fruition in the living room of Pastor Johnson’s home.

The church grew and moved to the Vista Del Sol Conference Center on April 3, 1988. A more permanent facility opened in Northeast El Paso on Dyer in January of 1989. The name Christ Cathedral New Life Worship Center is an off-shoot of the church his father used to be an elder at and he was raised in” Christ New Life Episcopal Church. CCNLWC was rechristened Destiny Family Christian Center when they moved into the new location on Dyer because, Bishop Johnson knew this was all part of his destiny toretold in prophecy.

He says it was his destiny to unwrap the ties that bind people to the over-emphasized letter of the law to the neglect of the spirit. He knew that if he had a destiny, so did everyone else. One of the Bishop's parishioners, Aida Ocampos, recounts, " When I first saw Bishop Johnson and Pastor Adele Johnson on Destiny TV, I was impressed by them so much. He doesn't have any claims that he's superhuman, or the next best thing. They do what they can when someone asks them if they can. And it's anyone, not just members of Destiny. When I first started going, our car broke down and we couldn't make it.

We called the Destiny Line with our situation and the bishop and pastor showed up at our door with the name of a brother in the church who is a mechanic and offered to bring us to meetings on Sunday. " Keith T. Jones, a pastor at Destiny says, " I became part of the congregation when Destiny was still Christ Cathedral. Bishop Johnson preached a sermon about being loosed from the wrappings of material things, of drugs, and the like. He said we needed to be free from the shackles that tie us to this everyday life and tie our minds to earthly things. He struck a nerve Johnson 3 ith me and it stuck with me.

I knew that I wanted to learn everything I could from this man. Since I've become part of the pastoral team, I've seen Destiny grow to new heights under his guidance and reach out in the community to touch people that would be considered so different from us" gangsters, military personnel. " Anyone new to Destiny is made to feel welcome. Walking into the church, one first notices that the walls are a bright cheery blue and there are plants

all through the church” in every empty corner. There are lounge chairs on the stage that look comfortable and used.

There is no microphone attached to the podium on the stage. Bishop Johnson, who was ordained in 1991 and then re-ordained by Bishop T. D. Jakes in October of 2002, likes to use a cordless microphone headset when he preaches. He says he tells stories, he doesn’t preach” which is why people feel comfortable and want to come to church every Sunday. And to a great storyteller, a cord would just get in the way of him laughing, dancing, singing and roaming up and down the aisles in between the pews. And that may be the reason, why Destiny Family Christian Center continues to grow and expand.

Bishop and Pastor Johnson may have, indeed, hit the figurative nail on the head. It is ingrained in all people, that when people start preaching” they tune out. But a story, especially a good story makes people want to listen from beginning to end” intently, so as not to miss a single word. Bishop Richard L. Johnson and his wife and co-pastor Adele Y. Johnson, tell the story of Jesus Christ and his disciples. They tell the story of God and his will. They weave a world where hope still lives and thrives and God is within hearing distance whenever we need to call upon