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Report One of Four

The Resurrection of Pastor Daniel Ekechukwu

By David Servant

Soon after it occurred in December of 2001, I heard the report of Nigerian pastor Daniel Ekechukwu's resurrection via e-mail from my friend, pastor David K. Aboderin, of Lagos, Nigeria. I also heard about this miracle from my friend Brent Regis, son-in-law of Reinhard Bonnke. Bonnke had been preaching at the church where Ekechukwu was resurrected a short time before it occurred. Brent told me at that time some of the details of pastor Ekechukwu's experience in hell. Some months after that, I also watched the video documentary of that miracle produced by *Christ for all Nations*, which focused primarily on the miracle of the resurrection. I wanted to learn more about the incident. Since I was scheduled to spend the first two weeks of September, 2002 teaching at three pastors' conferences in Nigeria, I told David Aboderin that if it would be possible, I would like to meet pastor Ekechukwu, and I prayed that the Lord would make it possible.

I learned that pastor Ekechukwu was from a village called Amaimo, Imo State, and that he was pastoring a church in the city of Onitsha, Anambra State, called *Power Chapel Evangelical Church*. Onitsha was about a three-hour drive from where our final conference would be held, in the eastern Nigerian city of Umahia. So I asked the pastors at that conference if any of them knew how we could find pastor Ekechukwu. One young man raised his hand and told me that he had a friend who had a friend who personally knew pastor Ekechukwu. However, we also learned that pastor Ekechukwu was very difficult to meet, as he is in great demand. To make a long story short, we eventually learned that pastor Ekechukwu was temporarily staying at a hotel just five minutes from David Aboderin's home in Lagos, where I would be lodging during my final three days in Nigeria. We were also given the opportunity to meet him. So in a country of 130 million people, and in a city of 12 million, the man I wanted to meet was lodging just five minutes away from me! It was either great coincidence or wonderful providence. I was given the favor of personally meeting with Daniel Ekechukwu twice during those three days and also talking with several people on his ministry staff who were very familiar with his story.

The following report has been compiled from several sources: (1) from pastor Daniel Ekechukwu himself by means of personal discussions I had with him from September 12-14, 2002, while I was

in Lagos, Nigeria, (2) from his personal written testimony contained in his own self-published booklet which he gave me, titled *Miracle of the 21st Century*, (3) from listening to his public testimony on September 13th at *The Chapel of Glory*, Lagos, Nigeria, (4) from the documentary video produced and sold by the ministry of *Christ for all Nations*, which includes the testimonies of pastor Daniel, the doctor who pronounced him dead, Daniel's wife, Daniel's father, the mortician who embalmed Daniel, and several pastors who were present at his resurrection, and (5) from a personal discussion with Ede Samuel, a long-time friend and personal assistant to pastor Daniel, who also was an eye-witness of many of the events surrounding Daniel's death and resurrection. The events described in the following report are factual to the best of my knowledge and memory. I've sent this report to a Nigerian man named Uche Chikezie, who was Daniel Ekechukwu's Public Relations Director, and he affirmed that all that I reported is true. I am persuaded that due to complications from an automobile accident, Nigerian pastor Daniel Ekechukwu physically died in the late evening of Friday, November 30th, 2001, was dead for at least 42 hours, visited heaven and hell during the time of his physical death, and was raised from the dead between 3:50 P.M. and 5:15 P.M. on Sunday, December 2nd, 2001 in the basement of the *Grace of God Mission*, located in Onitsha, Nigeria. Pastor Ekechukwu's resurrection is the greatest modern miracle of which I've heard.

Although some of what happened to pastor Ekechukwu is certainly extra-biblical, none of it is unbiblical. Indeed, neither the story of Daniel Ekechukwu's resurrection or the story of your salvation is found in the Bible, making them both extra-biblical, but neither should be discounted on that basis.

The Account

On Thursday, November 29th, 2001, Pastor Daniel Ekechukwu and his wife, Nneka, had a misunderstanding that degenerated into an argument that ended in her slapping him. He was very offended by this incident, to the point of not even acknowledging her attempt to reconcile the next morning. Pastor Daniel admitted that throughout the day of November 30th, he angrily thought about how he would put his wife in her place when he returned home. He would not, however, make it home that Friday.

As he was driving home that evening, the brakes on his 20-year old Mercedes 230E failed as he was heading down a steep hill, and his car crashed into a concrete pillar that was built to prevent cars from going over a steep embankment. He was not wearing a seat belt (few Nigerians did in 2001, but that changed in 2003, when wearing a seat-belt became a national law), and his chest hit very forcibly against the steering wheel and its knob, apparently doing damage to his internal organs, as he was soon vomiting up blood and having difficulty breathing (not to mention that he soon lost all signs of life). Daniel was not able to remove himself from his car, but frantic on-lookers pulled him out. One bystander volunteered her car while another bystander offered to drive him to St. Charles Borromeo Hospital, not far away on the outskirts of Onitsha.

Within minutes of their arrival at the hospital, a doctor began administering emergency treatment, but Daniel knew his body was not responding to it. He began praying the prayer of a man who knows he is going to die, asking God to forgive him of all his sins so that he would be ready to stand before the Lord. He also sent for his wife, Nneka, with whom he had refused to speak when he left his home earlier that day. She fainted upon hearing the news of her husband's accident and condition, but when revived was taken by a Christian neighbor to the hospital. Daniel's friend, Ede Samuel (whom I interviewed at length) was with her and essentially witnessed everything that transpired over the next three days.

Upon seeing Daniel in critical condition when she arrived at St. Charles Borromeo hospital, Daniel's wife burst into tears, begging her husband not to die and leave her. The doctor admitted that there was nothing he could do to save Daniel's life (keep in mind this was a Third World hospital), and so Daniel requested that he be transferred by ambulance to Umezuruike Hospital at Owerri, where his personal doctor practiced. The Umezuruike hospital was 80 km away. Daniel's wife arranged for the ambulance against the advice of doctors at St. Charles hospital. It was on the way to Umezuruike Hospital that Daniel died.

Daniel was lying in the back of the ambulance while his wife was in the front passenger seat. He began to feel that he was not going to survive, and so he called for his wife to come to him. He began to say goodbye, give her instructions about certain church and personal documents, and admonished her to take care of their sons and his church. She began sobbing greatly and amidst her tears strongly rebuked him for such negative statements. He was a man of God and should have faith, and not be speaking of dying!

As she was speaking, Daniel saw two large angels (they were so large that he later wondered how they fit inside the ambulance---one was as big as the ambulance) who were completely white (even the pupils of their eyes). Daniel tried to speak to the angels, but one held his finger to his lips, motioning for his silence. The angels lifted him on either side, and Daniel realized that there were now two of himself. The angels were holding him under each arm of his spirit man (which was perfectly whole), while his broken body was lying below. Once they left the ambulance, Daniel became oblivious to the natural world.

When the ambulance arrived at Umezuruike Hospital with Daniel's body, it was now late at night (Friday, November 30th), and Daniel's doctor was not there. A member of the medical staff, however, examined his body and sadly told Nneka that her husband was dead and there was nothing that could be done. Nneka refused to believe the bad report.

So they drove to the Federal Medical Center in Owerri, but found no doctor there either. Finally they drove to the Eunice Clinic, and there Daniel was confirmed to be dead by Doctor Jossy Anuebunwa. There was no breathing, no heartbeat or pulse, and Daniel's pupils were dilated and fixed. The doctor said that there was nothing he could do. A death certificate was issued at 11:30 P.M., November 30, 2001.

They then drove Daniel's corpse to his father's house in a nearby village, and naturally Daniel's father and other family members were heartbroken at the sight of Daniel's dead body, weeping profusely. Daniel's father instructed them to take his body to Ikeduru General Hospital Mortuary (now known as Inyishi Community Hospital mortuary) not far away. They arrived there around 1:00 A.M. on Saturday morning. The resident mortician, Mr. Darlington Manu, received the corpse and the family members departed.

The primitive Nigerian mortuary where Daniel's body was taken had no cold storage facilities, and so the mortician injected embalming chemicals into Daniel's fingers and into his feet. He then prepared to fully embalm Daniel's body by cutting Daniel's inner thigh in order to insert a tube by which he could inject more embalming fluid. As he did this, he experienced a shock that pushed him away from the corpse. This did not surprise him, as he had experienced similar forces before and attributed them to occult powers. (Such things are *widely* practiced in Africa and highly respected by all African pastors whom I know. Africans never understand the skepticism of Americans regarding the reality of occult power.) After a second attempt and a second shock that

somewhat paralyzed his right arm, he concluded that Daniel must have been a member of a powerful secret society. He assumed, however, that after some occult sacrifices and incantations the powers in the corpse would subside, and he could then complete his work. (This mortician, of course, was not a Christian, but converted after Daniel's resurrection.) So he instructed an assistant to lay Daniel's body in the rear of the mortuary where many other corpses were already laid. (Incidentally, Daniel said that people could smell the embalming chemicals coming out of his body for two weeks after his resurrection. They would hug him and hold their noses.)

Around 2:00 A.M. Saturday morning, the mortician, who lived very close to the mortuary, was disturbed by songs of worship coming from inside his mortuary, which stopped as soon as he approached the mortuary doorway. This occurred twice. Upon searching for the music's source in his mortuary, he noticed some kind of light emanating from the face of Daniel's corpse. This completely unnerved him.

The mortician was so disturbed over what was happening that he located Daniel's father on Saturday morning to inform him of what had been happening and to request that he remove Daniel's corpse from his mortuary. Then, on Saturday night, while she was sleeping, Daniel's wife experienced a dream in which she saw the face of her husband, and he was asking her why they had left him in the mortuary. He stated that he was not dead and that she should take him to Onitsha where German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke was preaching. She determined to do so, even though her family thought she was out of her mind. Daniel had been dead for more than 28 hours. The family finally yielded, but purchased a casket and brought funeral clothing for the mortician to dress Daniel. Rigor mortis had fully set in by this time. An ambulance was hired on Sunday morning, December 2nd, and the casket that contained Daniel's body was taken to *Grace of God Mission* (a large church) in Onitsha, about one and half hours away, where evangelist Reinhard Bonnke was preaching at an afternoon church dedication service. They arrived at the church around 1:00 P.M.

The church grounds were being protected by swarms of federal, state and local security guards for the sake of Reinhard Bonnke, who has received many death threats, and who is hated by Muslims all over Africa. (Not to mention the fact that the World Trade Center had been destroyed by Muslim hijackers just weeks before.) For this reason, the security guards would not allow the casket to be brought onto church grounds, thinking it might actually contain explosives. Daniel's wife loudly pleaded with them, and opened the casket to show them her dead husband, which resulted in their mocking and even flogging her because of her persistence to gain entrance. She caused such a disturbance that the senior pastor was notified, and his son instructed that Daniel's wife be permitted to bring his body to the church without the casket, and that it be placed in the basement. Daniel's body was laid there on two tables pushed together in a Sunday School room.

Some believers gathered around Daniel's body and prayed while Reinhard Bonnke, who knew nothing of the dead body in the basement, preached and prayed. Eventually, it was noticed that Daniel's corpse twitched, and then irregular breathing started. (By this time, Reinhard Bonnke had left the premises entirely.) The attendant believers began praying fervently, and because his body was stiff and cold, they began massaging his neck, arms and legs. When those in the sanctuary got word that a dead man below was coming back to life, the basement room was soon jammed with people. Suddenly Daniel sneezed and arose with a jump. It was somewhere between 3:50 and 5:15 PM on Sunday afternoon. Daniel had died Friday night around 10:00 PM. He slowly became fully coherent over the next few hours.

Do you doubt this account? A report on the web site of Christ for all Nations declares:

Here are some hard facts that won't go away. For two days Daniel did not breathe, his heart had stopped beating. It was in a hot climate, not suspended animation in an ice chamber. He had been injected with a harsh chemical to keep back mortification. As a corpse he was carted around for hours, pulled about, and lay in an airless narrow coffin for hours. He should have had severe brain damage, but he is alive now without any ill effects.

This is no unsupported claim of bringing someone to life privately, as in a house. Here was a public event, an open demonstration of revival from death. If anyone has to be named, it is Nneka. Her incurable faith alone prevented Daniel's burial simply to bring him where she was convinced God could bring him back to life. She regarded Reinhard Bonnke as a man of God and that in the atmosphere of faith where he ministered this miracle was possible. The faith of Nneka dictated the whole event and her faith was honored. By whom? Who honored her faith? If not God, who else?

I would add to this defense that if the incident was a hoax, I doubt that pastor Ekechukwu would have invented the story of what happened to him when he was escorted to hell, which I will relate next. Pastor Daniel's message is now one of repentance to the church, to prepare the church to stand before Jesus, and many have indeed repented after hearing his testimony. If his story is all a hoax, the result of this hoax is real holiness. Finally, the ministry of Reinhard Bonnke certainly needs no promotional hoax, as his Nigerian crusades are already attended by millions. He in fact states that he had nothing to do with the miracle, and wasn't aware of the dead body in the basement of the church where he was preaching.

As amazing as the story of his death and resurrection is, what Daniel experienced after his death is even more amazing. To him, what he experienced between his death and resurrection could have taken only fifteen minutes, even though he was physically dead for almost two days. After he was lifted from his body by the two angels in the ambulance, he soon found himself momentarily alone, but was soon joined by a different angel. Daniel stated that if he was confused about something that he saw or experienced, or if he had a question in his mind, this angel immediately gave him the answer. This angel first told him that they were going to Paradise. There was no time expended in getting anywhere the angel took him. As soon as the angel said they were going to Paradise, they were there.

Daniel stood with the angel and watched a multitude of worshipping people who were dressed in sparkling white garments. He immediately thought they were angels, but the escorting angel told him that they were human beings who, "while they lived on earth, served God and had their faith focused on Christ Jesus and lived righteously." These people were all ageless and raceless. That is, none appeared to be young or middle-aged or elderly, and none had any racial distinctives in their appearance. All were focused on a very bright light above them, and all worshipped in perfect unison. They would all lift their hands at once and bow at once "as if a sort of electronic device was activating them."

Daniel did notice one man who looked elderly among the multitude, and the thought occurred to him that perhaps that man was God, but the escorting angel immediately corrected him. The man was father Abraham. (Read Luke 16:19-31 for a story Jesus told that speaks of Abraham in the afterlife.)

Daniel longed to join the worshippers, but the angel told him that there were other things Daniel needed to see. He told Daniel they would next go to see Jesus' promise to His followers, the mansion He had prepared for those whom "He would find righteous on the last day." Immediately they were there. Daniel said there is no earthly way to describe what he saw. The mansion had no apparent end to its height or width. It continually moved, and each room also revolved in some manner. It was made of something that was transparent like glass, and the floors appear to be made of light. Daniel didn't see anybody in the great mansion, but heard beautiful singing. Wondering where the music was coming from, the angel immediately pointed him to the many flowers around the mansion. When Daniel looked at them more closely, they were moving and swaying and singing praise to God!

The angel told Daniel, "The mansion is ready but the saints of God are not. Jesus is being delayed because Christians in the church are not ready yet." (This is entirely scriptural; see 2 Pet. 3:12.)

Next, the angel took Daniel to hell, and they stood at the gate. When the angel lifted his hand and let it fall again, the gate opened, and Daniel could immediately hear the awful sounds of people screaming and weeping, but everything in hell was in total blackness. Then a bright light shone from the angel, and Daniel could see many groups of people in anguish. He told me of several specific groups that went through endless cycles of torment, held captive to the same sins they practiced on earth. One group consisted of people who would eat their own flesh and then vomit it out onto the ground, at which time the vomit would fly back onto their bodies and turn back into flesh that they would eat again. The angel told Daniel these people were those who had eaten human flesh as an occult practice. (Such things occur in Africa all the time.) Another group, who had stolen land from others while on earth, endlessly dug rock-hard ground with their bare hands.

As I heard Daniel relate this scene, I couldn't help but thinking of how many times Scripture declares that God will repay every person according to his or her deeds, and also promises that everyone will reap precisely what they have sown. I remembered the story Jesus told of Lazarus and the rich man. In the afterlife, their roles were exactly reversed. The rich man longed for a drip of water from Lazarus just as Lazarus had previously longed for a crumb from the rich man's table.

Pastor Daniel also saw the former military dictator of Nigeria. He saw a Christian who had dabbled in occult practices and fallen away from the Lord, and a pastor who had embezzled money from his own church and also lied about it. The former pastor pleaded that he would return the money if Daniel could help him escape hell. Although there were different kinds of tortures, all of the people in hell writhed in agony under an unseen force that would wrench them repeatedly. All of them were shouting, wailing and gnashing their teeth. Pastor Daniel told me that if every Christian could see what he saw, there would be no need to preach the gospel, as every Christian would become the gospel.

The most surprising thing is what happened next. The escorting angel told pastor Daniel, "If your record is to be called here, you will in no doubt be thrown into hell." Pastor Daniel immediately defended himself saying, "I am a man of God! I serve Him with all my heart!" But a Bible appeared in the angel's hand, and it was opened to Matthew 5 where Jesus warned that if one calls his brother a fool he is guilty enough to go into the hell of fire (see Matt. 5:21-22). Pastor Daniel knew he was guilty for the angry words he had spoken to his wife. The angel also reminded him that Jesus promised that God will not forgive our sins if we do not forgive others (see Matt. 6:14-15), because we will reap what we have sown. Only those who are merciful will obtain mercy (Matt 5:7). The angel told Daniel that the prayers he prayed as he was dying in the hospital were of

no effect, because he refused to forgive his wife even when she attempted to reconcile on the morning of his fatal accident.

Pastor Daniel wept at this revelation, but the angel told him not to cry, because God was going to send him back to the earth to grant the rich man's request (see Luke 16:27-30). A man would come back from the dead and warn people of hell. The angel said that Daniel's resurrection would serve as a sign and be the last warning for this generation.

Finally, pastor Daniel was led to the top of a mountain, at which there was a large hole full of darkness. There the escorting angel handed Daniel to a man standing there whom he did not recognize at first, but soon realized it was German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke. The angel told Daniel that man would help him spread the gospel of salvation.

Both Daniel and Rev. Bonnke fell into the hole, and that is when pastor Daniel jumped up from the table where he lay at the Grace of God mission. He was back in his body after having been dead for at least 42 hours, almost two full days.

As you may imagine, pastor Daniel greatly emphasizes in his preaching the need to forgive those who have wronged us, lest anyone suffer the fate he almost suffered. How important it is that we obey Jesus' commandments regarding forgiveness and walking in love toward each other, as well as all the rest of His commandments. It is indeed time for the church to repent and "pursue peace with all men, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Do not listen to false teachers who say that holiness is not essential to ultimately gain eternal life. Jesus warned that only those who do the will of His Father will enter the kingdom of heaven (see Matt. 7:21). Do not listen to teachers who say that if you are once saved you are guaranteed that you will always be saved. Jesus warned His closest disciples (see Matt. 24:1-3) of the possibility of their not being ready when He returned and being cast into hell (see Matt. 24:42-25:46).

If we expect God to forgive us, we must forgive others. That is what Jesus solemnly promised. Are you ready to stand before Jesus, sincere and blameless?