

A Review of I. A. Charles' *It is Never Late*

Onyeka Ike



PhD, Department of English and Communication Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

The book *It is Never Late* a one hundred and eight page motivational and inspirational debut of Pastor I. A. Charles, the Senior Pastor of God's Power Dominion Ministries International located at INEC Road, Kpansia, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The gospel minister is a mechanical engineer transformed to an ebullient, passionate, dutiful and result-oriented messenger of God. It was published in 2024 by Eagles Publishing House of the same INEC Road, Kpansia, Yenagoa. The imagery and artistry of the front cover portray an elegant time piece strategically positioned as it indicates a definite time. It is a prompt reminder of the concept of time which is divine and essential.

Indeed, when the Almighty and eternal God fashioned the universe, He also created and patterned time. In the *Old Testament*, there is an evident use of chronological time units like day, night and the seasons of the year; the Israelites moulded the year around annual feasts. In the New Testament, references to hours are clearly made. More crucial, however, are significant periods in one's personal life. Although there is a time for everything according to the scriptures, God Himself who is the designer of time has no limitation of time in accomplishing His purposes in the affairs of men. These contextualizes the choice of cover imagery of *It is Never Late*.

The thematic preoccupations and graphology of the entire text reveal the author as a man with an unwavering faith in the transforming power of God in any situation of life irrespective of time of God's intervention or level of deterioration. They also reveal him as a man who is quite aware that right from the factory of His Maker, he was created for a definite impact, configured for excellence, packaged to be distinguished, and therefore utilizes every opportunity he has to pursue these noble trajectories. Also, his dictions and expressions, his nuances, idiosyncrasies and efficient management of tropes in the book portray him as a die-hard possibilitarian – one who strongly believes that with God nothing is impossible.

It is Never Late is dedicated to God Almighty whom the author sincerely appreciates for counting him worthy to be called His servant. The book could not have been published at a better time than this – a time when millions of citizens are going through monumental ordeals, forlornly and disillusionment brazenly orchestrated by various economic parasites, as well as political and administrative cankerworms. It is from the perspective of such indisputable excruciating realities of the nation that the author prays that the book “will be a driving force to those who are about to pack up, and strengthen the hopeless to hold on” (8), and that it contributes in releasing every destiny that is confined by

various shackles of life. The writer's lexicosemantic portrayals and interpretations are unambiguous quite admirable.

In an era of intense and flagrant commercialization and commoditization of the gospel as occasioned by avarice and materialism, it is indeed scarce and refreshing to find an inspirational treatise devoid of the usual heavy doses of embellishments and suffusions of the enticing words of human wisdom and philosophy. On the contrary, the author's assertions, postulations, propositions and prognostications are entirely predicated on the Bible – the word of God, as well as on concrete and traceable testimonies from various individuals impacted through his stewardship.

The book contains seven loaded chapters, beginning with the first chapter captioned "He is a God of Surprises." This opening chapter situates the work in the appropriate scriptural and social context. The Scriptural context is cited from Job 14: 7-9: "Even a tree has more hope! If it is cut down, it will sprout again and grow new branches. Though its roots have grown old in the earth and its stump decays, at the scent of water it will bud and sprout again like a new seedling" (11, NLT).

This biblical stance is analytically corroborated with the heart-touching narrative of the woman with the issue of blood in Luke chapter eight, as well as with the needle narrow miraculous rescue of Apostle Peter from the tyrannical claws of Herod Agrippa in Acts of the Apostles Chapter Twelve. The social context borders on the elucidation of an almost impossible historical soccer victory of

Nigeria's Golden Eaglets against the USSR in Saudi Arabia in 1989. It was a seemingly hopeless situation where many sports-loving Nigerians had already completely lost hope, accepted defeat and switched off their television sets in disappointment, frustration and anger. But suddenly, the tide changed and brought an unexpected and uncommon victory to the Golden Eaglets.

In view of such scenario, it is succinctly observed that the big challenge with many people is that they conclude too fast. The author avers that God's possibility supersedes man's capability and that there is no hopeless situation with God including chains of frustration, barrenness, stagnation, humiliation, chains of delay, poverty, disfavour, etc. God, he states, does not come late and has His time for all He does.

There is a comprehensive discourse about "the limitless God" in chapter two. Here it is emphasized that although one may not be able to alter the hearts of people in one's favour, God Almighty who is limitless and controls the universe can, and that when one understands the ways of God, one can provoke his acts and His hands can be moved to perform. Ample illustrations are presented from God's mighty deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt after about 430 years of agonizing enslavement and from Joshua's encounter with the Divinity when God made the sun to stand still over Gibeon and the moon over Aijalon. Other relevant instances used to substantiate the fact that God cannot be limited by time, space or means including the experiences of Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego when they were put in the furnace

of fire and God went with them; the miraculous rescue of Daniel from the mouths of lions and Jesus' miraculous feeding of 5000 persons with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes. The author believes that if God could use a fish to transport Jonah to Nineveh; if He could use a raven to feed Elijah; if He could use a donkey to speak to Baalam and could use a catapult to kill a Goliath, then there is nothing impossible for Him to do in any given situation. He therefore advises Christians to stop publicizing and advertising Satan's report but rather learn to speak out the greatness of God even in unpalatable conditions until victory comes.

In stating how to provoke the limitless God, the author advises that believers should expand their imagination, knowing that what they picture is what they will capture; what they visualize is what they will actually realize, and what they describe is what they surely inscribe. These admonitions re-echo several parts of the scriptures as well as the consequential utterance of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States of America who stated that "the future you picture, you feature." A second way to provoke the limitless God to act in your favour as enunciated in the book is to get a scriptural revelation to back your imagination, knowing that revelation is the fuel of imagination. The greatest limitation in life is identified as mental limitation which usually affects what one says. God, he states, has not changed and every challenge that will ever face any man on earth answers to the authority of God.

Christians are admonished to break out of their undesirable situations in view of the

fact that God has designed them to be enviable and not pitiable. Using the life of Jabez in first Chronicles chapter four as a case study, the author maintains that one cannot make a difference unless the person is different; one cannot stand out unless he steps out; one cannot make waves until one makes moves different from the normal and ordinary moves. A man's desperation for positive change, the author believes, compels God's attention in one's direction which will guarantee His visitation because things cannot fall in place on their own. And for anything to rise, a force is required to act on it.

In sharing certain secrets to breaking out, the writer avers that until one is fed up one cannot get up and that God's children should be persistent in the place of prayer, knowing that their prayer quality affects the qualities of their destinies, and that if their voices are known to God at the place of prayer, their voices must be heard in their generation. The author's position on the necessity and usefulness of prayer is reminiscent of the assertion that what bullets are in the gun of a soldier, prayer is in the life of a believer. It also calls to mind the discerning aphorism credited to John Stephen Piper – an American Reformed Baptist Pastor and Chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary who stated that "Until you know that life is war you cannot know what prayer is for." Indeed, prayer is a veritable weapon needed by all believers at all times irrespective of portfolio or paraphernalia.

The reader is urged not to let anything stop them from seeking for the desired changes in their lives, knowing that if God is for us, no

one will really succeed in being against us. It is in this context that the writer asserts that if the enemies of David could not stop him from becoming king which God ordained him for; if Joseph's brothers and Portiphar's wife combined could not stop him, believers should be rest assured that all enemies put together will not be able to stop them. The believer is therefore enjoined to be aware that the opportunities ahead are bigger and greater than the disappointments and pains of yesterday; that a life lived without putting God first usually leads to regrets, and that if one cannot see far, he cannot really go far. The author maintains that one's vision of today is one's reality of tomorrow and that no success comes by mere wishes since every glory has a particular price tag. Also, no lazy man really has a place in the position of dignity. Then there is a vital warning that if one is not living right, one should be certain that one's result in life will be limited.

The fifth chapter of the book discusses what the author refers to as "forceful restoration." This caption prophetically establishes God's authority and willingness to perfectly restore whatever the Devil has taken away from a believer as it is written in Joel 2: 25-27: "And I will restore to you the years that the locust had eaten, the cankerworm and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm and ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God." This prophetic assurance is further substantiated with the experiences of Samson who although transited from authority to captivity and from prosperity to adversity still experienced a regrowth of his hair by the mercies of God.

In the sixth chapter, there is a great insight and revelation of "The God of impossibilities." Here the author maintains that when the God of impossibilities steps into one's situation even hopeless conditions are miraculously transformed to the amazement of all. The author asserts that anytime a believer has a challenge, the main thing God Almighty battles with is not actually the challenge itself but the believer's ability to believe that he is able, actually more than able to handle the situation. God, he sates, will always use available vessels to handle such challenges. It is in this regard that unbelief is identified as a major reason why there are impossible situations.

The last chapter of *It is Never Late* which is chapter seven is conspicuously captioned "Break Out in the Midst of challenges." Here it is succinctly observed that no matter how anointed or connected one may be, one cannot be insulated from the challenges of life since one does not become a champion by mere wishes, rather, there is always a fight before a champion emerges. Elaborating on the experiences and encounters of Jephthah in Judges chapter eleven, the author insists that life cannot give one what one wishes for but for what one really fights for. Then there is a strong charge for believers to learn to be possibilarians, knowing that they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them and that every insult can only be silenced through credible results.

Again, the believer is further encouraged to always see victory in the midst of challenges and to consistently speak out in faith, not fear. The author maintains that if

David had kept quiet, he would have lost the battle with Goliath because by Goliath's curses, he had passed on the battle to the gods of the philistines. Thus, David doing just the same made the battle to become a battle between the gods of the philistines and Jehovah the God of Israel. It is on this premise that believers are enjoined not to close their mouths in the face of challenges because a closed mouth in such a situation might result to a closed destiny.

In conclusion, Pastor I. A, Charles deserves to be commended for diligently documenting these laudable inspirations and revelations. *It is Never Late* is a book that should take a noble place in libraries and family book shelves; it has the ingredients to transform the lives of readers. Many people can boast of legacies of good houses, cars, bank accounts and so on for their children. Yet only few persons can give a serious consideration of bequeathing the legacy of good books which is more enduring and has a concomitant multiplier effect. Those who devotedly study *It is Never Late* and apply the principles therein clearly stand the opportunity of experiencing a release of delayed blessings as well as a recovery of lost ones through the power of the Almighty God.