

Magic Johnson Leaves NBA to Serve More in His Pentecostal Church

Earvin “Magic” Johnson left the NBA earlier this year, but it wasn’t so he could kick back and retire. It was so he could serve more in his church and community.

Johnson says his work as the Los Angeles Lakers’ president of basketball operations was simply “not fun” for him, reports the West Angeles Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in Los Angeles. And even more so, he says, it hindered him from being able to truly help others in need, according to the Los Angeles Sentinel.

Johnson and his pastor, Bishop Charles E. Blake of West Angeles COGIC, announced on March 18 that they were launching an initiative to equip African American men to succeed in life. And recently, Johnson consulted with Blake regarding plans to construct the West Angeles Family Life Center, which will provide development programs for inner-city families.

Johnson’s wife, Cookie, started attending West Angeles COGIC nearly 20 years ago. Soon afterward, Johnson started going to church with her and, as a result, has grown in his faith, according to the Associated Press. During a recent Sunday presentation, according to the church, Johnson shared publicly that his prayer life is stronger than before, and he is surrounding himself with people of faith.

“It’s truly a blessing when you know what direction you’re going in,” he said. “It’s such a change for me because now when I go to speak to corporations, I lead off by praising the Lord. ... You can touch somebody else to praise the Lord.”

Johnson recently toured a Newark, New Jersey, hospital that

has a greenhouse that helps promote wellness in the community.

“It’s really amazing what the hospital is doing for the community,” Johnson told AP. “That’s what I’m all about. I’ve been around the country doing the same thing, and that’s what God has called me to do. I just want to go out and bless other people.” {eoa}