

TheMetroSection

'They tied both legs and hands...'

Confusion as man dies during church deliverance in Edo

From Alemma-Ozioruva Aliu, Benin City

THERE was confusion and pandemonium at Uselu Quarters in Benin City on Monday as a 44-year-old man identified as Osayande Ekhatior, was said to have died during a deliverance session at a "miracle" church named Hope Ministries a.k.a Holy Ghost Deliverance Centre, Uselu Quarters.

The deceased was said to have died when he fell during a prayer session and allegedly hit his head against a generating set in the church.

But not satisfied with the said explanation, youths in the area stormed the church premises with dangerous weapons and destroyed the church property, including musical instruments, electrical appliances and vehicles.

The father of the deceased, Pa Erase Ekhatior, said his son visited him on that fateful day and told him that he wanted to undergo deliverance, a request the father said he granted.

He, however, noted that the deliverance session got awry when he heard the deceased crying out for help.

He alleged: "They forced him and tied both his legs and hands and carried a bucket full of water and poured it on his body. The mother asked why that was done and they said that it was what they usually do to calm him down after struggling for five minutes, only for Osanyade to die in their custody."



Edo State Police Commissioner, Samuel Adegbuyi

The sister of the deceased, Mrs. Omoregie Osas, said she suspected foul play in the death of his brother. "They beat him to

death because the cloth he was putting on before was pulled off and they wore him another cloth."

But reacting to the allegation, the resident Pastor of the Church,

Mrs. Isoken Okudaye and a church member who claimed he witnessed what happened, alleged that the victim was violent during the deliverance and accidentally hit his head on a nearby generating set and died.

Okudaye said: "We have been taking care of his father without any money. We don't kill, beat or destroy souls. If they bring people with insanity, we heal them."

An eyewitness who pleaded anonymity said: "We were in a meeting when we got a distress call that somebody died in a church and before we came, some youths had attacked the church. The altar was shattered and cars parked within the premises were destroyed. We can't actually say who the actual people were until investigation is completed by the police".

The Edo State Police Public Relations Officer, Steve Onwunchie, confirmed the incident and said the police had begun investigation into the matter and the finding would be made public at the appropriate time.

He said: "A 44-year-old man, who went to a church around Ediaken area in Benin City, obviously for prayer purposes and deliverance, died during the exercise."

When we received the report, our operatives immediately swung into action and the corpse was taken to a nearby mortuary where autopsy would be conducted."