

Crime

More Trouble For Rev King

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The petitioner, Edwin Akubona, alleged that Rev. King "demanded and obtained the sum of N12 million from him" on the pretence of securing oil block from the Federal Government, "but failed / refused to obtain them."

PFN Disowns Rev King

By Efe Ebelo and
Sunday Michael, REPORTERS

Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) has disown controversial Reverend Chokwuemeka King of the Christian Praying Worldwide Assembly Church, who allegedly set five members of his congregation ablaze for alleged fornication recently.

The national secretary of the body, Bishop Joseph Ojo, in a telephone interview with our reporters, said the pastor was never a member of PFN, neither was he with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

Ojo said there was no way such a character would have been accepted into the group, adding that even if he were accepted he would have been kicked out long ago.

Collaborating Ojo's submissions, a top official of the body in the national office in Lagos, who spoke on the basis of anonymity, said King was not a registered member of the body.

"He (King) is not a member of PFN. He has never been registered with us. Nobody from PFN will support such act," the source stressed.

He noted that the body could only seek his bail if he were a member.

"Even if he had approached the body to be a member, PFN will definitely turn it down, because his practice is strange to us," the official said.

The source said there was the likelihood that some friends of the controversial cleric were trying to save him the shame by approaching the police as PFN lawyers.

When *Saturday Independent* contacted the state chapter chairman of the body, Pastor Wale Adefarasin, he was said to have travelled out of town.

Aspirant Promises Free Transport For Students

By Sunday Michael,
REPORTER

Students at all levels of education in Ojo local government area of Lagos State have been promised a subsidised transport system.

A Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chairmanship aspirant for the local government area, Omotoba Temitope, while speaking in Ojo, said one of his immediate programmes if elected would be to provide transport for students within the local government at a subsidised rate.

He noted that students and pupils within the local government would be transported to and from their nearest bus stops, from where they would spend little or nothing to their schools and homes.

Temitope said the transport fare would be between N5 and N15 per student, depending on the distance.

He remarked that some pupils and students stopped attending schools as a result of the unbearable transport fare, which their parents could not afford.

The chairmanship aspirant said the present condition of schools, where pupils were made to study without seats or roof over their school buildings, would be improved upon both in the reverine and upland areas of Ojo local government.

He said skill acquisition programme for able-bodied men and women would be given priority, as vocational training centres would be put in place as a way of empowering them.

By Alex Oni
CORRESPONDENT, Lagos

Detained General Overseer of Christian Praying Assembly (CPA), Rev. Kingsley Emeka Ezeoku, a.k.a Rev. King, had his problem compounded during the week, as a former member of his church filed a fresh petition against him at State CID, Panti Street, Yaba, Lagos, accusing him of fraudulently obtaining N12 million from him under false pretences.

The petitioner, Edwin Akubona, alleged that Rev. King "demanded and obtained the sum of N12 million from him" on the pretence of securing oil block from the Federal Government, "but failed / refused to obtain them."

In the petition dated July 26, written on behalf of Akubona by lawyers from the law firm of Emeka Amadi & Co, it was stated that following the failure of King to secure the oil block, "it then dawned on our client that the said Rev. King was a master extortionist and this final act of criminal extortion infuriated our client and he demanded a refund and further disassociated himself from the church".

Akubona alleged that shortly after this, Rev. King "hypnotised" his wife to the extent that she "abandoned the matrimonial home and now forms part of Rev. King's mistresses".

He alleged that in November 2005, Rev. King conspired with Augustine Eze, a younger brother to his wife, and stormed his (Akubona's) residence at FESTAC Town, Lagos, taking away his children.

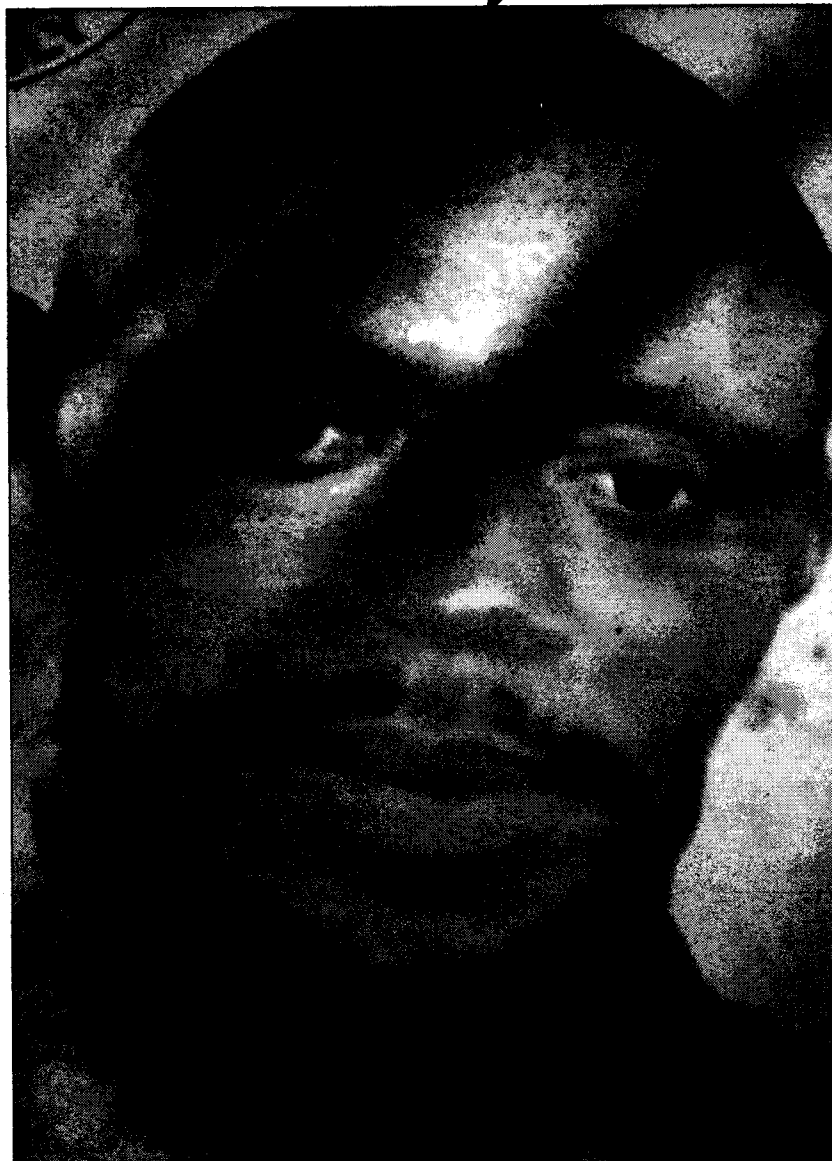
Besides, the petitioner claimed, the cleric threatened him to desist from having anything to do with his (Akubona's) wife and children, warning that failure to heed the warning would result in his untimely death.

Sometime last year, he said, Rev. King sold a Toyota Camry to him but refused to effect the change of ownership of the vehicle. When he demanded for a changed of ownership, he claimed, Rev. King told him not to question "this God."

The petition read in part: "Not satisfied with the criminal extortion, hypnotising and snatching of our client's (Akubona) wife and children, Rev. King is presently threaten-

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• Accused Of N12m Scam



• King

ing our client through his members and since then our client's life is in serious danger and urgent attention is required to nip in the bud.

"We are reliably informed that Rev. King has perfected plans to use our client's children for rituals."

Akubona and some members of CPA, who came to Panti last Wednesday, did not believe that Rev. King could be caged by the police. One of the members told our correspondent that it was impossible to put the "Jesus of

our time" in the cell as he had the power to "disappear and re-appear. I can tell you, it is not Rev. King that is in the cell. He must have disappeared in the cell long ago".

However, following the weighty allegation contained in the petition, our correspondent obtained permission and led Akubona and some members of the church to Rev. King. Speechless and transfixed, Akubona tried to utter some inaudible words, but Rev. King, apparently still asserting his

authority over them, shouted at Akubona: "What are you doing here? Get out, out." Bowing to superior authority, they fell over each other trying to hurry out of the pastor's sight.

However, on getting outside, they informed other church members that the self-styled 'God and Jesus of Our Time' was actually in the cell.

Our correspondent confronted Rev. King with some of the allegations, and he denied all the claims, describing them as "arrant nonsense".

King, who is in detention for allegedly setting five members of his church ablaze for fornication, said the case of Akubona's wife and children was in court, thus would not comment on it. He described the N12 million '419' allegation as a figment of Akubona's imagination.

Meanwhile, investigation into the alleged attempted murder case against Rev. King took an interesting dimension during the week, with detectives from Panti alleging that some members of King's church had been destroying vital evidence that could nail their leader of possible murder, manslaughter and attempt to kill five of his church members.

A top police detective, who spoke with *Saturday Independent* on condition of anonymity, said when a crack team of detectives visited Rev. King's house on the orders of Lagos police boss, Emmanuel Adebayo, the team found the evidence intact, but claimed that it was altered the following day when the team visited his house again.

Said the source: "We didn't have a search warrant the first day, so we could not take anything away from the house. On Monday morning, we got a magistrate to sign a search warrant for us and returned to the house. To our surprise, the generator had been set ablaze by unknown people. They are now claiming that it was the generator fire that set the five

people ablaze and not Rev. King. Unknown to them, we had taken pictures of the entire place, including the generator, before it was set ablaze".

Meanwhile, the fire victims have engaged the service of Lagos lawyer, Robert Igbinedion, who in an interview with *Saturday Independent* said the only major victim of the fire, one Osi, died of first degree burns.

Igbinedion said: "This is not a case of attempted murder, it is murder. The police have tried so far, but I am disappointed because they have not made attempt to visit Osi's house to find out while we wait for the police report on the matter. We hope the police will do a tidy job."

But police detectives said they had not seen any corpse and as such, they could not conclude that somebody had died. "For now, we are handling a case of attempted murder," a police detective said.

Meanwhile, high-flying lawyers have continued to appear for Rev. King. Top among them is Mike Okoye and Ebere Obi, leading six other lawyers.

The lawyers are asking for the release of the suspect on bail, as attempted murder was a bailable offence. They argued that they had responsible and credible sureties and would always produce Rev. King any time in court.

The lawyer, who filed the first case against Rev. King at a Lagos High Court, accusing him of sleeping with his wife's client, one Ebele Akubona, F.O. Akerele, described the arrest and detention of Rev. King as a vindication of his stand, describing the suspect as "violent and extremely evil."

"Only recently, we wrote a petition to the AIG Zone II that Rev. King, who was alleged to be at large in a criminal charge at Igbosere Magistrates' Court, is at Ajao Estate, Lagos and that he should be arrested. Perhaps, if the AIG had listened to our call, this violence would have been avoided. Rev. King caused our client's wife to file divorce proceedings when the police were closing in on him to give his criminal act the coloration of a civil matter. It is quite gratifying to be around to see the collapse of evil".

By Lanre Olaleye
HEAD, CRIME DESK

These are indeed trying times for the controversial leader of Christ Praying Assembly, Ajao Estate, Lagos, Rev. Emeka Ezeugo King, following his arrest by the police for allegedly setting five members of his church ablaze.

His arrest and detention at SCID, Panti, Lagos is appears debasement of the heavily-bearded pastor, who is highly revered by his followers.

To some, Rev. King is the Jesus Christ of this generation, hence could do no wrong. But the pastor's current ordeal has further demonstrated the fact that only the biblical Jesus Christ

is a saint.

With over 10 cases hanging over his neck in various police formations in Lagos State, the controversial King may have had his cup over-filled with petitions and accusations ranging from assault to murder, abduction and other violent crimes against the church. This indeed prompted the state Commissioner of Police, Emmanuel Adebayo, to order his immediate arrest, following reports that he allegedly set some persons, including Chizoba, Vivian, Ann, Vivian's sister, and one Mr. Kosichukwu on fire with fuel obtained from a generator.

Rev. King was said to have accused the church members of indulging in fornication. Three of the victims are currently on danger list in private hospitals with severe burns, while a man who was alleged to have aided the pastor in spraying the victims with petrol is currently on the run.

Before now, the fiery pastor seemed to be untouchable. No one questioned his authority. His close aides considered him too exalted to grant press interviews, even at the height of mounting petitions against him from some of his church members.

His present predica-

ment has, therefore, beamed the searchlight on some atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the revered pastor. Those who could not summon enough courage to confront him are now forwarding damaging petitions against the self-styled 'Jesus Christ'.

Like a fallen elephant, Rev. King was brought down to earth by detectives after spending days in the cell at Panti. For a man who declined press interviews, he was ushered into the presence of our crime correspondent bare-footed, a sharp departure from his flamboyant lifestyle. Wearing a purple shirt and brown trousers, the

controversial pastor told our correspondent that the explosion from the generator attracted him to the scene of the incident, adding that he could not have taken the victims to the hospital if indeed he was the one that set them on fire.

"I took them to the hospital in my own car and made sure they were well taken care of."

Meanwhile, his members may have started deserting the church in droves. The church, which normally is a beehive of activities on weekdays and on Sundays, is now a shadow of its past.

... Finally Demystified

His present predicament has, therefore, beamed the searchlight on some atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the 'revered' pastor. Those who could not summon enough courage to confront him are now forwarding damaging petitions against the self-styled 'Jesus Christ'.