

Hoodlums, Pastor King's followers clash again

**Olalekan Adetayo and
Kayode Ketefe**

SIX members of the Christian Praying Assembly, Ajao Estate, Lagos, are currently receiving treatment at an hospital in Lagos following injuries they sustained during a clash with social miscreants, popularly called *area boys*, on Wednesday.

An Ebute-Meta Magistrate's Court also on Wednesday overruled the bail it earlier granted the General Overseer, Rev. Emeka King, and two

members of the church.

The embattled pastor was alleged to have connived with two others to set some church members on fire.

Trouble started on Wednesday when the church members were returning from the court where the pastor reappeared.

Their uniform and beard trademark reportedly drew the attention of the *area boys* around Costain and Apapa Road at about 11.30pm.

The *area boys*, wielding dangerous weapons, alleg-

edly descended on them apparently to vent their anger at their leader's behaviour on them.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Lagos State Police Command, Mr. Olubode Ojajuni, a deputy superintendent of police, confirmed the clash to our correspondent.

Ojajuni said the situation was later brought under control by the divisional police officer in the area, who drafted policemen to the scene.

He denied unconfirmed

reports that three people lost their lives in the clash.

The police spokesman warned Lagos residents against taking the law into their hands, particularly when a case was in court.

He said, "Every suspect is presumed innocent until a court of law declares otherwise. It is, therefore, wrong for anybody to pick up arms against anybody or group, especially on a case that is in court."

"Let us allow the judiciary to perform its role, we (police)

have arrested the pastor and taken him to court based on the evidence before us."

At the resumed trial on Wednesday, the magistrate's court, presided over by Mr. Tajudeen Elias, ordered the accused persons to be remanded in prison custody pending the time the police would get legal advice from the office of the Lagos State Director of Public Prosecution.

Ruling on the application of the accused persons, which urged the court to decline to strike out the new murder charge against them, the court said it had no jurisdiction to entertain the charge.

King, Donatus Chiasor and Miss Kelechi were jointly arraigned for a three-count charge of conspiracy to attempt murder, attempted murder, and wounding of seven persons unlawfully.

The 40 year-old King and the two other accused persons were alleged to have deliberately set seven members of their church on fire after pouring petroleum on them on July 22. The offence is punishable under Section 338 of the Criminal Code.

One of the victims, Miss Ann King, who was said to have suffered "grievous bodily harm" later died allegedly from the burning.

The remaining six victims, who were said to be "wounded" by the burning, are Olisa Chiejinna, Onuorah Chisobah, Uche Iwoba, Vivian Ezeocha, Bunmi Olisa and Nwere Jessica.

The cancelled bail was granted to the accused persons on August August 2, and was reinstated on August 11 when the police reduced the initial charge from four-count to three-count to pave way for a separate murder charge against the accused persons.

The Magistrate held that although it had no jurisdiction to hear the new murder charge against the accused persons, yet "the nature of the case demands that the accused should be remanded in prison custody."



•L-R: Chancellor, the new Anglican Diocese of Lagos Mainland, Justice Ibikunle Adesalu; Chancellor, Anglican Diocese of Lagos, Justice Adesola Oguntade; Chairman, Implementation Committee on the new diocese, Mrs. Chikwe Ochiaga; and the Chairman, Publicity Sub-committee, Ven. Ben Nwanekwu, at a news conference heralding the inauguration of the diocese in Lagos ...on Wednesday. Photo: Olalekan Adetayo.

Presidency: PDP should present credible candidate -Marwa, Makarfi

A presidential aspirant on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party, Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa, and the Kaduna State Governor, Alhaji Ahmed Makarfi, have agreed that only a credible candidate will guarantee the party's victory at the 2007 presidential poll.

They made the assertion in Kaduna on Wednesday when Marwa paid a courtesy visit to Makarfi in continuation of his nationwide campaign.

They also agreed that the quest for power shift to the

for me as I commence my campaign for you to be the first governor to be visited by me.

"I am notifying you of my intention to serve Nigerians, if elected as president in 2007. We have before today discussed this matter and you know my opinion. There are lots of distinguished Nigerians who are capable of leading this country as president. I believe that our prayer is for the electorate to make their choice and for the campaign to be

free of acrimony and bitterness and all the other negative aspects.

"I am confident that in this dispensation, this is what will happen. If, through the grace of the Almighty God, I am elected, surely, we will consolidate and build on the gains of the present reforms and the efforts at promoting Nigeria by President Olusegun Obasanjo in all areas: economy, poverty alleviation, reduction and subsequent elimination, security,

health, infrastructures, roads, public transportation, agriculture, housing. These are areas that will attract our best attention so as to consolidate on the gains of the last eight years."

The governor said his position as a loyal party member since the past years remained "collectivity", asserting that should the members move together, "there is greater chances of victory" at the poll, since the country had never been a one-party state.