

## Accident victim on church premises cries for help

Published [December 31, 2019](#)



Ronke

### ...loses two-year-old son to crash

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A petty trader, Ronke Popoola, is currently battling for her life at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja after she was involved in a car crash on December 15, 2019, during the harvest of the Celestial Church of Christ, Genesis Global.

The church, which is located at No. 10, Duro Ishola Street, Dalemo, Alakuko, Lagos State, is being shepherded by the Senior Shepherd-in-Charge, Prophet Israel Ogundipe, and has been drawing crowds from far and near.

According to the victim, many worshippers came for the harvest and towards the end of the programme, a car lost control and rammed into the extension provided by the church to accommodate guests, who could not find space in the main auditorium.

Many were said to have been injured in the crash that also claimed the life of an 11-year-old boy. Ronke's two-year-old son, who was also run over by the car, died four days after.

Ronke's friend, who simply identified herself as Mama, said some persons approached Ogundipe to foot the victim's hospital bill, but he reportedly said both Ronke and the driver of the ill-fated vehicle were not members of the church so he could not assist them.

Ronke, who spoke to our correspondent during a visit to the hospital, urged the pastor not to neglect her as she could not foot the bill alone.

A doctor at the hospital said Ronke, who needed about four pints of blood, had been unable to buy vital drugs that would aid her recovery.

While, recounting her ordeal, Ronke said, "We were all seated under the tent provided by the church in the compound; the vehicle did not hoot; we only heard the sound of the engine. I sat backing the vehicle, and all of a sudden, I heard a loud noise and felt something running over me and I saw that people were trying to rescue me and my child, and that was the last thing I knew.

"Since I got to hospital, I cannot do anything; if my leg should touch the ground, to move it up is a problem. I cannot move my body and my back aches. I have been unable to buy the drugs and pay for the tests that the doctor recommended because there is no money.

"When the owner of the vehicle, who is a member of the church came, he said he was not the one who drove the vehicle and that the church was denying him, but he said he would do whatever he could to render assistance.

"The owner of the church has not checked on me and I have not heard anything from him, but I learnt that he said he could not help, because we are not members of his church despite coming to his church for a programme. I need help; I am in pain right now."

Mama told our correspondent that she was the one, who invited Ronke for the church programme, and knocked the church for neglecting the victims of the car crash.

She said, “It was over two years that I attended the church last; I heard that it was having its harvest and I persuaded Ronke to follow me to the programme. It was a normal programme that was going on well and we talked about going back to the Celestial Church of Christ and how I was going to buy a white garment for her if we eventually went back.

“While we were coming back to where we were seated, I saw that an 11-yr-old child covered with blood was rushed out and I was wondering what had happened, because I just left the place not quite long, but by the time I got to where we were seated, everywhere was already cleared and I started looking for Ronke, only for me to see her lying on the floor with her son David. One of the injured persons had been discharged and the 11-year-old boy, who also followed someone to the church, had died.

“Ronke was rushed to the Ile-Epo General Hospital, from where she was referred to LASUTH. Although she is getting better, blood is still gushing out of her private parts and we need money to buy four pints of blood and drugs. I heard that the church said it could not render any help because Ronke is not a member of the church, but the pastor knows how to give other people, who are not members, money in front of cameras.”

When *PUNCH Metro* contacted Ogundipe, he said he was not aware of the victim’s predicament, adding that he was told that the owner of the ill-fated vehicle would foot the bill.

He stated, “The case has got nothing to do with us or our church and I am only trying to support them, because the man who drove the car has been arrested; the case has been taken to court and according to the IPO, the condition given to the owner of the vehicle is to foot the woman’s hospital bill.

“The most painful part is that I did not say I would not help her because she is not a member of my church. I did not know anything about her or hear anything about the incident; all the people I have helped are not members of my church. If not that I’ve just heard from you now, I did not know that she had been abandoned, but I will send someone to get back to her.”

Our correspondent learnt that the matter was reported at the Ayinla Police Station.

When contacted, the Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, Abimbola Oyeyemi, confirmed the accident, adding that the driver of the vehicle had been charged.

“I can confirm the accident and the driver was later charged, because one of the victims died as a result of the crash; the owner of the vehicle is trying to assist in the treatment of the woman and I also learnt that the church is trying to render assistance too,” he stated.