

Twenty-three-year-old Mrs Peace Nwali is the mother of a two-year-old boy, Onyedikachi, who was allegedly beheaded by a barber, Christian Nweke, 26, in Ebonyi State. Nweke also allegedly drank Onyedikachi's blood after killing him. Nwali tells **EDWARD NNACHI** how she left her child for some minutes to fetch water and met his corpse

**What do you know about the man who reportedly beheaded your two-year-old child and drank his blood? He was said to be seeking spiritual help at a prayer house...**

The man, Christian Nweke, met us at the prayer house in Umuhuli village in the Ishielu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, as a sick person. He said he had severe chest pain. They said he was living in Nnewi, Anambra State, where he was a barber. He was the one that beheaded my son, drank his blood and dropped his head under a table in the presence of other little children. I had him in January 2018; now he has been taken away from me.

**What were you doing at the prayer house?**

We were seeking help at the prayer house. My little boy had been sick; he fell ill some months after I gave birth to him. His father, who had promised to marry me, left us. Nwali's ill health has caused me and my mother so much suffering. After spending over N5,000 on drugs and I realised there was no improvement and that no help was coming, I was advised to go to the prayer house for spiritual assistance. Also, I know the owner of the prayer house; she equally advised us to come there as God could intervene. At the prayer house, little Onyedikachi Nwali, was already getting better, although we had spent over a year there. The prayer house is at Umuhuli village, Ishielu Local Government Area of the state.

**You were said to have gone to the stream to fetch water when the incident happened. Who sent you to the stream?**

Nobody sent me there. That evening, there was no water at the prayer house. The little water we had was for drinking and little Onyedikachi needed to bathe. It was around 5:30pm, so I decided to go to the stream to fetch water so I could bathe him, only for me to return to the prayer house and find my son dead. At the prayer house, the prophetess, Mrs Felicia Ughuo, was really taking good care of us, so much that I didn't think it was wise to leave the place.

**How did it all happen?**

Before that time, the prophetess had travelled to Enugu to buy some things for the prayer house, including food items. It was around a quarter to 6pm that I told a little girl of seven years old called Peace Thegwo to look after my son while I went to fetch water. So I left for the stream. On my way back, I heard children shouting, "aunty, aunty, he has killed your boy. He has killed your boy." It was at that point that the bucket of water on my head fell off. I rushed there and saw the body of my son on one side and his head under a table. I saw Nweke with a machete.

The little children said it was the brother that came from Anambra two nights earlier that killed my son. I fainted; I couldn't talk. I tried to cry, but nothing happened. Everything appeared like a dream to me. At that point, I took my son's body and shouted. Neighbours started coming out and sought to know



what happened. They mobbed Nweke and started beating him, but at a point, some elders came and said they should leave him so as not to kill him.

Some members of the village's vigilance group came out and called the police, who came and took him away. Nweke killed my son and drank his blood. He actually drank his blood because there were traces of fresh blood on his lower and upper lips. This incident took place on December 13, 2019. And I keep wondering if he was a ritualist or if he was sent by a ritualist to carry out that evil work. I don't know, but God knows better.

**Before you moved to the prayer house, who was taking care of you and Nwali?**

I tried my best to raise money from the few tailoring jobs I got. I trained as a tailor, although, I'm not very skilled in the job. My father is very ill. Nwali's father doesn't care about us. My relationship with his father, Ifeanyi, lasted for eight years. After I got pregnant and put to bed, something came over him. I don't know what came over him. I learnt his people said he should end the relationship and not marry me. Nwali and I were on our own, suffering and struggling to survive until this tragedy struck. I came to the prayer house because I had known and lived with the prophetess before. She is a nice woman and I felt going there was the only option for survival.

**How close were you to your late son?**

We were very close. I loved and still love him so much, even though he is not alive anymore. I was comfortable having him around me. We were so close that I couldn't just go anywhere without him. That's why I regret leaving him behind at the prayer house when I went to the stream to fetch water. If I had put him on my back, he wouldn't have died. And it was people's advice that made me to start leaving him to play with other children. I used to take him everywhere on my back, to the kitchen, bathroom, church, market and so on. But I started having chest and back pains. And also he wasn't walking, so people advised that I should start leaving him to play with other children.

I feel very sad that I left him behind at the prayer house when I was going to the stream. I should have strapped him to my back and taken him along to that river, as usual. I wish I were the one that died. I know he would have had a better future than me, whose (destiny) had been reduced to apprentice tailor.

**Getting to the prayer house and seeing the**

## EBONYI WOMAN WHOSE TWO-YEAR-OLD SON WAS BEHEADED: MY BOY WOULD HAVE BEEN GREATER THAN ME

**lifeless body of your son, what was the first thing that crossed your mind?**

I felt like crying, but I couldn't; I felt like cutting myself into two, but that wasn't possible. I felt like killing myself, but the firm grips of people around wouldn't let me. I was dumbfounded.

**How would you describe the last time you saw him alive?**

That was that evening of December 13, 2019. It was around 5:35pm or so when I was leaving for the stream. Before I left for the stream, I ate and fed him. The suspect is also from Ebonyi State, but I don't know where in the state. Why he killed and drank my son's blood is what I don't know.

Even though he had not started talking as he was little, anytime I was singing, he would be dancing. During our last moments together, I sang and he danced. The song I sang was, "Jesus you love me too much ooo, too much ooo, too much ooo, excess love ooo." He loved the song so much. And each time I hear the song anywhere now, even on radio, I weep. The owner of Mountain Zion Prayer Ministry cried when she returned and saw what happened. And even till now, she still cries because of the tragedy. She has even instructed that nobody should play my son's favourite song within the premises of the prayer house again.

**What were your hopes for him?**

I wanted him to be a minister of the Gospel; maybe a pastor, reverend, or prophet. This was in recognition of what God had done in our lives and my belief that without God, we could achieve anything. I wanted him to serve God and lead others to God.

**Can you remember the last thing you said to him?**

I told him, "Onyedikachi, stay with your 'sisters'. I want to fetch some water. I will soon return to join you." Immediately I said that, he started crying. I didn't know that was the last time I was going to talk to him. But God knows better.

I still see him and wish I had taken him to the stream that evening, as I always did. Even before the incident, I used to see him in my dreams on my back as I took him everywhere I went. I regret not taking him with me that day. Onyedikachi, I'm so sorry. Please, forgive me. I know you wouldn't have died if you had followed me to the stream. Taking him everywhere I

went had been my hobby for over one year now. I feel so ashamed and disappointed that I didn't do that on that fateful day.

**Losing a child is not easy. Do you think life has lost its meaning and the whole world is about to crash?**

I feel that way exactly. I feel like I should have been the one that died. I feel like the world means nothing and that it has been unfair to me. This tragedy befell me after all I had been through with little Onyedikachi. There were days we didn't eat; there were days we bathed without bathing soap; and there were days we couldn't even visit the hospital because there was no money.

Life means nothing to me now. I feel I'm the worst sinner. God, please save me. It's almost two years now that his father left us and I had taken solace in the fact that one day, my son would make me smile. Since my son died, his father has not even showed up. He lives in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. I was told he came to Ebonyi Christmas, but I did not see him. If he comes back to me and begs me, I will forgive him, but I won't marry him again. Losing my son is like starting from the beginning again. Where do I begin?

**Do you think the suspect is mentally stable person?**

I think he is a ritualist; but I'm not sure. However, based on what he did, anyone could conclude that he is a ritualist. I also think he might be involved in a blood-demanding occult.

**What is your advice to the authorities in order to prevent a recurrence in the future?**

Whenever such people are spotted in the midst of defenseless and harmless Nigerians, they should be killed. Such people should be hanged because they are threats to others in society. They are dangerous to the society. Yes, the suspect has been arrested but he shouldn't return to the society back. If he comes back alive, he might kill more people and feel, "it's better to go back to prison and return to kill more."

**Do you think you can ever recover from the shock of your son's death?**

I don't think so. The pain and loss are too much for me to withstand at this stage in my life. However with God, I can withstand it. I wish I could turn back the hands of time. It is very painful. But with God, all things are possible. I know God will help me.

**How have you been coping in the absence of your late son?**

It is not very easy with me. I miss him a lot and wish he were still here. Of course, he was not talking normally yet, but he showed evidence of intelligence and I was happy about that. But thank God for those who have been a source of inspiration and comfort for me. God is using them to enable me to get over the situation, but it's not easy. Above all, God has a better plan and what happened was His plan for me at the time; I will overcome at the end.

**What do you think can make the loss of your son easier for you to bear?**

God's grace and prayer can make me bear the loss of little Nwali better. Pastors in my area and children of God have been rallying round me. They have been counselling, praying and sharing the word of God with me. I have C. and I know He won't let me down. God should stand for me now, shouldn't He?

I really wish I had died instead of my son. If I die now, I know I would be in a better place with God. And little Nwali would be in a position to take care of me, even in death. I wanted him to live and not die. But God knows better. Nwali was only two years old when he was murdered and I didn't know his destiny. My destiny for now is to be a tailor who cannot further her education. I know Nwali's destiny would have been greater than mine.