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## SHOCKING! Lightning kills 2 women during prayer session in church

— 17th April 2016

From NGOZI UWUJARE

IN a bizarre case of ill fate, two women, 25-year-old Chioma Jonathan, a native of Obiangwu in Ngor Okpala Local Government Area and Chinonye Anyanwu, aged 26, from Ahiazu Mbaise LGA, both in Imo State, died when they were struck by lightning.

The unfortunate incident happened when the two women went to participate in the regular Holy Ghost Hour prayer session of Heavenly Sure Charismatic Church, a Pentecostal church, usually held in the premises of Comprehensive Secondary School, Emekuku in Owerri North LGA, Imo State.

Also affected in the lightning strike was the 54-year-old General Overseer of the church, Pastor Luke Nwokocha, who led the short-lived prayer session. He temporarily lost consciousness and was rushed to a hospital by his wife and another member of the church, where he was revived. In addition, he sustained injuries on his leg.

At the headquarters of the police command in Imo State, Pastor Nwokocha recounted to *Sunday Sun*, what happened. "We always have fellowship every Tuesday. On the fateful day, we had our 'Holy Ghost Hour'. We were five members in the church. The two deceased sisters, including the sister that swept the church premises; Evangelist Solomon and myself were arranging the benches. Around 4.30pm heavy rain started falling. I started praying for the programme."

Then there was a sudden lightning flash followed by the deafening sound of thunder. The two women, who were in the direct path of the electric field created by the lightning flash died instantly, when they were struck by the streak. Nwokocha, who apparently was off the direct path of the streak received a much lower jolt of electricity, which, however, was strong enough to throw him across the room, cause temporary loss of consciousness and physical injuries on his leg and hands.

"My wife, Pastor Eucharika Nwokocha and the other church member rushed me to the hospital for medical treatment," he said.

Nwokocha who hails from Umuakuru Emekuku in Owerri North LGA further explained: "I have been in this ministry for 26 years. I have never experienced anything like this. I was called into ministry in 1990. Until that time, I was a policeman and served in the Imo State Police Command and retired at Akwa Ibom Police Command in July 2007. Following my retirement, I decided to focus on my ministry fulltime. I do not understand how it happened, its only God who understands and knows all."

Following the incident, the elder brother of Chioma Jonathan reported the case to the Owerri North Divisional Police Station, from where the case was transferred to the homicide department at the headquarters of the Imo State Police Command, Owerri, the state capital.

The Commissioner of Police, Taiwo Lakanu who confirmed the incident said it was a strange occurrence. He added that the cleric was undergoing interrogation at the State Criminal Investigation Department while the corpses of the dead women had been deposited at the mortuary of the Holy Rosary Hospital, Emekuku.

One of the elders of Emekuku community, Godwin John told *Sunday Sun* that the whole thing was a mystery.

"We know Pastor Luke usually holds the 'Holy Ghost Hour' prayer session. What happened to Pastor Luke Nwokocha and the lightning strike that killed two members of his church is an abomination. We will consult the elders," he said.

Meanwhile Lakanu has reassured relations of the deceased women that proper investigation would be carried out by the officer in charge of the homicide section of State Criminal Investigation Department, Supol Innocent Obi, who is working hard with the detectives under him to ensure that there is no miscarriage of justice

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