

Crime

Taiwo Jimoh

Detectives attached to the Homicide Section, Lagos State Police Command, have started investigating the identity of a man, who burgled a church and died in the process at the Ikorodu area of Lagos.

The deceased was said to have burgled Glorious Voice of God Church, located at Shote area of Ijede, Ikorodu, to steal musical instruments and electrical wires.

He had successfully stolen the items and was already leaving, when he suddenly got to the outer part of the church and decided to help himself to other wires.

He was trying to pull down the wires, when the Electricity Distribution Company (DisCo) suddenly restored power. The man was instantly electrocuted.

Members of the church came in the morning to find his body and stolen items abandoned. Some of the stolen cables were in a black bag.

Our correspondent, who visited the community, heard that it has been under siege of burglars for long.

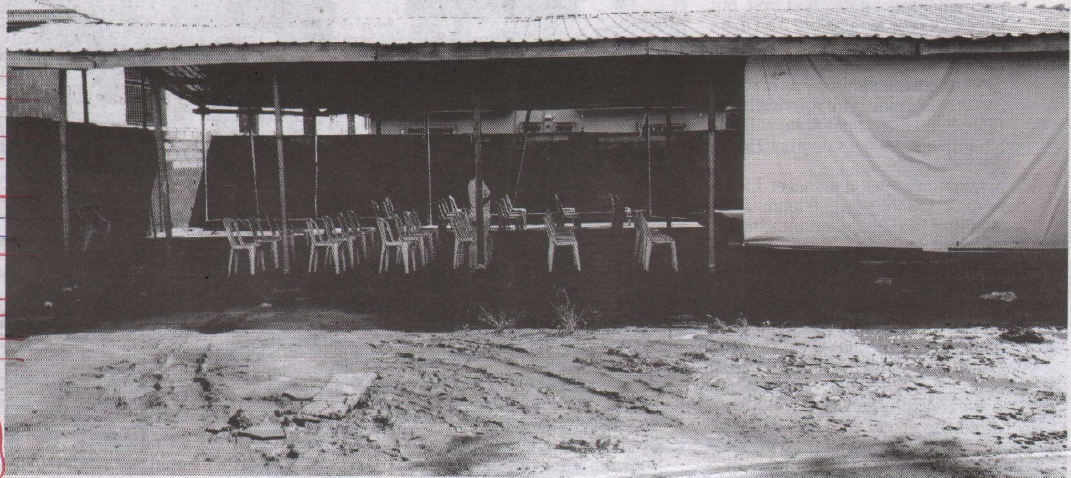
According to residents, the thieves used to besiege the community especially on Sundays, knowing most shop owners wouldn't be around. The thieves used to loot shops.

Schools, artisan workshops and churches are not left out of the burglars' operations. A welder said he attempted suicide after his shop was burgled and his tools were stolen three times within a month.

The presiding pastor of Glorious Voice of God Church, Ogah Rodorick, said it would teach robbers targeting worship centres a lesson.

He said: "The death of the robbery suspect is a lesson to other robbers who are planning to rob God's house. A thief or armed robber that goes into the house of God to steal or rob has committed a sacrilege!

"I was not in the church on the fateful day of the incident. I was still at home when I received a phone call about 7a.m. from a neighbour, that I should come to the church quickly. He said that someone was in the church with electrical wires. Since my house is far from the church, I had to call my assistant pastor, who lives close to the church, to go and check what was happening. When he got there, he called me back, saying that the matter was serious. He said that I should come myself. When my assistant pastor got to the church, he discovered that the thief had vandalised and removed every cable in the church. While he was trying to remove more cables, he



The church

'Swift judgement': Man electrocuted while robbing church

was electrocuted.

"When we moved closer to his body, we discovered that the cable on his chest was still burning. We immediately reported the case to Area 'N' Police Command. Policemen later came and then they took my statement. His remains were evacuated and deposited at the mortuary. Police later told me that it was a case of electrocution."

Rodorick disclosed that the church was just two years old in its present location. He said that he remembered that when the church was moving into the community, he was told that burglars and burglaries were prevalent.

He said: "I have never envisaged that they would come into the church. I didn't see what they would want to steal in a church. I never knew that they were a lot to steal in a church."

"When the owner of the land gave us this place to use as our church and worship God, I was told that because we are having a lot of activities, that thieves wouldn't come close to the church, but the reverse is now the case."

"Since we moved into the church, we have not witnessed any robbery. This is the first time. I believe that the God I serve will continue to expose criminals who are robbing the house of God."

The assistant Pastor of the church, Mr. Alex Obi, said he was sleeping when he received a phone call from the presiding pastor to proceed to the church.

He said: "To my surprise, when

I got to the church, I saw the man lying on the ground with the stolen cables on his chest. A crowd had gathered. The robber gained access into the church through a portion of the gate that fell during a heavy rainfall. The suspect removed the wire from the band, the coil of a standing

fan and put them in a sack. He was trying to remove another wire outside, which channels light into the church, when he was electrocuted.

"It is God that arrested him. This will serve as a lesson to others who are planning to go into robbery. I was told that the suspect was one of the scavengers from the northern part of the country. After we had left the police station, some of his 'brothers' came to the church to plead with us to release the body to them for burial."

A bricklayer, identified simply as Mr. Ashwogbin, was the first to notice the body. He quickly called Rodorick.

Ashwogbin recounted that on the fateful day, while he was in his shop about 7a.m., he decided to make use of the toilet. The toilet was close to the church. It was when Ashwogbin was moving closer to the toilet that he saw the suspect's body.

He said: "A few hours later, the assistant pastor came and we both moved round the church. We then discovered that the cables in the church had been vandalised by the thief. Police later came to the scene. When I saw him, I couldn't touch him. Since we have been in this place since 2013, my shop had been robbed thrice and my work tools carted away. Our area is common for robbery. Even with the presence of the vigilantes."

"A plumbing material shop, close to mine, had been robbed several times. Whenever they want to rob



The suspected robber being evacuated by the church members

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