



First with Nigerian News | Published since 1994

## Lightning Kills Pastor, 2 Others During Church Service

2011

A church auditorium turned to a theatre of death in Obubra, Cross River State, South-south Nigeria when three senior officials of a Pentecostal church were struck dead by lightning during a church service.

Pastor David Ogbekwe of Christ for the World Mission, a popular pentecostal ministry in the state, who was conducting a Bible study class was killed along with two senior members of the church, Deacon Lazarus Arong and the Woman Leader, Maria Egbam late evening on the fateful day when lightning struck. A member of the church, who gave her name as Sister Mary, told P.M.NEWS in the village of Okorogana, two hundred kilometers from Calabar, the Cross River State capital, that she was late to the Bible study but was there when the incident happened.

"I went after the prayers had been taken and Pastor David was preaching on 'A Workman For God' and took his message from the book of 2 Timothy 4 and Philippians 2. He had finished with Timothy and was on Philippians when the lightning struck," she said. Sister Mary said the thunder and lightning came following a heavy rainstorm.

"The generator was not on because it was still bright (5pm), but the rain was heavy and there was severe wind too. Suddenly we heard a loud sound and there was fire every where inside the church and we all fell down and after about five minutes, we got up but the Pastor, the Deacon and Woman Leader did not get up."

She said the pastor's hand was scorched as if "someone pressed a hot iron on it" but the other two had no burns on them.

When P.M.NEWS visited the village of Okorogana the bodies of the deacon and the woman leader were being buried in their family homes.

A son of the women Leader who gave his name as Samuel Egbam said his mother was a committed Christian and he does not "want to believe what some people are saying; that the death of my mother is caused by someone in the village. I leave everything thing to God."

A pastor of the church said the burial expenses for the victims including Pastor Dave whose body would be taken across the Cross River for burial in his village today (Friday) would be borne by the church.

A pastor with the ministry, Pastor Lawrence Ekwok, who was a former journalist with the Daily Independent newspaper, said the incident "was an attack".

The police in Obubra said the matter was reported to the divisional station.

A police source at the station retorted when asked to speak on the incident: "but who do we hold culpable, the lightning? I think the church is handling it in its own way and we leave it at that."