

60 Reported Dead as Church in Nigeria Collapses

The Associated Press reported witnesses and an official said at least 60 people were killed when a church collapsed during a service at The Reigners Bible Church International in southern Nigeria Saturday.

Congregants told the Associated Press that the church in Uyo, capital of Akwa Ibom state, was still under construction and workers rushed to finish it in time for Saturday's ceremony to ordain founder Akan Weeks as bishop.

The AP reported that hundreds of people, including state Gov. Udom Emmanuel, were inside when metal girders crashed onto worshippers. Weeks was reportedly unhurt, but the bodies of the 60 victims had been retrieved as of 8 p.m. ET Saturday.

The AP reported that the death toll could continue to mount, according to one rescue official, and that the governor's spokesman, Ekerete Udoh, said the state government will hold an inquiry to investigate if any building standards were compromised.

"I visited the scene of the incident today and saw people being taken out," said Monday Akpan, a resident told a Reuters reporter. {eoa}