

Will The Anti-christ Arise from Nigeria?

Pastor T.B. Joshua remains a divisive figure in Nigeria



Controversy continues to surround Nigerian faith healer T.B. Joshua, whose ministry draws thousands of followers worldwide despite relentless claims that he stages miracles and practices witchcraft.

Joshua, general overseer of The Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos, has reportedly seen cancer and AIDS healed during his services. People visit his church from across the globe, and last fall healing evangelist Benny Hinn appeared on Joshua's TV program and described him as a man of God.

But several Nigeria-based pastors have said Joshua's power comes from demonic sources and that his church is a cult. Ladi Thompson, pastor of Living Waters Unlimited Church in Lagos, recently produced a documentary, *Deception of the Age: The rise of a Nigerian Anti-Christ*, that seeks to expose Joshua as a false prophet.

"We don't want an Antichrist to arise out of Nigeria to conquer the globe," Thompson told *Charisma*. "Then at the end of the day, when the truth explodes, people will go, 'Ah, look at Africa again.' It's our duty as ministers of the gospel ... to warn the righteous."

The documentary features accounts from two former leaders in Joshua's ministry. Bisola Johnson claims she and her family were given a yellow liquid to drink when they first arrived at Joshua's compound, seeking healing for a "malignant disease." Johnson said because her relatives were Muslims, they assumed the pastor's actions were normal for a Christian.

She said she soon began to dream about Joshua and to imagine

herself attending his church. After becoming part of the ministry, she says he eventually manipulated her into having a sexual relationship with him. She claims she was one of several women he coerced into having affairs.

Another former leader, Godwill Agomoh Paul, said he helped Joshua stage miracles. Paul said he would tell people seeking prayer at Joshua's church that they couldn't see the pastor unless they sat in wheelchairs Paul purchased for the ministry. When they stood up out of the wheelchairs after receiving prayer, observers would think they had been miraculously healed, though Paul says the individuals had never been paralyzed.

After appearing in the documentary, Paul sent a letter to Nigeria's Inspector-General of Police asking him to investigate Joshua. Paul claims people have died because Joshua instructed them to stop taking medication and depend on his "blessed water."

Joshua called the allegations "fabricated lies" and released a documentary of his own to refute the claims. The video, *Beware of Blasphemers*, presents a string of people who claim they spread rumors about the church for profit. The documentary also shows Johnson saying her family worshipped Satan and that she once set fire to her home because she was mentally ill.

The video also shows a man whose healing Paul said was staged testifying that he had been paralyzed and was miraculously able to walk after Joshua prayed for him.

The documentaries have divided many Christians in Nigeria, which is what worries Thompson. He believes Joshua is using trickery not to amass wealth or fame, but to undermine the church. "We've had a lot of false prophets," Thompson told *Charisma*. "[Satan has] always tried to infiltrate the church. In Nigeria, there's always a clear distinction between the true church and these syncretic churches. But he's divided the

church.”