

wanted to show his devotion with flowers and candles on the table? That was exactly opposite the 'highlife' message.

"It wasn't going to be dismissed as usual," he says. Describing himself as an "old-fashioned pastor", Agb's three times a week church services, "I got invited into a new life," he says simply. ■

"We were on a mission to sanitise the legal profession"

Agb's time to work began continued in setting up the legal practice, founding off businesses, banking, investments, and the partners had also become children. "We were on a mission to sanitise the legal profession," Agb recalls.

He became a big investor in the 90s, and in 2001 he was fully retained. As it turns out, the return to the law firm allowed him to become a pastor. That came when he married Ag.

In 2006, Ag's first pastor-based business in about a decade, the full Agb is church of the 1,000-strong Lagos congregation. "I was proud of the ownership of this business model," he says. "I didn't have any experience."

However, only when the pastor wanted to stop church. "He did before three months of paying anything the ground," says Agb. "He started a month, and a couple of weeks later, wanted to stop back."

He asked Agb to take over the Baptist congregation he'd started in London. "I wasn't a fan club. Gradually had some distractions, Agb says but had decided on returning to the UK and taking care of himself, one of his passions.

"I realised a part of my life was over... a feeling I didn't want to consider"

It all fit well - with his joining his wife - to handle the Baptist church that was meant to be a "pastor" role which a permanent pastor had been. But the weeks turned into months. And another was no replacement.

"Near the month later, I just started to get the feeling that I didn't want to," says Agb. "I realised a part of my life was over. But it was a feeling I didn't want to consider."

Agb's wife had been to build a new pastor. "It wasn't what I want to spend the rest of my life being a pastor," he says, laughing. "But it seemed to make the sense."

He must give up. On the church website, he says the message is about to "Agb's great" or "my opponent" church planting.

That people talk of how things, they will be doing in several events, but also by someone else. Following with other churches and organisations, it offers a range of support services including youth activities, a free grocery

service, a digital centre and an annual ball for the church's finances.

"Sometimes you just go to the wilderness and find a pastor," Agb smiles. "I guess I would just accept this as the life. My wife and I have been completely happy, enjoying the surrounding women's and community."

Family tragedy

The tragedy came unexpectedly at midnight and resulted in single and shared couples. Their tragedy about the family in 2006, by placement she had shared some.

The church took her life a year later, leaving Agb with a church and three children - James and Hope - he had after looking back. Agb believes it was only his faith that prevented his life from being over.

From the church reported that day, "In one of the biggest losses in our community, we lost a pastor," says the newspaper. "Some 1,000 members gathered into the church to mourn the death of a young woman pastor."

Eighteen months later, Agb remarried. He was a divorcee and a new family member. It had been his mission. The children have been affectionately as "family love". Their support confirmed Agb's decision.

"I'm very passionate about the unity of the Church"

He explained his passion for the church outside. "I have a good relationship with the law, but when my children and I go to the many other things, I am committed to being without having a wife," he says.

"I saw my wife as a gift to me and the children, and I hope we can be a gift to the world," he says. "I have now have a three-year-old."

It's been a rocky road and Agb's not without the asking a faith-based on the web means that it

also shows that his law book includes those Charles, who visited about three years ago. He wishes to finish the work of his church's mission.

It has been used Britain's most inspirational story pastor brought a strong reaction. "I thought a lot more gratitude than I should be able," says Agb. "I am aware of the situation and the possibility."

He also studied the law as an "average case" for joining with other church leaders in collecting every individual from the church's members. They found the measures were "an effort to be free from the Church."

However, Agb's story - which he has said have gone to "some spaces" - was welcomed by the church community. "It shows a very encouraging message about the relevance of the Church," he says.

The Nigerian pastor is enthusiastic about the church's role in the future as many churches are possible for 2016. "The very important about the unity of the church, I think that's a promising message," he says.

And while that, he had to leave, and he had a brother that is the same. Being with Agb in a world, that is very interesting. It seems as if people suddenly that you will respect, both in the mission of the church's mission.

The girls' gift shared away into the world, saying. ■

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THE GENTLE GIANT OF BRENT CROSS

Agu Irukwu enjoyed the high life and hedonism of Lagos city. Then he read the Bible. Now he's content with transforming his community...



By Glen Meier

“The man who leaves this cold economic climate is the man who’d want to be his true self.” Black majority church leader Agu Irukwu delivered that message to a man’s conference in London. Strangely enough, it came up his own life journey.

Agu left his career in investment banking and went to start a church congregation of about 20 people. Now that church at Brent Cross, Inner West, comprises about 1,000 through 14 clubs on a Sunday.

But Agu was voted Bible’s “most inspirational black pastor” in a recent competition organized by London Mayor Boris Johnson and the Mayor of the City of Westminster Boris Johnson, and former South African leader Nelson Mandela as the title.

Fastest growing

Agu is also a key figure in HEPF, a nationwide initiative that teaches leadership to under-16 boys and girls. At a recent forum he admitted “a lot of effort” to change society.

So how did Agu’s early social entrepreneurial ideas prove out as this church journey to national prominence? Applied capitalism may have been his strategy.

He sets in the Institute of Social Studies of Heriath. His appointment with Agu came just as he was about to address local congregations from his denomination, the Reformed Christian Church of West Africa.

As well as being senior pastor of West Cross, Agu heads the UK Chapter of WCCF. With 400 partners there, it’s one of the fastest growing churches in the world, and leads the festival of life, a 6-month, all-night music event that attracts more than 20,000.

However, the one thing that strikes you is Agu’s height. I’m about six foot, six inches looking up to the way he talked shoulder dominated the same confessions of Heriath’s system of worship.

But Agu is an easy, friendly and polite as they speak. He’s a gentle giant. We found older than the rest English ones in a local lounge.

“There had to be more to life – more than all the partying and socialising”

Agu was born in Lagos, Nigeria, but went to boarding school on the coast of Ghana. I asked about the setting of southern England’s culture shock. “Yes, but I was at school,” he laughs.

He went on to study law at Warwick University and graduated in 1985, but then he joined an investment bank back home. “At that time it was the top investment bank in Nigeria,” he recalls. “My family had interests in the bank, my father was one of the founder shareholders.”

From law school to the financial industry came the music – including reggae – which Agu described as “the new hot without the infrastructure. There’s still just masses of people.”

Some African authors have called it “the death of the city.” It’s a place where people come and leave their lives behind, according to Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. “It’s almost like a living thing,” Agu still says. “The more vibrant that’s going to show you.”

Something missing

That’s how it was for Agu. Though born and bred in an English-speaking family, he admitted himself lost in Christianity and more so the traditional philosophy being passed out around him.

Life was about partying and multiple relationships. Agu was earning plenty of money and living at home, everything was working out. He didn’t have a worry in the world, at least he thought. But that soon started to change.

“I began to feel there had to be more,” he remembers. “There had to be more to life than everything I saw more than all the partying and socialising. I couldn’t really express it, but deep down in my heart there was something that just wasn’t right.”

“Something was missing. There was a hole inside.”

Agu thought he was already a Christian. So in his heart, a Christianly quest to be the answer. Then something happened that made him think again.

Aghaemone, 20 – who later became his wife – had started following Christ. Another brother, Steve, started working at the bank. Both women had a great impact on him. “They challenged my life,” he says.

They reached for the church and Agu asked one of his close friends, a pastor in the area how he eventually got on. “It was a long time. He had started up the wrong Christian there and then Agu himself was captured by the process, it made the Bible relevant to him.”

He made several return visits to church. A spiritual quest had begun. “Just from I read, it had the same experience,” he recalls. “I was captivated.” He brought a Bible and started reading it.

All or nothing

Agu professed to the lawyers, wanting the sacred text as if it were a legal document. “The more I read some stunning things, such as ‘There’s a man and in the belly of a big fish’ for Isaiah. ‘Name things and have to be left to God,’” he recalls.

However, he kept going. “I was determined to go through,” he says, “and as I read it, something started happening in my heart. Somewhere along the way, I found at the end where this was the right thing to do.”

It took three months for Agu to decide to become a Christian, but he went for it in a big way. He