



Zimbabwe – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 13 June 2017

Re: Information relating to Uebert Ange Snr and the Spirit Embassy (The Goodnews Church). Persecution/ treatment of pastors involved in Spirit Embassy. Police/ state protection.

An article from South African newspaper the Mail & Guardian, in a paragraph headed “Poster boy of the gospel brigade”, states:

“The prophet is barely into his 30s, wears a velvet jacket, floral high-collar shirt and brown pointed-toe shoes. He goes by the name Uebert Angel. He is one of the poster boys of Zimbabwe's prosperity gospel brigade. They are in their early 30s, natty dressers who bag crowds yearning to fill the gap left by old-time religion: the promise of prosperity. Who can resist that? The old churches still insist on Christ's teachings to ‘store up your riches in heaven’. But why wait when the prophet in the velvet jacket says you can have it all here and now?” (Mail & Guardian (4 April 2012) *Preaching the gospel of bling*)

The Introduction to a document from the BiAS - Bible in Africa Studies, a publication of the University of Bamberg Press, states:

“This latter brand of prophets in Zimbabwe was locally popularized by Ezekiel Guti, founder and leader of the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa, Forward in Faith (ZAOGA FIF). However, the current discussions surrounding prophets and prophecy in Zimbabwe are largely inspired by another brand of Pentecostal prophets, the mega-church prophets. Among this class are Emmanuel Makandiwa and Uebert Angel, founders of the United Family International Church and the Spirit Embassy respectively.

There is so much that has captured the imagination of Zimbabweans when one looks at these two leading figures among the mega-church prophets currently operating in Zimbabwe: from their lavish and materially extravagant lifestyles, including the latest and very expensive cars such as a Lamborghini and Bentley for Angels and a Mercedes S600 for Makandiwa. These prophets also claim to possess spiritual healing powers that few can rival, and to being able to bless followers materially, including the so-called ‘miracle money’ where followers find money in their pockets and bank accounts.” (BiAS - Bible in Africa Studies (University of Bamberg Press) (2013) *Prophets, Profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe*, pp.15-16)

In a section headed “Faith with Profits? An Overview of Prosperity Theology” this document states:

“Prosperity theology contends that believers must ‘sow’ in order to ‘reap’ financial rewards and good health in this life. Through giving generously, God will reward them richly. The work of their hands will thrive, irrespective of the

prevailing situation. God is projected as the God of miracles who empowers believers to 'make a way where there is no way.' In their preaching and prophecies, proponents of prosperity theology such as Makandiwa, Angel and Prophet Passion promised adherents who gave generously that their lives would be transformed. They would no longer be in want, but they would become stable economically. God would ensure that poverty would not haunt them any longer." (ibid, p.101)

A section of this document titled "Young Male Prophets in Contemporary Zimbabwe" refers to Spirit Embassy founder Uebert Angel as follows:

"Closely linked to Emmanuel Makandiwa is Spirit Embassy founder, Uebert Angel Mudzanire. His Shona name is Mutumwa, meaning 'messenger'. Uebert Angel was born on 6 September 1978 and he hails from Zaka in Masvingo province where he grew up attending the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. He founded the Spirit Embassy Ministries International on 12 March 2007 while living in Manchester, England. By then, he was only twenty-nine years old. He testifies that while in the United Kingdom until today, angels visit him and it is widely believed that it is due to these angelic visitations that he changed his name to 'Angel'. Others believe that the change of name was a simple translation from Shona to English of Mutumwa to Angel. Apart from his official names, Uebert Angel is also nicknamed 'the Eagle' or 'Major' by his followers for his said supernatural prophetic powers. He is married to Beverly Angel who is regarded in Spirit Embassy as a prophetess. He is also well-known for his famous statement in which he refers to God as Jehova Chikopokopo, Mwari vasingade runway (God the helicopter, who does not need a runway). From his perspective, God does not need anything to justify his blessing of people whom society may regard as unworthy. In terms of size, Spirit Embassy boasts of twenty branches worldwide, including cathedrals in South Africa, the United Kingdom, Zambia and Botswana. It also owns a television channel, namely Miracle T.V." (ibid, p.161)

An article from Zimbabwean newspaper The Standard states:

"Flamboyant and sharp tongued, Prophet Angel made his way into the public glare in 2011, championing the gospel of prosperity. The tall and lanky prophet, who dressed with a flourish, quickly became one of the most sought after prophets locally and regionally. Fondly referred to as 'Papa' or 'Major' by his congregants at Spirit Embassy, the youthful prophet - whose collection of flashy cars endeared him to the youthful group in his church - was unapologetic about his boastful tirades. He reached an all-time high with his miracle money sermons which almost got him into trouble with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe officials, but wriggled his way out of it and became even more popular." (The Standard (1 March 2015) *Zimbabwe: Uebert Angel - From Grace to Grass*)

This article also states:

"Angel received a lot of negative publicity for making people kneel before him. He was accused of drawing his powers from some priest in Nigeria who was closely linked to his spiritual father Victor Kusi Boateng. He was also accused of using occult charms and power, to perform miracles and a team of pastors from Ghana threatened to come and seek audience with the President Robert

Mugabe and expose him. Feeling the heat Angel relocated to the United Kingdom, allegedly to spend time with his wife, but his departure did nothing to stem the controversy around him. The media was awash with reports that the esteemed preacher/prophet was also battling a brain tumour. In December last year he was implicated in a \$300 000 fraud case in which he allegedly connived with a local car dealer and swindled a Harare businessman of a Bentley luxury vehicle. The man claims that Angel refused to return the Bentley given to him on the promise that the 'seed' would, in a matter of months, multiple three times in value. In a typical case of how the mighty have fallen, Angel now has a warrant of arrest over his head." (ibid)

An article from News Day states:

"Spirit Embassy leader Prophet Uebert Angel Mudzanire has been implicated in a \$300 000 fraud case where he is alleged to have connived with a local car dealer, Anderson Tagara, and swindled a Harare businessman of a Mazda Bentley and later fraudulently registered it in his brother's name." (News Day (5 February 2015) *Uebert Angel sucked in \$300 000 fraud case*)

A report from the Legal Monitor Worldwide states:

"Harare magistrate Mr Tendai Mahwe issued the warrant on Christmas Eve when he did not appear in court to respond to allegations of lying to businessman Mr Ndabazinengi Shava that he would 'harvest' several vehicles and money if he 'seeded' his Bentley Continental to the preacher. Efforts to get a comment from Prophet Angel over the last fortnight were unsuccessful while church officials in Harare were tight-lipped. The warrant reads, in part: 'Whereas from the information taken upon oath, there are reasonable grounds of suspicion against Ubert Angel Mudzanire, founder of Spirit Embassy Church with no further particulars known, committed a crime of fraud as defined in Section 136 Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act Chapter 9:23 which occurred sometime in June 2013. It is alleged that he intentionally misrepresented to Shava Ndabazinengi. . .being the director of Faith-Edge Holdings (in Harare) that if he cedes his motor vehicle, a Bentley Continental, black in colour on registration number ACO 1759, engine number CKHOO2121, chasis number SCBDH23WOBC68373, complainant would in eight months receive several vehicles, assets and money as blessings and if nothing materialises the accused person would return the same motor vehicle to the complainant when in actual fact all this was not true and instead the accused person sold the car without the complainant thereby converting the proceeds to his own use.'" (Legal Monitor Worldwide (16 February 2015) *Warrant of arrest for Prophet Uebert Angel*)

A News Day article states:

"Angel, born Angel Mudzanire declared his Zanu PF allegiance while addressing about 10 000 guests attending President Robert Mugabe's 90th birthday party at Rudhaka Stadium in Marondera on Sunday. 'Critics will be there and stories will be written (that) Angel has been swallowed by Zanu PF as if they know where I was before. I was born to a Zanu PF father and we had a sister who campaigned for MDC, but we never fired her from home,' he said in apparent reference to Mercy Mudzanire-Nongera, who last year contested and lost MDC-T primary elections for Masvingo Central constituency. He also praised Zanu PF's land reform and youth

empowerment programmes. However, NewsDay readers yesterday blasted the youthful cleric for seeking 'Zanu PF refuge to cover up for his yet-to-be uncovered sins'. Others defended the miracle-making Angel saying his political affiliation was a personal choice which he should not be demonised for." (News Day (25 February 2014) *Uebert Angel torches storm*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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