



I BELONG TO JESUS

THE KAKA STORY

by Kunle Falodun

Many football fans around the world were popping their eyeballs when the latest money bag in the English Premier League, Manchester City Football Club announced that they will be bidding for the services of an AC Milan player last summer. It was not the fact that they were bidding for Ricardo Izecson dos Santos Leite, popularly known as Kaka that was the shock, it was the staggering amounts that was being mentioned that got the attention of the world. Even non football aficionados took notice when Manchester City bid about £135 million for the services of Kaka and offered to pay him a total of £500,000.00 a week.

Kaka, was born on April 22, 1982 in Brasilia, Brazil. His family moved to the city of Sao Paolo when he was seven years old. He started playing football with a local youth club and it was here that Sao Paolo, one of the top Brazilian club sides discovered him and took him on at the tender age of eight. He was offered a professional contract at fifteen and made his senior appearance in 2001, scoring 12 goals in 27 appearances. AC Milan, one of the biggest clubs in the world signed him from Sao Paolo for about Eight million Euros in 2003. AC Milan owner, Berlusconi was famously quoted as calling this fee peanut.

However, the Kaka story is not that simple. Just before moving to Milan, Kaka suffered a career threatening injury. He was almost paralysed due to an incident that occurred at a swimming pool. In an interview with the UK Sun Newspaper, he said "It was a time in which I learned you have to give your best every single day because the next day you might not be able.

"The doctors said I was very lucky, that I could have been paralysed. But I think it was God — He saved me from something worse. "I had gone to visit my grandparents in Caldas Novas in Brazil and I slipped on a swimming pool slide. When I fell into the water I hit my head on the bottom of the pool and twisted my neck, which caused a fracture of a vertebra. All I knew was that anyone with a broken neck would be disabled for life. The doctor told me I would not be able



to play for at least three months, and then they would be able to tell if I was going to fully recover".

"But after two months the injury had healed and I was able to resume my football career. That was when I knew God was looking after me and that He was on my side." Since this time, Kaka's belief in God has become legendary the world over. He wears a tee shirt with an inscription boldly written "I belong to Jesus" under his jersey, which he famously revealed after winning the champions league with Milan to millions watching on TV around the world. The fact that his tithe also goes to the church straight from his account is also not a secret.

He is one of the highest paid footballers in the world at the moment and had won the World player of the year award in 2007. A former world cup and Champions league winner, Kaka had won the greatest prizes in his profession. The man who likes to call himself an evangelist was once reported to have appeared in an advertising campaign of the Billy Graham organisation in Brazil which reportedly led to millions turning to Christ, healings, deliverance from demonic oppressions and many life changing testimonies.

So when Man City came calling, Kaka said he prayed to God and God who directs his life told him NO! At a time when it seems money can buy anything, Kaka's message is clear; I belong to Jesus! He stayed put in Milan.