

ters of the church in Lagos. Disclosing that teachers assistant on Administration and Personnel, Pas- inculcate the fear of God in the students.

## How Boko Haram murdered Borno Pastor



FOR five years, he preached the words of God amidst the prevalent insecurity in the North Eastern state of Borno, often walking through the shadow of death, but miraculously surviving. Even when the usually serene hilly town of Shaffa, Hawul Local Government area in the southern part of Borno State, where he ministered, was attacked about

two months ago, Pastor Eluid Mshelizza Gwamna came out unscathed.

But, the evangelical mission of Pastor Gwamna in the rural communities of southern Borno was however cut short by rampaging Boko Haram fighters few weeks ago in the same Shaffa, about 230 kilometres from Maiduguri, the state capital, while returning from

a church programme.

The resident pastor of the local assembly of Living Faith Bible Church, aka Winners Chapel, was reportedly ambushed by the insurgents, who were unleashing terror on the community on the night of the sad day.

He has been transferred to Marama, another community few kilometres away from Shaffa, but his family are still in Shaffa, his elder brother, Ibrahim Gwamna Mshelizza, said, adding that the 44-year-old father of four went back to Shaffa to honour an invitation by his former members to deliver a sermon at a programme organised by the church on that fateful Wednesday.

"He was actually invited to preach at the Living Faith Church at Bamjikirl in Shaffa. He later headed home to spend the night with his family after the programme, but was ambushed on the way. From the account given to us, he was identified as a pastor by one of the Boko Haram men and they slaughtered him right there," the elderly Gwamna revealed.

Not done with the dastardly

act, the sons of Satan, according to Shaffa residents, then proceeded to set ablaze houses in the town.

"Someone among the Boko Haram was pointing to people's houses one after the other, and they burnt down these houses. It was as if they had the list of houses they planned to burn," an indigene of Shaffa, who resides in Maiduguri disclosed to us.

No fewer than 18 people were reportedly killed by the insurgents in the dusk attack that also spread to neighbouring Shindiffu, another community in Hawul Local Government area.

Gwamna's family members described him as a committed and hardworking minister of God.

"He was devoted to his pastoral calling after a long sojourn in the world, doing what he liked until God took over his heart and called him to come and do what He wanted. Nobody ever thought he was going to be a pastor or even a man that would be preaching God's words," the deceased's brother further disclosed.

He said the pastor, who was the fifth in the family, left behind

three boys and a girl with his wife, adding that the family had taken consolation in the belief that the man died while preaching the gospel of Christ.

"Mama said it gladdened her heart that Eluid died a believer. She was even the one preaching to us to take heart and see his killing as a sacrifice to God. She considers him a martyr, having died in the hand of his persecutor who were out to silence every voice or belief different from their wild ideology," he added.

According to other family sources, the pastor's mother, Mrs. Saratu Gwamna was the first Bura woman to attend a bible school in Bura land, one of the major ethnic groups in the southern part of Borno.

"Her husband was equally a church planter," said another relation who did not want her name in print. She stressed that the death of the pastor dealt a big blow to the larger Mshelizza family.

• Culled from Church Times Nigeria

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