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"Angel" Michael: An Ode To A Hero

By: Zanswat Bowsan on October 11, 2013 - 3:34am



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It has been said jokingly that a black man is cowardly. He runs now and asks questions later. Every day, we watch stories on heroic feats done by people in the western world, but very rarely is there a story around us about a person who lays down his/her life for another.

Michael Anthony was a 27 year old young, vibrant and promising man who had plans on studying electrical engineering in the

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university; the dream was halted due to lack of funds. Instead of being idle, he became an electrician's apprentice.

On the 13th of August, 2013, at about 8:30pm, Michael Anthony, an Igbo man who resided in Benue State had just returned home at Owners Occupier Housing Estate along Abu King Shuluwa road, Makurdi, when he heard a child crying. He assumed it was one of the children in the neighbourhood who was being flogged. The crying became unbearable and he heard shouts for help; that was when he hurried to the scene. A neighbour's house was on fire and their baby was trapped in the living room which was already engulfed in flames.

"The fire started that evening without anybody noticing it; before anyone knew what was happening, the flames had spread like wild fire, swallowing up the whole house. At a point, people in the neighbourhood made desperate efforts to rescue three children from the fire but the flames heaped on", he said. All efforts to rescue the crying baby were futile and some started calling the fire service which turned out to be abortive as well. That was when Michael's rescue instincts kicked in and he raced into the house and located the baby whom he threw out of a window. The baby survived and he managed to escape alive but with severe first and third degree burns.

It was such a touching story that it moved President Goodluck Jonathan to donate the sum of 2million naira for immediate treatment abroad which the medical experts stalled when the young man appeared to be responding to treatment at the Benue State Teaching Hospital (BSUTH). Though "angel" Michael, as he was fondly called at the hospital lay in pains, he said he had no regrets in saving the baby from the flames; he said "I don't in any way regret my action. No matter what it turns out to be (life or death), my joy is to make heaven at last." Even as he fought through, he still had plans on going

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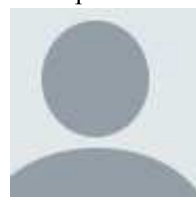
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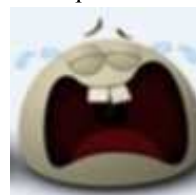
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back to school to pursue his dreams. Sadly, Michael lost the fight when his health began to depreciate and he began to complain of an excruciating chest pain.

The mother of the baby that was saved remains grateful and says she and her husband could never have done what Michael did. When the house went up in flames, they had lost all hope and resolved to trust God for another baby. She says she is still shaken and cannot get over the whole incident. She still cannot fathom the fact that Michael gave his life for her son to live.

Amidst tears, his family was grateful to God and they believe that he fulfilled his assignment on earth. His father said "I particularly appreciated the doctors and the nurse on duty that night, they did their best but I think God needs him now". His mother simply thanked God for using her son to impact on lives. "He has done God's will. My son finished well", she said.

Never has there been such a moving story that has melted even the hardest of hearts. Will his death trigger an awareness of selflessness? How many more good Samaritans will go unnoticed in our country? Even though he is gone and free from pain, this valiant young man definitely deserves a form of recognition, a posthumous award to show that the nation applauds his distinctive act of service to humanity. He neither considered tribe, religion or region in his altruistic motive.

And as his family mourns his passing, one can't help but admire his bravery which reminds me of a song we sang in primary school: "When the knight won his spurs in the stories of old; he was gentle and brave, he was gallant and bold. With a shield on his arm and a lance in his hand, for God and for valour he rode through the land."

May his soul rest in perfect peace.

— Some information was culled from

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Seventeen suspected fake corps members on parade at the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) premises. PHOTO BY ICPC

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