

From wedding train to funeral parlour •How church members died in road accident

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Mr Lekan Saka

Olayinka Olukoya writes on the accident that claimed the lives of nine members of a church last Saturday when they were on their way to attend a wedding ceremony.

THEY had no inkling that fateful Saturday, October 6, 2012 that death was lurking in a corner as they eagerly prepared to go for the wedding of the daughter of a member of their church.

They were all gaily and gorgeously dressed in their attires, hoping to share in the joy of the parents of the bride and the entire family.

They were in high spirits as they hit the road. They were all full of hopes, aspirations and desires. But unfortunately, fate had another plan for them as they did not even get to their destination, not to talk of partaking in the wedding ceremony as a result of an accident that claimed their lives near Ototo village, a few meters away from Abeokuta, the state capital.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the victims and 11 others were heading to Victoria Island in Lagos State to celebrate with retired Bishop Babajide. They were all members of the African Church, Solution Camp Ground, Ewang Estate, Abeokuta. It was learnt that they had all converged on the church premises to take off in a convoy. They were said to have been led in a prayer session by the priest in charge, Reverend Jeremiah Okunlola, popularly called "Baba Ori-Oke".

They left the church premises in a convoy with an 18-seater Hiace bus belonging to a private transport company in the town leading the convoy involving two buses and three cars.

The unfortunate incident happened about 30 meters away from the take off point when a truck travelling from Lagos to Abeokuta rammed into the commercial bus conveying the newly ordained priest, Reverend Josiah Adebawale, a prospective corps member, Miss Mayowa Odunlami, a graduate of Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State and the only child of her mother and six other members.



Others in the bus were a protocol officer in the church, Mr Olamilekan Saka, who was said to be planning for his own wedding; Evangelist Bola Kuye, one Mrs Ogunwemimo, Mrs Adefule, Mrs Tosin Ewuoso and a middle aged woman identified as Iya Alakara.

The late Saka, it was learnt, was planning to hold his family introduction ahead of his wedding, before the ugly incident occurred. He was said to be alive and bubbling that fateful Saturday morning, before they took off for the journey.

For Odunlami, the only child of her mother who was said to be in her early twenties, it was an unexpected end.



She was said to have visited her friends at Adigbe in preparation for one of her friend's sister's wedding slated for November 10 and was also said to be preparing for the one year mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme.

Mayowa Odunlami

The late Reverend Adebowale was ordained as a priest in the African Church denomination less than 30 days ago by the Primate of the church, Rt. Revd. Emmanuel Udofia, and other officiating ministers.

Adebowale had been a deacon for baby.



years in the church. He was said to be in his late thirties and hailed from Ilaro area of Ogun State. He is survived by his wife and two kids between the ages of one year three months and five months old baby.

He had since been buried that Saturday night in Abeokuta while Saka was buried on Sunday evening.

It was tears and wailings at the burial of Mrs Ogunwemimo who was billed to travel for holy pilgrimage to Jerusalem but her dream of visiting the holy land failed to materialise. She was a staunch member of the church; she was buried on Monday.

Meanwhile, the Ogun State Governor, Senator Ibikunle Amosun, has commiserated with the families of the victims and promised government readiness to foot the medical bills of the survivors.

Rev. Josiah Adebowale (left)
during his ordination

Amosun paid an unscheduled visit to the survivors at the State Hospital, Ijaiye and the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Abeokuta, where he urged all the medical personnel attending to them to put in their best.

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24