

# How a Lagos-bound bus crashed, leaving deaths and sorrows in its wake

• Newly married couple among the dead

BY OSA AMADI

January 5, 2016 was the birthday of Muna from Umunakara Imerienwe in Ngor-Okpala LGA of Imo State. But it was a bad day for the family of Mr. Hilary Dikeocha, a distant relative to Muna from the same village.

While Muna's family were rejoicing and thanking God for adding one more year to their son, unknown to them, Mr. Hilary Dikeocha and others from Ulakwo and nearby villages had perished in a motor accident on Shagamu road on their way back to Lagos after the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

The doomed bus had parked at Ulakwo bus stop early that Tuesday morning and intercepted passengers who had wanted to go to their usual bus stations at Owerri to board buses back to Lagos. Ulakwo is like a gateway town to Imerienwe and other nearby villages. Incidentally, all the passengers that boarded the ill-fated bus came from Ulakwo, Imerienwe and the neighbouring villages.

Perhaps Mr. Hilary Dikeocha wouldn't have travelled to the village during that Yultide, if not



• Hilary Dikeocha

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for his brother's burial, Godwin Dikeocha, which took place on December 31, 2015. Godwin's death had been so devastating to the Dikeocha's family. Not a few members of the family, especially women, had refused to be consoled on that 31st as Godwin's body was being laid to rest. It was clear too that Mr. Hilary was also in deep mourning, though he must have taken courage from his Christian faith shaped

over the years by membership of the Deeper Life Christian Ministry. He was seen sitting beside his eldest brother, consoling him, perhaps with the word of God, not knowing that he himself was going to die, 5 days from that date, and in a most horrible way.

That Tuesday morning, Mr. Hilary had taken one of the sons of Godwin his late brother and together, they

had boarded the doomed bus at Ulakwo. Fortunately, the boy survived the accident, but unfortunately, his uncle, Mr. Hilary Dikeocha, died on the spot.

Hilary Dikeocha's death will certainly be difficult for his family to endure. But how would another family endure the death of another young man from Ndeama Ulakwo who entered the same bus that morning with his newly married wife from Nekede?

The young man from Ndeama was said to have come home that Christmas for the traditional marriage between him and his young wife. The young man died instantly in the accident. The wife was found still breathing, and was rushed to a hospital where she too died, bringing to an end, the hopes and dreams of two young people to raise children and have a happy, prosperous life.

Two other young men, said to be brothers from the same mother, also died in the Sagamu New Year mis-hap. The brother, according to reliable sources, are from Egbelu Obube in Ulakwo.

Now, weeping, regrets, and gnashing of teeth are the prevailing moods in the bereaved families. Some relatives of the deceased are asking, "Oh, why God?" But the reality is that we live in a world of life and death, a world where more than 150,000 people die everyday in different ways, a world where at least 2 persons die every second. For some, we live in a painful world.