

I never knew it was our last meeting when my twin visited me

— Brother of Baptist cleric who died in Oyo auto crash

OLUFEMI OLANIYI

SORROW and disbelief continued to trail the death of a reverend with the Bethel Baptist Church, Ogbomoso area of Ibadan, Oyo State, Taiwo Oloyede, who died in a motor accident on the Moniya-Iseyin road on Saturday, October 9, 2021.

The incident threw members of the church into mourning. Oloyede, who was pastor in charge of the church for about 21 years, had travelled many times with church members for spiritual assignment and social functions before the incident. On October 9, the cleric travelled with some church members and some of them also died in the crash while returning to Ibadan.

Oloyede, his wife, Grace, and other church members travelled to Saki on Saturday, October 9, to attend the burial of one of the church members' parents. But while returning from the trip, he lost his life alongside some other members. They were said to be on the same bus.

The cleric's wife who was also on the bus sustained injury and is said to have been receiving treatment at the University College Hospital, Ibadan. However, some other church members who sustained injuries had been treated and discharged.

Our correspondent gathered that the accident which happened close to Muslim Burial Ground at the outskirts of Iseyin was reportedly caused by speeding. Two buses collided at a bend and the buses were badly damaged by the impact of the collision. According to the Oyo State Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps, Uche Chukwurah, nine lives were lost, while 15 people got injured and only a male child was rescued without any injury.

They started the journey at dawn on that day and many believed that those who lost their lives had no premonition of the incident.

The late cleric's twin brother who is also a clergyman and pastor in charge of PJ Ladapo Memorial Baptist Church, Ikorun, Osun State, Reverend Kehinde Oloyede, in a brief interview with our correspondent, however said he had no omen about the what occurred to his brother despite visiting his (Kehinde's) family and spending five days with them before embarking on the journey.

He said, "My brother came to visit in Ikorun on

Saturday, October 2 and left on Thursday. He didn't tell me anything to suggest that his end on earth had come. I also didn't have any premonition about his death. But he launched a book he wrote on August 22. The book is titled, "My journey to the land of the dead." We have to accept the way it happened. God is ever faithful."

In an interview with our correspondent, the President, Ibadan Baptist Conference, Reverend Stephen Adekunle, said the burial date of the cleric had not been fixed because of the condition of the wife who was still hospitalised at the UCH, Ibadan.

Sunday PUNCH gathered that the book, "My journey to the land of the dead," captures the experience of the late cleric in 2007 or thereabouts when he was involved in a motor accident.

On July 5, 2020 when he clocked 20 years as the pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Oloyede in a post on his Facebook page appreciated members of the church for their cooperation with him, recalling the warm reception he was given when he was newly posted to the church two decades earlier.

It read, "Today marks 20 years I've spent as your pastor at Bethel Baptist Church and I've been spending a lot of time lately thinking about my past few years here. I remember how welcoming everyone was the first weekend I moved into town. Several families came to help us carry boxes and several more families provided hot homemade meals. I remember the weddings and funerals I've had the honour of serving as well as the various church functions I've been able to be a part of. Most of all, I remember the heartfelt conversations that happened in my office and at the front of the church."

"Today I am simply writing to say thank you. You are such an amazing congregation and it has been such a blessing to be your pastor. I am continually blown away by your compassion, generosity and willingness to serve. I can only hope that I have inspired all of you as much as you have inspired me. Thank you so much for all that you do. You make this great place possible."

Oloyede's friends, relatives and church members have since taken to his Facebook page to mourn him and condole with his family.

One of his friends on Facebook, Jonathan Olaniyi, said, "You talked to me with words of encouragement on Thursday and death snatched you on Saturday, haa daddy. May your soul rest in perfect peace."

A member of his church, Rotimi Moradeyo, wrote, "My Rev'd last week Wednesday, you called me on the phone and prayed for my family. Haa my daddy, so sad to hear of your death, may your soul rest in peace."

In his condolence message on the late cleric's Facebook page, Solomon Aremu, said he believed the cleric saw his death coming and that was why he wrote a book about his journey to the land of the dead.

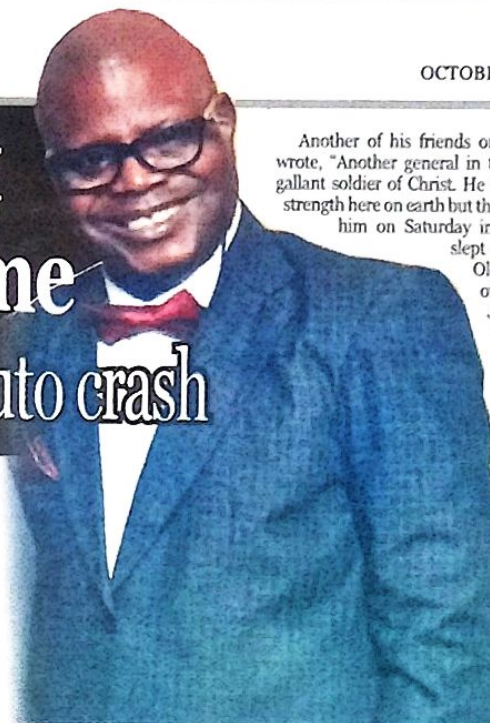
He said, "Revd Taiwo Oloyede must have predicted his death through his book but not known to us. He actually saw this death coming. He launched his book titled, "My journey into the land of the dead," on August 22, 2021 and I am saddened to hear of his demise barely two months after the launch of the book."

"He came, he saw and he conquered. Glory be to the name of God. May the good Lord give the family the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss and grant his soul a peaceful rest till the resurrection day."

Another friend of the late clergyman, Reverend Olawale Olabiye, also wrote, "Now I understand why my friend, Reverend Oloyede Jacob Taiwo ran away from me at this year's ministers' conference. He asked my wife where I was. She told him I was in the multipurpose hall. But my friend refused to check on me or call me till the end of the conference and returned to Ibadan which was very unusual of him. He didn't want me to speak and see his face for the last time. Haa God! Can I ask you a question? No! Because you are an unquestionable God."

"Can I pray that heaven should fall now? No! Because you don't expect such prayer from me. Can I thank you for this? Yes! Because your word says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 that, 'we should give thanks in all circumstances.'"

"Thank you God for choosing my friend as one of your soldiers. He has fought the battle, he has conquered and finished the race. The battle is over! Thank you Lord for the life well spent. My friend, sleep on at the bosom of Jesus Christ till we meet and part no more."



Another of his friends on Facebook, David Adeniyi, wrote, "Another general in the lord's army has gone, a gallant soldier of Christ. He fought darkness with all his strength here on earth but the cold hand of death touched him on Saturday in a motor accident and he slept off. Reverend Jacob Taiwo Oloyede, sleep on in the bosom of your saviour till we meet at Jesus feet. All 1996 set at the Baptist College of Theology, Oyo miss you and will always remember your friendly smile and loving character."

"We shall continue to pray for the family you left behind. May the God of grace console and comfort your better half, children, brothers, sisters and the parents you left behind. May God comfort the church, association and conference in Jesus' mighty name. J.T good night till we meet and part no more. My memory

is still fresh back to our discussion at BTS (Baptist Theological Seminary) Ogbomoso in front of Reverend Smith statue not knowing that that would be our last discussion. You finished your own part in the fight, left us behind and looking at us now how we are fighting. J T Good night till we meet and part no more. Adieu JT Oloyede."

Speeding and other forms of recklessness by road users have caused accidents on the 65-kilometre Moniya-Iseyin Road recently rehabilitated by the administration of Governor Seyi Makinde. The development made the Iseyin community to call on the government to erect speed bumps on the road to force motorists to reduce their speed.

The National President, Iseyin Development Union, Alhaji Bayo Raji, who was among the first to commiserate with families of the dead and injured victims, lamented that many lives had been lost in accidents on the newly reconstructed road. He called on the government to erect speed bumps on the road especially at the Iseyin end like it was done at the Ibadan end of the road.

Raji said, "We pray for the souls of those who died in the accident and other accidents that claimed lives and limbs on the road. We also beseech our governor, who has always listened and acted in accordance with the yearnings of the people, to please call the contractor to put speed bumps at critical points along this road, like the 'Serafu' Market, the kilometer 2 Cattle Market, some villages where activities are rife and the junction at the Iseyin Muslim Burial Ground."

"We believe that as speed bumps have worked in reducing the speed of motorists at the Ibadan end of the road, the same sanity will prevail at the Iseyin end as well and we shall not witness such waste of lives anymore."