



# Panoplia



## Remembering the Brethren who have gone ahead

By Abimbola Adewumi Alabi

While writing the message on Father's Day for 2016 my heart ached for the brethren that were close to me who had already relocated to heaven. They did leave their legacies within the short period of their life span. Naturally I assumed they will be around for a long time but the sovereignty of God prevailed as to when HE allowed them back. Like nations post and recall ambassadors so were these fathers who had gone back to heaven. Born again Christians do not die; they simply go to sleep. When rapture occurs on that beautiful resurrection morning we all shall see each other again. However the way they impacted us still lingers in our memories. As I wrote in an earlier piece 'what does death mean to you', it's actually what you do when alive that would make men appreciate and remember you. When you depart, those works will continue to speak. So be careful with what you do now.

**Bishop Emmanuel Osakwe** was my tutorial lecturer in those days at Foursquare Gospel Church, Yaba. I did my National Youth Service with the telephone and television ministries of the Church. Even though Pastor Grace Agorom was my immediate supervisor, Osakwe's office was always opened for me to brainstorm on any issue. He introduced me into the world of theology; gave me books to read; and asked me to enroll in the Correspondence Bible School – a program which he too was taking at the time. Somehow his office at Yaba Church was the first on your right as you entered the then bungalow Yaba office. There I met other youths, high crusaders, young and old. He was a melting pot that brought all groups of Christians together. He graciously introduced me into the opportunities of speaking engagements outside the foursquare world. It was mixed

feelings for us when he left the Foursquare hierarchy to serve as the pioneering minister along with our leader, in the Nigerian World Vision outfit started by late Dr S O Odunaike. After Dr Odunaike's passing on to glory, he founded his own ministry but still kept in touch with the Foursquare world.

Ebullience is the word that best described **Brother Yomi Adewale**. Any time you met him, he was always full of life. He had that zest in him that was joyously contagious. Always with a smile; he will often call your name with so much life that always showed his enthusiasm towards that person. Whenever you met him way back in those days at University of Lagos, he was always neatly dressed. There was no excuse of power failure or absence of water on campus

that will ever make him put just anything on. Whatever the time of the day or whatever the occasion, Bro. Yomi as we all knew him was always well dressed. As the General Secretary of the LVCU he often led us in worship and those were times of great rejoicing and worshiping God that no one wanted to miss. With his command and fluency of English one might think he was an English major. He always introduced



Welcome to Panoplia.

The mission of Panoplia is to help believers develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. It emphasises spiritual growth and leadership.

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Most quotations in this newsletter are from the **Holy Bible, King James Version.**

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guest speakers with confidence and uniqueness. He carried that same positive attitude into his ministry at the Foursquare Church, Yaba. I had the privilege of working with him in the Lifeline TV ministry of the Church. He was a very humble but very knowledgeable minister of the gospel. As the Presenter of the TV program he handled the various topics with simplicity that connected the TV audience with the discussants and, and he presented the speakers very well. He put that same distinctive qualities into his work at the Cornerstone Church he founded in New York and continued his passion of caring for the people in his various ministries. It was he, in those days at Yaba Church, who first introduced me to Bro Godwin T Emiko, as he was then known. Though I had heard about him in one of those meetings with the senior friends of the LVCU but the late Olu of Warri was another father gone too soon in the Foursquare / LVCU world.

**THE Olu of Warri, His Majesty Ogiame Atuwatse II** was a rare humble royal dignity that I was privileged to meet within the LVCU / Foursquare family. As a leader in the movement I was opportune to receive him on some occasions that he came to worship at the Yaba Church and he radiated such distinct knowledge and balance of Christianity and royalty that marked his peaceful reign. In one of such visits to Yaba Church the women were having a session of the service on that day and due to culture he could not seat at the meeting where it was a woman presiding. I had the opportunity of waiting on him inside the Senior Pastor's office for over an hour while that program was on. It was a moment of rare insight into his knowledge of the Bible and true application to the world we live in. I was also privileged to be hosted twice by him along with other leaders of Foursquare in the privacy of his palace in Warri.



## IN THIS EDITION:

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As I write I do also remember some other fathers that had gone too soon among those that we started that glorious fellowship, LVCU with, such as **Frank Olanrewaju**; a powerhouse engine for God. When he prayed, heaven and earth knew. He served with NIFES till he departed. **Sunday Ayankogbe** always brightened the fellowship at the time. You cannot have a dull moment with him. He always shared his faith with such passion and excitement. **Tunji Ogunkanmi**, often humorous with his smiles and notable for his confession of calling himself the young millionaire. And true to his confession he became one before he rested too. **David Oluwayomi** was a Bible secretary with such passion and love for God with his trademark of digging deep into the scriptures. Whether he led prayer meetings or Bible study you surely had an encounter with God. Now he has gone to be with our Father who is the God of all knowledge.

The news announcing the exit of our always-smiling **Sister Charity Fakinlede, nee Edemadede** also brings to mind women who had carried the banner of righteousness faithfully. To those of us who had 'visitation ministry' to Moremi Hall in those days, her room was either the

beginning or the end of the visitation time to that hall. Always jovial very hospitable; you cannot leave that room without her talking about Coli. She was not only in love with him she was excited about him. She was truly charitable, loving and caring to those of us privileged to know her in those early days. **Monica Aggrey** was also the 'modern face' of LVCU in those days. Definitely she loved the LORD and her unique ways drew positive attention to the fellowship. Sadly for us, she too has taken an early departure to heaven.

And for all our dear sisters like **Biodun, Yetunde and Bisi** whose partners have gone ahead of us all we know that the legacies they left behind will continue to speak. This is a celebration of lives touched by God and whom God used to touch many lives.

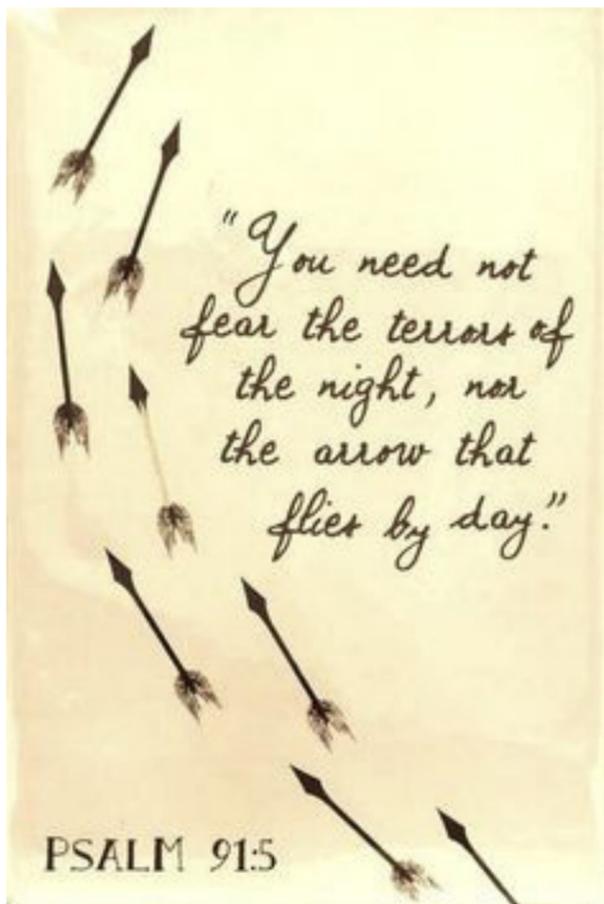
Heaven is a reality that we will all see one day, if we continue in the faith. To those who have 'quickly' finished their work and entered into their rest, we do thank God for your lives. And for us, who are alive; let us continue to fight the good fight of faith.

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# All for the Best

By Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein

*You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day — Psalm 91:5*

One of the greatest Jewish sages to ever live was a first-century rabbi named Akiva. There are many stories about Akiva, but one is more a tribute to his teacher than about the great sage himself — a man named Nahum Ish Gamzu.

Nahum was his given name, but the other two words were part of a phrase that he was known to say: “This, too, is for the best.” No matter what happened in Nahum’s life, he saw it as a gift from God. Situations that would lead most people to despair had no effect on Nahum. Akiva learned from his example.

In one story, Akiva was traveling at dusk. He needed a place to spend the night, and so he entered the nearest village and knocked on the door of the first house he saw, hoping to find shelter and a place to rest his head. But the homeowners turned him away. As did the next owners, and the next, and the next. No one would take him in! Eventually, Akiva gave up and set out for the woods instead. “This, too, is for the best,” he said.

In the woods, Akiva lit his lamp so that he could study. He also had a donkey with him to help carry his things and a rooster to wake him in the morning. But soon, a lion ate his donkey, another predator devoured his rooster, and

a strong wind blew out his candle. But all Akiva said was, “This, too, is for the best.”

When Akiva woke in the morning, he discovered that the village he had passed through the night before had been pillaged by the Romans. The inhabitants were sent into captivity. Finally, Akiva understood God’s providence. Had he stayed in the village, he, too, would have been in captivity. If not for God, the Romans would have heard his donkey or his rooster or seen the light of his candle, and they would have captured him in the woods. Akiva could see how everything truly was for the very best.

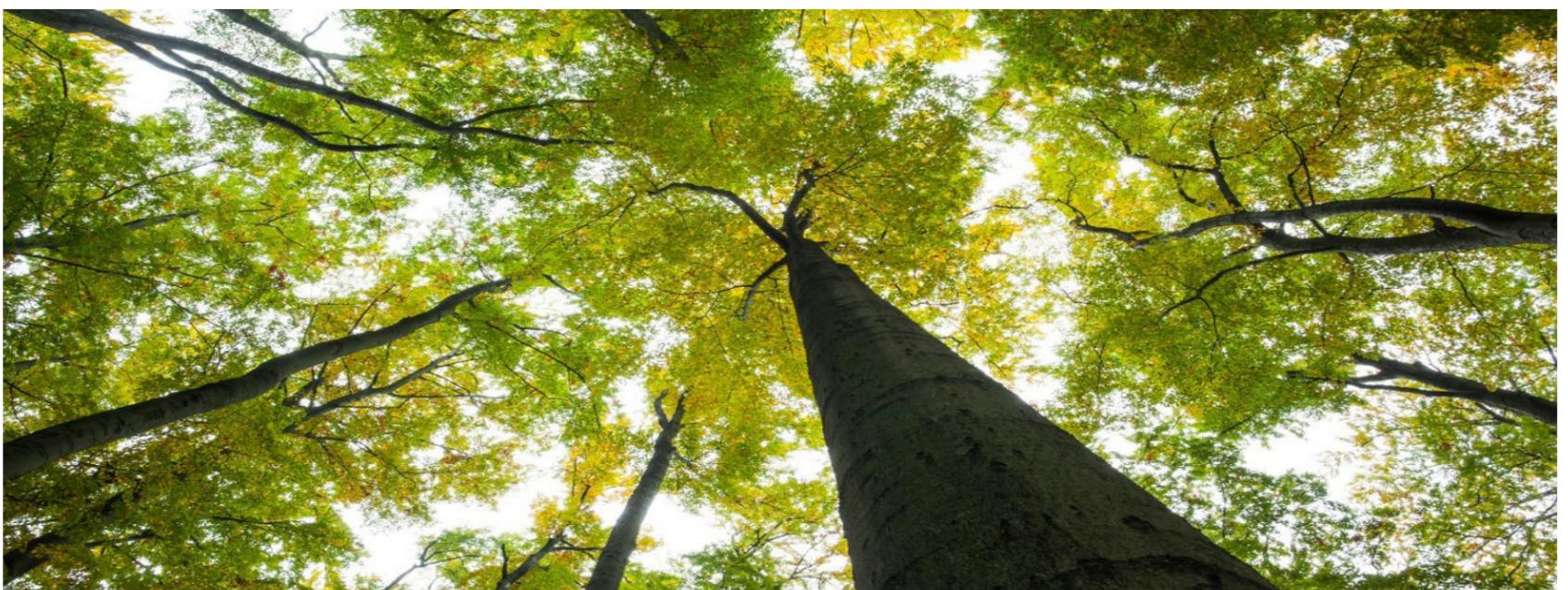
In Psalm 91, the psalmist writes, “*You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day.*” Think about it. There is nothing to fear when we know that every single thing that happens to us is for our own good. We can let go, relax, and enjoy the journey, knowing that all will be well in the end. How much wear and tear on the soul we could save!

Try out Nahum’s phrase and see what it can do for you. Next time you find yourself in a seemingly unfavorable situation, say this: “This, too, is for the best.” One little phrase can change your whole day . . . and your life!

With prayers for shalom, peace,

*Rabbi Eckstein*

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein  
Founder and President



# Standing Up In Battle



By Anthony Adesile

Through the ages, man has been on the battlefield fighting. It's called the battle of life. But there are battles we understand and battles we often have no clue about. We understand competitive battles; battles fought and won physically. These are physical battles that we can see, and yes there are many who aggressively court these kinds of battles. But there is a battle that even the mighty strong men and women of this earth do not understand. It is the battle of the spirit and it does not respect physical strength and ability of man. This is the battle that many, weak or strong, man or woman, boy or girl, fights and loses.

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12)*

This is the battle I believe you know does exist, if you are a Christian. This is a battle that challenges your logical or intellectual mind, if you are one of those that say there is no God and the mere mention of God and Satan instantly builds a wall of superiority around you over a bunch of weaklings who embrace 'religion' as a way of escape. Well believe it or not, there is devil after your life, 'to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10)' and the experiences you have that defy logical explanation are proof of the battles you have been losing so rapidly.

But this discourse is for those who know and engage in spiritual battles. If you are not in this category, your best bet is to stop denying the obvious before the 'thief' destroys your soul in hell and you find yourself a loser here on earth and eternally. You need to take the first step in the process of winning by believing and receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Want to try? You can do that on your knees and plead for mercies or seek help from a bible believing Christian or Church.

Now that we are all on this same page with regards to spiritual battles, I must ask what your response is to spiritual battles. I mean, you, a Christian. Do you stand up as a valiant Christian to fight or do you recoil in fear and uncertainty, doing nothing? That's why we would explore examples from the Scriptures for our encouragement, and believe you me; we need more encouragement to fight a winning battle.

There was a threat to the life and race of a certain people in the land of Shushan. A life-long enemy who had sworn to annihilate the people finally won his way into procuring a decree that was to do just that. The effect was instantaneous.

*And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing: and many lay in sackcloth and ashes (Esther 4:3).*



fasting, they meant business and suddenly the hunted became the hunter; and the enemies that were poised to annihilate them of whom Haman

was chief, became the victims of their evil plan.

You see, the response of the Jews was similar to most of our response to threats on our; life, home, city or nation, and the list go on. Yes the Jews fasted, wept and wailed, but not because they believed there was hope. They had lost their will to live and had no strength to fight. Except a man called Mordecai. He had just been provoked and awakened. His weeping and mourning was not out of fear or capitulation. No. It was a cry of the spirit for strength and direction to resist the decree. Even Esther the queen who herself was a Jew had no hope and declined Mordecai's command to approach the king to repeal the decree. His response to Esther's excuse was proof that Mordecai understood warfare and had chosen to fight and win – not to lose:

So here we are with a man who chose to stand up in battle. But there is another example to examine in order to better understand and be better poised for battle.

*...For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this? (Esther 4:14)*

Faced with the threat of death, Mordecai never for once doubted that intervention would come. He was that sure that God would show up for their deliverance. It was his unwavering position and the Esther's obedience to the heavenly call that rallied the people to now fast and pray with a purpose – divine intervention. You see, before, their fasting and crying lacked purpose, and were defeatist in nature. But when they came together on a 3-days prayer and

This time it was a man renowned in the land as a fearless man of God. He had fought many battles and lived to tell the stories. In his days, he had commanded that there be no dew or rain except by his word; ravens had brought him bread and meat when there was drought; and his exploits for God had made him a revered person by kings and nobles.



But there was a time that Elijah confronted baal before Ahab the king, declaring a contest: let the God who answers by fire be God. Thus it was that all other gods failed but the God of Israel caused fire to descend from heaven and consume the sacrifice that Elijah made before the people. Immediately the land was purged of idolatry and all the prophets and prophetess of baal put to death. Elijah defended God and God did not disappoint him. One would hope for the story to continue on that winning note but alas, Elijah disappointed.

*If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small (Proverbs 24:10)*

Elijah whom kings and nobles revered; Elijah who had just done exploit for God and eliminated all the prophets and prophetesses of baal, was threatened by someone who was not even the king but the wife of the king and was afraid. Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah and he 'arose and ran for his life'. It is understandable when a believer retreats in order to better prepare for battle as one does sometimes. But Elijah did not retreat; he fled. How disappointing could that be? There was more. Elijah prayed:

*And he prayed that he might die, and said, "it is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" (1 Kings 19:4)*

Of course God was disappointed. Elijah had gone too far with God to run from battle, especially one that challenged God to battle. This was no mere physical battle. Jezebel was a baal priestess and Elijah was God's prophet. A baal warrior challenged God's warrior to battle and Elijah fled. No wonder when God asked Elijah to approach His presence He asked him twice, "what are you doing here, Elijah (1 Kings 19: 9, 13)". His excuse ran hollow before God's accusation. God shamed him and granted his dying wish. It was notable also that what Elijah was to have single-handedly achieved and taken credit for was among three people: Hazael, Jehu and Elisha:

*It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill (1 Kings 19:17)*

Yes, Elijah remains a notable man of God today but that incident marred all the accomplishments as God's servant.

You and I can learn from the lives of Mordecai and Elijah. To always stand and not be complacent. If you have recently

won a battle, stand. If you are presently engaged in a battle, stand. And if it seems as if life is just fine with you, stand:

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith.... (1 Peter 5:8-9)*

*Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:13)*

Let us conclude with the story of the man who evidently was born into a troubled family. His mother was a woman of pain and his brothers were no better. But the time came when he recognised that it was the 'thief' that was at work to steal, kill and destroy. Unlike others, he purposed in his heart to stand and fight. He had had enough of pain and affliction. He had had enough of limitations and reproach. So he took action:

*And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested. (1 Chronicles 4:10)*

Perhaps you remained withdrawn to the challenges, afflictions and torment you experience from time to time. Now is the time to rise up and stand against the thief, the enemy that has been waging unrelenting war against you. Now is the time; today is your moment of change. Why not rise up and take control? May the LORD stand with you and grant you victory as you take that step of faith in Jesus' name.

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## EMPOWERING YOU TO FULFILL YOUR GOD GIVEN DESTINY



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*'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.'*

**ACTS 10v 38**

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