



# Sagalee Abdii

A Periodic Newsletter of  
*Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church of Minnesota*

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## Editorial Note

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By Admasu Simeso

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"! Taken from 2nd Peter 3:18 this verse was the theme of our 2014 End of the Year Spiritual Conference as well as the theme of our church for this year 2015. The word 'grow' in Afaan Oromo, *guddadhu* (*guddadhaa*, plural) has several rich meanings: grow in height and wisdom, advance, develop, change for good, mature etc. The most common blessings especially to children and young people when they do right things and please their parents and community members, people say, *guddadhu*, and *Waaqayyo si'haaguddisu!* Grow, 'let God nurture you to grow'.

In reference to the early years of the Lord on earth, the Gospel says, "*And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man*".<sup>1</sup>

To recall our theme of 2014, we were reminded to "*repair and rebuild the broken*". This year we are called to, "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord*". This shows that growth is multi-dimensional, and that it is the most important gifts from God to us. It is a cumulative process that we should also continue with building and repairing where there

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 2:52.

are needs and at the same time grow in His grace and wisdom spiritually.

Growing is individual as well as communal. Growing in the Lord involves maturity in our Christian faith. Growing in the Lord also involves taking on responsibility, involvement in the social ministry expected from a growing and living church committed to sharing the message of the Gospel in Holistic approach.

Our Christian heritage, particularly what we have inherited from our Oromo church fathers and mothers is of great significance and important value to us. They understood the message of the Gospel and truly lived what they believed and preached; they were confident in what they believed and were not wavering every time wind of uncertainty bellows. That shows growth, maturity absolute trust in the Lord they believed in.

It was that legacy and commitment to the Lord of our people, what they instilled in us from the beginning that followed us in the trail of our movement, the spread of our people throughout the world since mid-1980s. Oromo people are spread throughout the world, joined the place of worships that the Lord had prepared for them way in advance, growing in number, six of them here in Twin Cities alone. However we need to grow not only in numbers but in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, striving to fully live genuine Christian life with the help of His grace.

We are very thankful to God that we are witnessing that our church, OROECM is growing in number as well as our members maturing in their faith. This we have seen a steady growth over the last two years. Turnout for 2014 Christmas service, the New Year Spiritual Conference, Easter Week and Easter Sunday celebration, Easter Spiritual Conference, Women's Ministry Workshop, Children and Youth Spiritual Music Concert and the Mothers' Day celebration are all clear indication of growth. At each one of these events there were genuine spirit

of worship and fellowship together, a sign of growing and living church of the Lord.

Our Bible Studies of Sunday morning at the church, also that of the Love in Action every other week and several others in Northern and Southern neighbors are having quite an impact on the spiritual growth of our members. The mid-week Wednesday evening services provide worship and prayer together and spiritual topical studies together where participants share views and experience enriching one another, a remarkable sign of growth. When people study the word of God together as well as individually in depth they develop solid faith anchored in the teaching of the Lord not easily swayed by every amateurish people that appear now and then. The Justice and Peace Advocacy Committee that was established by OROECM Church Council to work on the issues of peace and justice on behalf of our church has been working hard preparing itself how to address the various justice and peace issues in systematic manner.

Last but not least our Church Council is and has been working diligently meeting regularly and discussing various issues concerning the life of our congregation. Among its major focus has been the preparation of the document outlining the Mission & Vision of our church for the next five years.

As we have said above God has blessed and continuing to bless our church in many ways for which we should be grateful to Him. Among these indicative of growth, though one of the most striking sign of growth is the participation of our teenage and younger girls who were born here in Minnesota singing and praising God (one of those on Mothers' Day) in Afaan Oromo in our traditional dresses and tune.

Thus, we are seeing, experiencing and witnessing that our church is *"Growing (and continue to grow) in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"*. While we thank the Lord for all the good things He has done for us, our immediate and

next step should and must be to earnestly work on and carefully plan how to reach out to our people around here as well as back home to share with them in various areas of need through Holistic Ministries the blessings we got from the Lord.

*We pray God bless our church, our people and our community to grow in His knowledge and Grace and also in our call as His witnesses!*

## CHRISTIANS ROLE IN THIS WORLD



**By Pastor Melkamu Negara**

These days when the world is in turmoil because of natural and man-made causes, we ask ourselves *“what is the role of Christians and Christian churches in this situation?”* Should we just watch what is happening or do we have a role to play? We hear *breaking news* on the mass killings of innocent people, abductions, demonstrations against injustice, people being beheaded because of their personal faith, natural calamities like volcano eruption, weather related damages and we can go on counting.

Historically, we know that Christian churches made impacts on the society they were living in. Christians were not spectators both spiritually and socially. We know that many modern and powerful countries were the product of Christian influence directly or indirectly. The moral character of the people, the way they treat strangers, the organized social services and their constitutions including laws of many countries show great Christian influences. In spite of modern secularism and

change of life styles, still the remnant of Christian influence can easily be traced back to strong Christian influence they had in the past. Even if those golden times look on the way to decline, the role and influence of Christian Churches are still alive and continue to make impacts. As Christians, we always hope for the better future. *“He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law”* }Is.42:4.

We all know that when someone is given a chance to work at a big company or organization, duties and responsibilities are clearly set and is handed to the employee prior to starting her/his work. If that person wants to remain an employee of that company, he or she must completely comply with the term of agreement and job description set for him or her.

Of course, we Christians are not hired but we are called by Jesus Christ to accomplish the duties entrusted to us as long as we live in this world. As an employee of a company is evaluated and also required to give full account of his or her accomplishments, we too are also preparing our reports through what we daily do. Probably, we may not be aware of but we are performing daily on issues that we will report on someday to the one who called us, our Lord Jesus Christ. So, let us remind ourselves few duties and responsibilities we were given by Jesus Christ to accomplish until we will be summoned to our final home for final report.

(1) As Christians, our role is to **PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL** of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20).

It is only this good news that save the world from hatred, exploitation, oppression, partiality, selfishness and many more similar sinful acts. It is only when man-kind submits itself to this message from God that people live together as originally intended by God. For this to happen, we Christians have full responsibility.

(2) **LIVE THE GOSPEL** that invites outsiders (James 2:17 "...*Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself...*"). Once Francis of Assisi said "**Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words**". Our actions are louder than we speak. If we do not know our role as Christians and live accordingly, our words just become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal like Paul says in first Corinthians 13: 1 and 2. {" *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal* "} Jesus has also told us why we are here on this earth. "*You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world...*" (Matt. 5:13 and 14).

(3) We are called to **SERVE OTHERS**. In Oromo culture, if you are assigned to serve guests on special events; your responsibility is to make sure that all guests are served well. It does not matter you know the guest or not. If you are a genuine servant, you are expected to make sure everyone is looked-after Paul says "*It is God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus; and long ages ago he planned that we should spend these lives in helping others.*" (Ephesians 2:10)

(4) Finally, I want to remind us all that our role is to **LOVE PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF WHO THEY ARE**. Our services without genuine love become meaningless. We are not doing things because other people around us are doing. Our service is originated from the Lord who loved without any expectations or any reciprocal outcomes. The love of Jesus came to those people who never deserve- "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" {Rom.5:8). Christian love is beyond

the customary love we know on this earth. The standard of this world never tells us to love enemies- "*But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*" {Matt. 5:44}. Our role as Christians is more than what the world practices. Probably, this saying of Jesus might not make sense to some people.

Usually people are quick to revert to fighting to settle issues through wars. But we should know that war leaves behind memories of hatred in people's lives for generations. But Christian love overcome animosity from among people and clears the way to live together as much as possible peacefully. As Christians, as long as we are in this world our role and our call are to proclaim and follow the life changing love of Christ.

# Aadde Tsehay Tolessa;

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## Her Thoughts about God and Human Suffering



**By Samuel Derressa**

I remember the day when I sat down with Aadde Tsehay Tolessa, the wife of Rev. Gudina Tumsa, six years ago on February 8, 2008 to interview her. It was just the two of us at her residence in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. Just like her name, Tsehay (which means the sun) has a bright face that attracts everyone. Anyone who had a moment with her would tell that Tsehay was known for welcoming everyone, even strangers, with an unforgettable smile. How can someone who has been through excruciating hardships turn into a strong and resilient woman?

Tsehay was imprisoned for ten years (1980-1991) where she was tortured by the socialist government. The only cause for her imprisonment and torture was her husband's denial to cooperate with the military government, and his bold criticism of dehumanizing structures in the country. Her husband, Rev. Gudina Tumsa, was executed by the Ethiopian military government in 1979. Gudina was the General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (1966-1979). Her four children were forced to migrate to Europe and America in fear of persecution. Undeservingly, she was detached from her beloved family at a time when her young children needed her care and support the most.

Yet, she remembers those difficult moments as the unfolding of God's will to reach out to those that are lonely, hopeless, and dehumanized through her suffering. Tsehay smuggled the Bible into a prison when the socialist government was persecuting Christians for holding Bibles in public places, preached the good news of Jesus Christ, helped those in economic need, and turned the prison into a worship center.

After her release in 1992, she offered her land to the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) for the establishment of a congregation at a central location in Addis Ababa. This congregation is named Biftu Bole—where few hundred members meet every Sunday to worship God. Until her passing on to the next life, Tsehay worshiped at this congregation with her children and grandchildren. Here, everyone knows her as a daughter of God more concerned with being kind, anxious to exercise compassion and committed to integrity all her life.

One of the main issues we talked about in my conversations with Tsehay was the relationship between God and suffering, or the relevance of Christianity for people that experience suffering

daily. I would like to share with you how Tsehay, a woman of God, expressed how one should understand the love and presence of God in the midst of all kinds of challenges and problems one may encounter in life.

We all know that we as Oromo's, our lives have been one of oppression and struggle; suffered through different historical periods. Our people were oppressed under the military dictatorship during 1970s and 80s. It is clear that under the present governance the situation of our people seems to be worse than in previous time. Young people all over Oromia are up demanding justice, their democratic and human rights. These multi-faced crises put people in anxiety, fear, uncertainty, and distressed. The constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech and assembly is suppressed; there is no slight equal opportunity in every sector and necessities for life in Ethiopia. People with alternative political views are closely watched, followed, arrested and detained. There are reliable reports of wide spread abduction of young as well as older people, extrajudicial killings etc.

Under such circumstances the questions we are forced to ask are: Where is God in the midst of all these sufferings? What is God up to when our people go through ofrom ne kind of suffering to the other? How do we understand what is happening to our community back home? Would we say that God allowed this unbearable suffering on our community or that it was the result of the sin of those who lived before us (the former generation)? Would we say that God used this exile as some kind of punishment? Where is God in the midst of this long period of exilic life and suffering? Whenever we see massive movements and influences that seem to obscure God's will in human history, how do we find God in the midst of that?

I remember asking Tsehay these questions. Where was God when you were suffering in prison? Where was God when your husband was killed and your children were dispersed all over the world? Her response was so simple, and yet, enigmatic. She

replied, "God is in the midst. God is at work in the midst of it all." Tsehay is right, God is where God always is: at work in the midst of all the messiness of human problems. Where was God in the slavery of Israel? Where was God in the cycles of the Judges? Where was God in the unfaithfulness of Saul, David, and Solomon? Where was God in the annihilation of the kingdom and the exile of the Southern kingdom? Where was God in the abandonment of Jesus on the cross? Martin Luther said that God is hidden, even in these seemingly ungodly places. God is always at work in spite of human rebellion against His will.

## Barsiifni nuyi walitti dabarsinu Gooftaa biraa dhufe

(1 Qorontoos 11:23-26)

Qopheessaan: Luba Wandimmuu Laggasaa Soneessaa

Ergaa Gara Warra Qorontoos kana Phaawuloos Ergamaatu amantoota Waldaa Kiristiyaanaa magaalaa Qorontoos bara sanaatiif barreesse. Innis rakkina gara gara qoodamuu waldaa, qulqullummaa dhabuu amantootaa, wal arga hawaasaa gidduu, fi kan kana fakkaatan ilaallachisee gorsa hafuuraa barreessee ergeef. Kutaa macaafaa kana keessatti immoo barsiisa Gooftaa harkaa fudhatee isaan barsiise irra deebi'ee amantoota Qorontoos yaadachiisa (1 Qor 11:23). Barsiisa Yesus kana Maatewoos, Marqoosii, fi Luqaas wangeela isaanii keessaatti sirriitti barreessanii nuuf kaa'anii jiru (Maat 26:26-30; Mar 14:22-26; Luq 22:15-20). Kutaa kana dursee, 1 Qorontoos 11:17-22 gubbaatti, Phaawulos guutummaa waldaa Qorontoos barsiisa kana irraa gara hin taanetti maquu isaaniitiif "yaadaan gargar ba'uun" isin keessa jira jedhee isaan ceepha'a (lakk. 18). Darbees akki isaan itti

walitti qabaman kan kennaa Waaqayyo waldaa Kristiyaanaa keessaan nama hundumaaf kenne sana (“irbaata Gooftaa isa qulqulluu”) fudhachuuf isaan qopheessu akka hin taane ibsee isaan akeekkachiisa (lakk. 20). Barsiifni Wangeelaa inni amantoonni waldaa Qorontoos irraa maqan kun isa kami?

Tokkoffaa, barsiisa isa Yesuus gadi of deebisee bartoota isaa tajaajile sana keessaa maddu dha. Kennaa Qulqulluun (Irbaatni Gooftaa) duraan dursee barsiisa Yesuusiin, itti aansees immoo ofii isaa dabarsee namoota hundumaatiif kennuu isaatiin hundeeffame. Yesuus Barsiisaa fi Gooftaa ta’ee utuu jiruu gadi of deebisee erbee tajaajilaa uffatee bartoota isaatiif miilla dhiqeera. Yesuus Kristoos “ofii isaatii Waaqayyo biraa akka dhufe, gara Waaqayyoo akka dhaqu” utuma beekuu tajaajila namni baay’een fudhachuu hin feene kana isaan tajaajile (Yoh.s 13:3-5]. Egaa Yesuus Kristoos jaalala Waaqayyoo tajaajiluuf jecha ulfina keenya isa akka wayyaatti uffannee nama irraa kabaja ittiin argannu sana ofi irraa fuunee lafa kenye, “erbee” tajaajiltuu uffannee akka gadi jennee wal tajaajiluu qabnu nu barsiiseera.

Lammaffaa, barsiisa isa Yesuus hammeenya namni isa irratti raaw’atu hundumaa gaarii gochuun deebise sana keessa maddu dha. Yesuus Kristoos akka Seexanni Yihudaa ilma Simoon, nama biyya Keriyotitti galee yaada Yesuusin dabarsee kennuu kana garaa isaa keessa kaa’e beeka ture (Yoh 13:10b). Haa ta’u malee, Yesuus Yihudaadhaafis miilla dhiqee warra qabanii isa ajjeesuu dhufan keessaas gurra “garbicha angafa lubootaa” isa Phexiroo billaadhaan rukutee kute sana fayyisee hamaa garriidhaan mo’ate. Pheexiroosiin immoo barsiisa kana irraa maquu isaatiif yommuu ifate, “Billaa kee man’ee isaatti deebisi; warri billaa luqqifatan hundinuu billaadhaan in badu” (Maat 26:51-54) jedhe. Xiyyeeffannaan Yesuus attamitti akka caaffata qulqullaa’oo keessatti raajotaan dubbatamee barreeffame jirutti dhiphinaa fi du’a isaa keessaan jaalalli Waaqayyoo raaw’achuu akka danda’u irratti ture. Yaadni hamaanii fi waan hamaa hojjechuun Seexana gammachisa. Garuu isa

hamaaf hammenya utuu hin ta’in gaarummaan yoo deebifneee Waaqayyoon gammachiifna.

Sadaffaa, Yesuus waan beekaniin jirachuun barbachisaa akka ta’e barsiiseera. Yesuusiin gara biyyaa lafaa kan fide namoonni waan beekaniin jiraachuu dadhabanii cubbuutti kufuu isaanii ture. Waaqayyo namootni hariiroo itti fufiinsa qabu, kan Uumaa fi uumama gidduutti ta’uu qabu, isaa wajjiin akka qabaataniif beekumsa waa’ee ofii isaa fi waa’ee uumama hundumaa ga’aa isaaniif kennee ture (Uum 2:7-25). Namoonni garuu gorsaa Waaqayyoo kana hordoofanni jiraachuu irra, isa Seexanni “akka Waaqayyoo” ta’uu isaan abdachiise sanaan geggeeffamu filatan (Uum 3:4). Yeroo sanaa jalqabee namoonni iddoo ofii isaanii dhiisanii iddoo Waaqayyoo gaaduutti dabarsanii of kennudhan cubbuu ofi irratti moosisan. Namni ulfina isaaf hin kennamne hawwu, waan kan isaa hin ta’in jal’inaan harka keessa galfachuu, fi wal hammeessuu dhaala godhate. Kun jaalala Waaqayyoo miti. Kanaaf, Yesuus waan beektaan hojiitti jijjiiraa jedhee nuu dhaameera (Yoh 13:15, 17).

Walumaa galattii, kaayyoon irbaata gooftaa fudhachuu guyyaa hundumaa fakkeenya Kristoos hordofane wal tajaajiluu keessaan tokkummaatti jiraachuu dha. Waldaa Kristiyaanaa keenya keessaa oduun gadi ba’u tokkumaa qulqullootaa kan mirkaneessu malee yaadaan gargar ba’uu amantootaa kan mul’isu ta’uu hin qabu. Barsiifni, lallabnii, faarfannaa, fi tajaajilli keenya hundinuu kan barsiisa Gooftaa biraa dhufe irratti hundaa’u dha. Luboonni, hojjettoonni wangeelaa, geggeessitoonni, tajaajiltoonni, akkasumas amantoonni hunduu utuu waan ifatamuu qabu gidduu keenyatti ilaalluu yoo wal jajne, waldaan Kristiyaanaa sababii keenyaaf namaoota warra hin amanin biratti tuffatamuun ishee hin oolu. Kanaafis, kottaa ofi ilaallee qalbii keenya jijjiiranna. Barsiifni nuyi walitti dabarsinus isa gooftaa biraa dhufe qofaa haa ta’u. Amiin!

# From Children and Youth Ministry:

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By Jote Betel:

Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church in Minnesota OROECM has a strong Children and Youth Ministry program among its several Ministries. The purpose of the Children and Youth ministry of our church is to supplement the effort of the parents to raise the children according to the Word of God with love and care so they can grow with a strong and mature Christian faith and as responsible and caring citizens and member of their past, present and future community. We also help them understand the history and culture of their Oromo root. We also try to help them grow as God fearing, caring and responsible members of humanity.

Youth Ministries is a bridging ministry to education, interconnection, formation, and transformation. Responding to the spiritual needs of children is about building trust and relationships. Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church strives to walk with young people in their journeys from childhood to young adults, recognizing their gifts for ministry, trying to answer their questions about spirituality, and their desire to make a difference in the world.

Our children are our greatest treasures and our brightest hope, yet they face great temptation that distract them from their Godly way. Our job is to equip them with a solid foundation on God's word—that is the reason why we at the Children and Youth Ministry leaders serve with care and love. I celebrate the opportunity to make as a watermark of our Children & Youth Ministry an inviting place where all our children regardless of path can be assured that God has something special for them and that there is a place here at Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church that affirms that this is their place.

The strength of our Sunday school also rests on the foundation of our leadership team. It's just as much about the adults who minister to the children as it is about the children themselves. We have to ensure that we have all our roles clearly defined.

I love the Sunday school and appreciate its influence on the life of our children. Because our society is changing, some people think that the age of the Sunday School is past. But the future of Sunday school is bright, and I believe God will continue to use the Sunday School as the evangelistic and educational arm of our church. After its Lord the Sunday School must become one of the strong foundations of our church. It is true that anywhere, any time, the church can grow when it is revitalized. That's because, I believe in the power of God and the influence of His Word spiritually growing.

A Church is like growing or cultivating a garden. The ground must be prepared and the seed planted properly at the right time. The seed must be watered and be exposed to sunshine. These are principles for growing a garden, and when properly applied, new life will spring forth. I still believe that our Sunday School has a bright future and that it can will grow.

God is working mightily in the life of our children ministries at Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church! Many of you are familiar with our ministry, but there is always something new! With this article you will find the details for key ministry events, and certain "not to miss"

The Youth and Children Ministry of our church organized spiritual music concert at our church on May 2, 2015 under the title let us praise the Lord in one Voice, in which singers and musical instruments players from other churches participated. It was a successful get together worshipping the Lord together and many friends and invited guests from other Oromo churches in the Twin Cities area took part.

The entire program was devoted to gospel songs performed by various groups ranging from our own little children, youth, mothers and fathers, worship team, choir, and guest singers such as, Hawi Geleta, Jalal Teshome, Katie Sima, Hiwot Bekele, and Darartu.



I would recommend this event as a unique experience and especially enjoyable for those who like Gospel music and enjoying the Holy Spirit. Our children live up to and exceed their great reputation of being anointed singers and worship leaders.

God is working mightily in the life of our children ministries at Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church! Many of you are familiar with our ministry, but there is always something new! With this article you will find the details for key ministry events, and certain “not to miss”



OROECM Young Children singing.

## 2015 Major Events

- Monthly Youth worship program--- Last Saturday of each Month.
- Acquire the Fire—An inspirational Youth Evangelism gathering-March 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>
- Church-wide musical Concert-----May 02, 2015
- Church-wide Family gathering Festival---June 27 & 28
- Wapo Bible Camp-Kids 4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Week-long Bible Day Camp for kids PK-4<sup>th</sup> Grade---- July 27<sup>th</sup>- 31<sup>st</sup>
- Youth Retreat----- July 13<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup>
- United Youth Conference: May 22<sup>nd</sup>- 24<sup>th</sup>
- Halloween Night: October 31<sup>st</sup>
- Christmas Eve Service Slide Show- pictures of the college kids Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>

# The Role of Parents in Leaving Positive Legacies on their Children:<sup>2</sup>



By Lammi Aga, (From OROECM Youth)

From the Apostle Paul’s writing to Timothy, (1 Tim 1:8-15) we learn quite a bit from the advice that the Apostle gives to Timothy as inspired by the Spirit of God. I chose to paraphrase the verses of this section of Paul’s writing to Timothy and also provide a brief summary of the message.

I personally understood it like this: because it is known that God’s word is a law (instruction), we must use His word lawfully, that is in the spirit of the message it wants to convey. Of course the message is meant for those who are unjust, people who defy law and order, people who sin and do ungodly things, people who use profanity in their daily speeches, people who choose to hit their parents, people who take lives in the form of murder, people who are sexually immoral, people who practice homosexuality, people who hold

<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from the presentation given at the 2015 United Youth Conference at Ethiopian Evangelical Church.

others captive, people who don't speak the truth, people who commit perjury, and all others that contradict sound doctrine, put in one word those who are called as sinners.

As much as possible we should try to live or practice according to the central message of the gospel that was freely given to us by our God that He entrusted to us. We are eternally thankful to Jesus because He has always judged us faithfully even though we were blasphemous, persecuting, and insolent opponents. It is because we knew no better than that He gave us from His abundant grace and love. Then we know that Jesus came into this world to save sinners, all of us included. Those who sin must follow God's laws and repent from their sinful actions to be saved; all people are sinners and must abide to the laws of the Father

We should also remember and understand that all sins are equal before God. If we elevate others' sins above the others, we actually are taking our own sin lightly. No person is at liberty to rein judgment on another person if they are to claim a life with Jesus Christ. It goes without saying that our purpose here on this Earth is to live for our Lord Jesus Christ, embrace sinners as boldly and lovingly as Jesus did: share the scriptures in love, challenge twisted beliefs, and show them the light. If they choose not to follow, let them go in kindness and in mercy. It is our responsibility as Christians to shed light where there is darkness so that the Holy Spirit may be present in that place. What should Christians expect from people who wish to redeem their faith? It comes down to two decisions: a) they recognize Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and respond to the power of the gospel. b) Deny the truth and stop going to church or not believing in God at all. To simply put it, the world is always changing but the Word will remain true.

Parents can pass on positive legacies to their children or the next generation by instilling the true message of the Gospel, by approaching the challenges they encounter every single day according to the teaching of the Lord in His Gospel.

On behalf of the children and the youth I ask the parents to take an idea from this paper and apply it to whatever daily challenges you encounter. Apply tolerance, patience, and love with the youth of today. Leave your mark. Leave positive legacies on your children, they would be leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you God bless us all!

# NEWS FROM AROUND OROECM

By Admasu Simeso

There is a well-known saying which goes, “*time flies*”. We completed the first of six month of 2015 after bidding goodbye to the year 2014; and now started the 2<sup>nd</sup> sixth month part of the year, all this time constantly moving in *time and space*. Since our last edition of Sagalee Abdii No IX we had quite a number of events in our church one after another:<sup>3</sup> We apologize that our publication became quite periodical and this is the first for this year.

## CHRISTMAS



Christmas worship

We had a colorful celebration of the 2014 Christmas on 12/24/14 in the evening. Our church Sanctuary was packed with people, estimated to be about 500. People were organized in groups from the very young to the seniors and formed their own choirs. The children had many groups dressed in Christmas colors and sang beautifully in Afaan Oromo and in English. We heard from the men

<sup>3</sup> As news what we cover here may be outdated but they are mainly meant for the record of our church.

group, the women and the Nehemiah Choir and really enjoyed every one of them. We had people from other Oromo churches in the Twin Cities area. With thank God for the wonderful celebration of the birth of our Lord, the Prince of Peace. “*Galanni Waaqayyooof waaqa irratti, lafa irrattis nagaan, namootaafis jaalalli gaariin*”. Luq. 2:14.

## NEW YEAR EVE

We had end of the year spiritual conference and the New Year eve church service and celebration. The theme of our End of the Year Annual Conference and for the rest of 2015 was, “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*”, taken from 2 Peter 3:18. Evangelist Aadde Kelebet Asfaw, from the Gullallee EECMY Oromo Evangelical Church was the speaker. Led by the Holy Spirit her message was very powerful. She was not new to our church as she was with us last year also. Evangelist Kelebet is certainly one of the few top Oromo women evangelist preaching the word of God with her own style to make it interesting and more meaningful. We say that the Lord bless her ministry.

## INSTALATION of NEW CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBES:

We had our congregation Annual Meeting and installation of two new Church Council members, the Vice President Obbo Yadessa Birri and Obbo Daniel Phetros a member.

## SPECIAL FAMILY NIGHT:



On 13 February 2015 our church had a special Family Night organized by the Spiritual Growth Committee. People were formally and smartly dressed up for the occasion and couples took turns to renew their vows in front of one another.

## EVENT BY WOMEN

From 26 February to 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2015 OROECM Women's Ministry conducted a successful workshop, covering both spiritual and social life of women and family. Again Evangelist Kelebet led the workshop.

## UOEC PASTORS CONSULTATION

During the same weekend the UOEC had its Ministerial meeting in Washington DC at Oromo Evangelical Church in Washington DC. Our Pastor, Pastor Melkamu Negeri attended it and reported that it was a Spirit led fruitful meeting and very positive for the future of the work of UOEC member churches to work together on common issues.

The UOEC 20<sup>th</sup> Annual spiritual conference of this year will be held from 22-26 July 2015 at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Winnipeg Canada and will be hosted by Oromo Christian Fellowship in Manitoba.

## BAPTISM



On March 08, 2015 seven children, (5 boys and 2 girls) and on 14 June 2015 four children, a total of 12 children were baptized in our church and added

to the fellowship of our church. During all this events our church was fully packed, a clear sign of growth and God's abundant blessings on us. We thank Him for His grace and the unity of purpose we have! Sagalee Abdii says congratulation to the parents.

## Easter Sunday Special Service:

Organized by the Women's Ministry, for the first time this year, we were gathered at the church at 6:00 AM to sing "ka'eeraa" He has risen! Few of the women were at the church before 6:00 AM like Marry Magdalene and other women did to be at His burial to anoint the Lord's body with perfume after the practice of the time. The video shown depicting the sequence of events leading to the arrest and crucifixion of the Lord and His resurrection on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, the First Day of the week was so enjoyed and appreciated by the people it was shown again later at the regular service time.

## PASSING ON TO The NEXT LIFE:

A beloved member of our church Aadde Cawaaqee Guddataa, mother of Aadde Aster Tesfaye passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015 after a long illness. In accordance with her wishes her body was taken back home by Aster and her husband Obbo Taaffassee Aagaa. Aadde Cawaaqee was buried in her home soil of Dembi Dollo on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015. Let her soul rest in peace in her heavenly home and her body in the dear land of birth.

## SPECIAL PROGRAM for FAMILIES:



Special coffee treats for special family night.

We had a special family program on 15 May 2015 at which Rev. Geneti Wayesa, Director of Family Ministry of Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, EECMY gave Biblical based teaching on the life of Christian family, stressing the importance of patience and understanding one another between couples and also their children to lead an exemplary Christian life to about 70 gathered family members.

## CONGRATULATIONS:

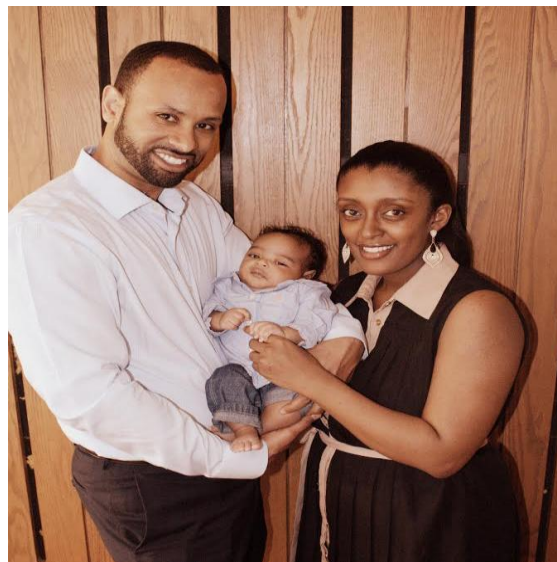


Dr. Dinku

A member of our church and also one of the active pastors of our church Pastor Dinku Lamessa Bato graduated with PHD from Luther Seminary in St Paul on Sunday, 17 May 2015.

On behalf of our congregation we at Sagalee Abdii say congratulations to Rev Dr. Dinku and his family for his hard work, success and great achievement.

## WELCOME to EJAARAA G. JENO



Ejaaraa, Leensa & Gaddisaa (Picture by Chali)

Our church has new young parents. Aadde Leensaa Iddosaa and Obbo Gaaddisaa Jenno are our new parents to a young boy born on 27 April 2015. The boy's name is Ejaaraa Gaaddisaa Jenno. Sagalee Abdii on behalf of our members say congratulations to the new parents and welcome to Ejaaraa!

## UNITED YOUTH FOR CHRIST



Lami Aga addressing the United Youth for Christ



OROECM Youth Members at United Youth for Christ.

The United Youth for Christ Annual Conference was held at Ethiopian Evangelical Church in St Paul, Minnesota from Friday 05/22/15 to Sunday, 05/24/15 in which the Youth and Children and parents from member churches including ours took part. Lami Aagaa from our church gave a presentation on Saturday, 05/23/15 on a topic of People from our church who participated say that Lammi gave a biblical based moving presentation which people really appreciated hearing that kind of message coming from our young people. On Sunday 05/24/15 the young people from our church also sang wearing traditional dress.

### MOTHERS' DAY CELEBRATION at OROECM:



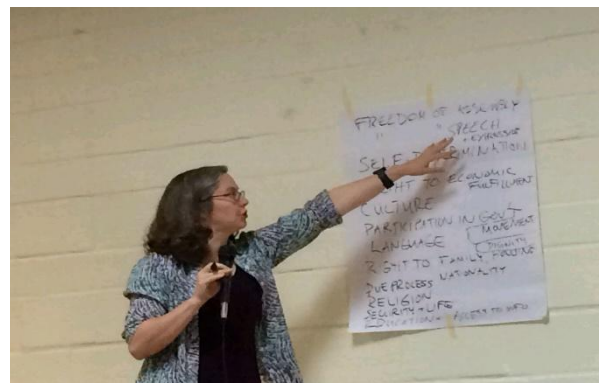
Adde Berhane Alazar 2015 Mother of the Year.



Women singing, (Picture by Pastor Melkamu).

As we have been doing over the last 3 years this year's Mothers' Day was colorfully celebrated again on Sunday ----in our church aptly in Aster Gannoo Hall. All the church programs of the day were led by the women. Few men led by Obbo Asraat Tesfaa were in charge of the delicious luncheon prepared our ladies. We are proud of our men who are committed to do superb job every year. Adde Berhane Alazar Rufi was chosen as the 2015 Mother of the Year. Around OROECM she known as Adaade (*Dear Aunt*) and in the presence of family and friends she was crowned by last year's mother of the year Adde Asnaqech Riqitu assisted by our Pastor, Pastor Melkamu Negeri and the 2013 Mother of the year.

### JUSTICE & PEACE ADVOCACY WORKSHOP Presentation.



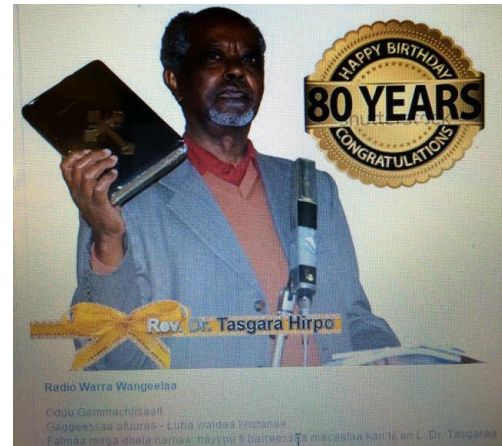
On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015 our church Justice and Peace Advocacy Committee held its 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop on the issues of justice and peace on which about 50 (fifty) members of our church and other invited from the larger Oromo Community took part. The workshop was conducted by Ms. Amy Bargquist from the office of The Advocates for Human Rights. It was informative and educational presentation on the complex issue. There were fruitful questions and answers and exchange of views.



JPAC workshop in session.

As a practical matter JPAC prepared appeal letters on two recent international crises, one in Yemen and the other in South Africa both involving our people who took refuge in those countries for various human rights violation in their homeland. In both cases letters were sent to relevant authorities by OROECM requesting to accord them protection they deserve under international law.

## Rev. Dr. Tesgara Hirpo



One of the prominent Oromo Theologians and church leaders recently celebrated his Eightieth birthday in Germany with families and friends. Rev. Tesgara was known for his bold stands on human rights, especially on the Oromo human rights issues, at least for the last four decades. His Biblical teaching is contextual and just like his friend Rev. Gudina Tumsa holistic ministry has been central to his teaching and service. Sagalee Abdii wishes him many more years of services and celebration. *Wagga'waggaan ittin isin hagau jenna!*

## OROECM BIBLE STUDY GROUPS:

We have Bible Study at the church every Sunday from 9:00 AM to 10:00. All participants are actively involved in the discussions and share their experiences helping one another in growing in our faith in the Lord together. There is no designated teacher; people take turns to lead the study.

There are also continuously ongoing Bible Studies in several parts of the Twin Cities area especially in Northern and Southern suburbs. People are invited and encouraged to join a group closer to their areas.

## QUBEE CLASS



Qubee class in Session.

Afaan Oromo and qubee class for all ages given every Sunday from 9:30 AM to 10:30 starting in at the beginning of June.

## OROECM MISSION AND VSION DISCUSSION:



Council President Dr. Robera presenting the Document.

OROECM Council after working on the Mission & Vision of our church for the next 5 years presented to the Congregation meeting by the president of the church and other Council members on Saturday 06 June 15 and continued on Sunday 07 June 15 after the Sunday church service. There were fruitful and useful comments from the congregation members

and asked the Council to go re-work on it and bring back to the general meeting. The meeting appreciated the overall content of the document except for few comments here and there.

## Fathers' Day Celebration:

Our church had an annual Fathers' Day Celebration on Sunday, 21 June 2015 at our church. The worship was led by only-men worship team and our Pastor; Pastor Melkamu preached drawing on the exemplary hard work and sacrifices that some of the Oromo Church Fathers and pioneers of the Gospel made with resilience and commitment some of them up to paying the ultimate price with their lives. Pastors and lay-people like Abbaa Gammachis, (Onesimos Nesib), Rev. Gudina Tumsa, Luba Maammo Corqaa, Luba Gidaadaa Soolan, Luba Dafaam Jammoo, Luba Ashanaa Nagaadee, Luba Namarra, Callaa. Other notable church leaders: H. E Ato Emanuel Abraham, EECMY President 1963-1985. Dr. Emanuel Gabre Selassie, EECMY first President from 1959-1963. Luba Kumsaa Boroo, Obbo Daqaa Uggaa, Qanyaazmaach Shuramoo Yaddessaa Obbo Guutamaa Rufoo, Aadde Elizabeth Karoorssaa. There were and are many outstanding leaders of our churches who made sacrifices so that theologically sound Gospel is spread among our people and survive during persecutions and hardship whose names we cannot include here due to lack of space, but we pay tribute to them and we respect them.

A poem written by Merob Aklilu Tilahun in honor of fathers was read by Lammi Aga, and a group drawn from the fathers sang. Later a delicious luncheon prepared by the women group was served in Aster Gannoo, Oromo history and idioms contest were also prepared. Obbo Jote Betel was chosen and honored as 2015 father of the year.



### In Honor of Fathers:



Obbo Joote Betel Cutting *Cumboo*, (picture by Chali Yadessa).

### By Lammi Aagaa and Merob Tilahun:

I would first like to start by saying thank you for giving us the opportunity to come up here and deliver this speech. We are gathered here to celebrate Father's day. Although you guys are growing old on the outside, you have remained young at heart and spirit. We the young adults would like to thank you Fathers for sticking by our sides all this time.

I'm going to share with you today a Poem written by Merob Tilahun. I had a chance to read it before hand and I think you will find it to be well written and I hope I can deliver it in the same essence that it was written with. Lammi.

*By: Merob Tilahun*

From the moment we are born,  
Till the moment we die,  
Just important as mother's,  
Always by our sides.  
Our protectors given by god,  
If you have one, please give a nod.  
Look around and they're right there,  
In times of trouble they are kind and fair.  
Love given every minute,  
Whether in flesh or spirit.  
Love so deep, so misunderstood,  
Most only cast off as just parents in a mood.  
Bound in mystery,  
Our Father's seem to be,  
To unlock this mystery,  
One needs to sit and listen to the old Man's History.  
Today is a day of celebration,  
The time to take up demonstration,  
Show the true colors of a good time,  
From breakfast till suppertime.  
To take up the mantle of life,  
And spend time with Dad, even for a drive.  
Here we leave in hopes of fun,  
For your time spent together with loved ones.  
**Have a wonderful Father's Day.**

### Honoring Our Graduates:



*Honoring our graduates. (Picture by Chali Yadessa)*

On Sunday 28 June 2015 graduates from various schools; from higher education, colleges and high schools as well as children from elementary

schools who made high achievements were recognized and honored at our church.



Graduates cutting cake.

It was pleasing to hear so many of our children are in honor list in the various schools they attend in their neighborhoods. There were two graduates with postgraduate degrees, Rev. Dr. Dinqisa Bato, PHD from Luther Seminary and Aadde Wubitu Ayana Sima, MBA from Augsburg College. A guest speaker Lalii Abdisa who has already accumulated 40 college credit while still in high school was an inspiring speaker at the event.

## WE THANK GOD: FOR THE COMMITMENT & Growth:

Finally, our church should be aware and really thank God for the commitment and dedication our members, of their free will, show for their church in every aspect of the life of the church.

Sagalee Abdii, on behalf of all our members would like to go on record and note how much God has blessed us from the commitment we see practically by everyone. (Of'irratti hin'beeknu malee, Waaqayyo dhugaatti nu'eebbiseera...):

The Worship Team, the Nehemiah Choir, those who take time using their God given talent to

compose pertinent spiritual songs from time to time, the young people who spend most of their free time at the church getting prepared to sing or play music, the media group who put us on the air and keep us on the air, leaders and members of the various ministries from Women to Love in Action, JPA, Prayer Group, those who cut grass faithfully every week to keep our church yard clean and beautiful, those who see to it that every week tea & coffee are ready so that people continue to fellowship after the service and have time to visit, those who keep the place clean, those who look after the maintenance and repair, the ushers, our Office Administrator who is daily engaged in various challenges to keep our church run, our Pastor and the other pastors assisting him in teaching the word of God as well as providing other services and the Council members who spend a good amount of their time on the issues concerning our church, etc.

Here we are not to say thank you just note for the record because they are doing of their free will with dedication and love for their church. It is humbling to see people engaged in doing not only what they can do but in areas where there are needs but no one is there to do. It is Matt 10:8 that we see in practice, "*Freely you have received; freely give!*"

# Major News from other Churches:

## Pope Francis's Encyclical on climate Change:



Pope Francis was greeted by crowds at St. Peter's Square this week. Agence France-Presse

Recently we heard in the news, most likely one of the most important news of this decade, 184 pages Papal Encyclical, (*Laudato Si* in Latin) issued on Thursday, 06/18/2015 from the Vatican on climate change. Some people referred to the encyclical as earth-shaking.

Encyclical is a once in a while theological statement from the Pope, to all Catholic bishops and believers around the world and at last for general public on current pertinent issues, underlining the Papal stand on those issues.

Pope Francis has proven that he always stood with the poor and the marginalized of the world and he has become their voice, Voice of Hope (Sagalee Abdii). The Pope's dedication to stand for the poor and make this world a better place is a noble Christian commitment. He has brought a

tremendous impact on the Catholic Church and by extension on world stage.

Pope Francis was elected on 13 March 2013 as a spiritual leader of the Catholic Church, the largest Christian church in the world with 1.2 billion followers. Before his election he was Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Cardinal of Buenos Aires, Argentina. He is the first Pope elected from the Western and Southern Hemispheres and the 266th in the line of succession that goes back more than two thousand years, to the first Pope, St Peter the Apostle of Christ. Beginning with St Peter, to whom the Lord said, "You are Peter, upon this rock I'll build my church" the popes are considered the Vicar of Christ, His ambassadors on earth. The Pope is also the Bishop of Rome, an additional responsibility. He chose the name Francis after the legendary Pope Francis of Assisi who also dedicate his entire life to serve the poor in spite of his background from a well to do family.

The overarching theme of his encyclical is "integral ecology,"<sup>4</sup> which links care for the environment with a notion already well developed in Catholic teaching: that economic development, to be morally good and just, must take into account people's need for things like freedom, education and meaningful work. "The basic idea is, in order to love God, you have to love your fellow human beings, and you have to love and care for the rest of creation."

Although we have not yet seen and read the detail of the encyclical it has already generated pro and con debate around the world. However as it draws our attention to the right direction, on behalf of our church, OROECM Sagalee Abdii would like to commend the Pope's courageous move and welcome his call seriously to take good care for our world and all God's creation. All Christian churches and people of Goodwill should join and support the Pope's call, teach the young generation moderation, minimize consumption, avoid waste.

According to news release from the Vatican Pope Francis will be visiting the United States from 19-28 September 2015. During his visit he will meet President Obama, address Joint US Congress, the

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<sup>4</sup> Ref. sources, AFP

first Pope to do so and also meet the homeless in one of the Catholic Churches in Washington DC.

This reminds us the sermon of Luba (Pastor) Michael Hundeesaa in our church on Sunday 29 June 2015 taken from Mark 5: 21- 43 that the Lord always was able to go down to take care of the need of the lowly and also spoke to those in high position.

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA] Global Mission and Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus [EECMY] DASSC sign Memorandum of understanding.



Lutheran World Information (LWI) reports from Geneva that ELCA and EECMY-DASSC signed Memorandum of Understanding to continue cooperation on ongoing projects in the area of diakonia

GENEVA, 25 June 2015 (LWI) - The Development and Social Services Commission of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY-DASSC) and the Global Mission unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to continue project cooperation of ongoing projects in the field of Diakonia.

It is to be recalled that the EECMY broke, “partnership ties with the ELCA and Church of Sweden, but indicated the possibility to continue engagement in diaconal projects that were under implementation at the time of its decision.”

EECMY President Rev. Dr Wakseyoum I. Negeri referred to the door that the EECMY had left open for continued support of ongoing development and social services’ projects. “I am glad that now an atmosphere of understanding is created that such support continues within the limits of the decisions of the EECMY, where the EECMY DASSC makes careful follow up on the implementation of these ongoing projects”, he expressed. “We will continue to pray to God to provide us with better future”, he added.

Thank you Lord for the life and dedication of your people!



Sagalee Abdii on behalf of OROECM would like to acknowledge the very essential technical support provided freely by the Yadesa brothers and Dawit. Thank you and God bless you!

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Chali Yadesa for the design of the new Sagalee Abdii logo and Gamachiise for the formatting and layout of the publication and all the technical input and Dawit for web posting design. Without their help it would have cost our church a substantial amount. Waaqayyo isaan ha'eebbisu!

Sagalee Abdii

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