



# Sagalee Abdii

A Periodic Newsletter of

*Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church of Minnesota*

---

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

### Editorial Note:

(By Admasu Simeso)

I. The Challenges of the Time and the Voice of Hope (Sagalee Abdii).

---

(By Luba Wondimu Legesse)

II. Word from the Pastor: By Pastor Wondimu L. Sonessa

---

(By Obbo Addisu Shunkuri)

III. Greetings from OROECM President, Obbo Addisu Shunkuri:

---

(By Sagalee Abdii Editorial Team)

IV. Tribute to the Life of Hacaaluu Hundeessaa, an Oromo Artist and Human Rights Voice.

---

(By Admasu Simeso)

V. Brief News from Around OROECM:

VI. Prayer Night for Justice and Peace by Coalition of Oromo Churches in Minnesota.

VII. Fair Share of the Water of the River Nile

---

## Editorial Note

By Admasu Simeso

### I. The Challenges of the Time and the Voice of Hope (Sagalee Abdii).

Currently we are living in a very peculiar time. There is an Oromo expression which goes, maal yaa Waaqayyo? (Why God? Kind of what is going on?) People say this when they are overwhelmed by a situation and do not know what to do: confused and bewildered. Our people say this because they know and believe that ultimately God is in control, everything in creation in His hand. It seems that currently the world is, more or less, in bewilderment and our country especially in Oromia is much more bewildering.

The world is in bewilderment mainly from the coved-19 which has gripped the entire world, soon for almost a year. On the other hand, the news we get from our homeland is very saddening to say the least, a very bad situation from the conflict, repression and a state of siege situation on top of the coronavirus which is serious enough threatening the lives of millions as they do not have any idea nor resource as how to handle it, a situation which even the advanced countries are having problem with.

As of 31 August 2020, about 26,000,000 coronavirus infection cases worldwide, 812,000

deaths were reported. In the US alone close to 6,000,000 cases and 190,000 deaths; Ethiopia reported close to 42,000 cases and 700 deaths. The low number from Ethiopia may be due to under reporting or because of limited flow of information.

The surprising thing to many people has been, when the unexpected covid-19 pandemic, the coronavirus, such a tiny virus caught the entire world by surprise, causing a devastating effect and has been dominating the headlines of world news to this day. If we take time and think, it shows us that no matter what we humans think and believe we are not quite in total control of our destiny as we may like to believe. Still the most surprising thing though has been when even the most advanced countries of the world in every imaginable way; economically, militarily and in the scientific field are unable to figure out what to do about it, at least so far. Day in and day out no other topic but just talk and air about the coronavirus, covid-19, and we do not hear for sure how long it is going to continue and if there would be any vaccine that will slow it down, stabilize the situation or totally stop the pandemic.

The positive sign though, we hear that most countries, especially European countries seem to be able to manage it. At present it is in the US and Brazil that the numbers are going up and the situation on the continent of Africa is not clear yet. Also, very saddening that people are not able to visit their family members in hospitals and cannot give them proper burial when they die. When it comes to quarantining people to slow down the spread it has a great social impact especially on the children as they cannot understand why they are separated and cannot see their parents and friends.

With the impact that the pandemic is having on the economy of the world we do not know how much longer the world can bear it without a major resultant effect. At present the most serious challenge the US is wrestling with is about opening schools. Currently schools are

closed from kindergartens to universities. On one hand opening schools will put children and teachers at risk of exposure to the virus and on the other if children stay home at least one of the parents should stay home with them and if single parents are more burden. The long-range effect of no schooling, no education is also a serious concern. Another important national event in the US that the covid-19 pandemic might have some effect on is the November 3, 2020 election and it has become among the issues talked about in the news.

Everywhere we turn we do not see nor hear positive and encouraging news except from one source, in the Word of God, **Voice of Hope (Sagalee Abdii)**. In the temporal view it is easy to lose hope, despair overwhelming but the Word of God, the Voice of Hope (Sagalee Abdii) is what sustains us. Just sitting and imagining what the future holds in this regard, what tomorrow's world would look like no one knows. The other unanswered question is that would the coronavirus ever go away, or the world is stuck with it?

**One of the most amazing secrets that God kept from humans is telling or knowing what the future holds and we do not know what even the next second holds. The unknown is the most challenging thing for humans.** But our hope is in the Lord and we put our trust in Him and keep our eyes and faith on Him that He will rebuke the current turmoil gripping the world including the multiple suffering of our people in the land of our birth, as He rebuked the waves that rocked the boat He and His disciples were traveling in, in Mark 4:39 and Matt 8:23-28 saying, "be still and let there be peace and there was calm"! Especially note Matt 8:25 where the disciples went where he was resting and said, "**Lord save us, we are perishing**". That is what the world needs to say nowadays.

We thank God that we have His sustaining **Voice of Hope, (Sagalee Abdii)** in every challenging situation and share the message of

Hope with our people and all people who are stressed by the current situation and that we pray without ceasing and also do what we can to reach out and ease the suffering of our people. We also pray for this country that we made our second home and for the entire world for God's mercy during this challenging time. **Waaqni keenya Jiraataa dha, keessa nu dabarsa, (our God is a Living God, He will carry us through)!**

Minneapolis, MN, 25 August 2020

## II. Word from the Pastor: By Pastor Wondimu L. Sonessa



### Amantiin Keenya Dubbii Waaqayyoo Dhaga'uu Irraa Dhufa

Barruu gabaabduu yeroo darbe Sagalee Abdii, Jildii 13ffaa keessatti haammatamte keessatti mataduree “Amantii Tokkoo fi Maqaa Baay’ee” jedhu jalatti, Macaafni Qulqulluun amantiin dhugaa iddoo namni barbaadee ijjibaatee akka argamu nuu mirkaneessuu isaa agarsiisuu yaaleen ture. Barruu kana keessatti immoo amantiin dubbii Waaqayyoo dhaga’uu irraa akka maddu wal yaadachiisuu irrattan xiyyeeffadha. Keessumaa yeroo amma biyyi keenyaa dhibee *Koronaa (COVID-19)* fi rakkoo siyaasaatiin hammacamaa jirtu kanatti dubbi amantiitti wal jajjabeessuun

barbaachisaa dha. *Vaayirasiin COVID-19* jedhamu kun akka hin daddarbineef wal irraa faffagaannee jiraachuu fi waaqeffachuu itti barreerra. Kun yeroo yartuu booda nu irraa darbuuf akka jiruu fi walitti deebinee waliin sagadnee isa Phaawulos warra Qorontosiin, “Yaada Qulqullaa’aatiin wal dhungachuudhaan nagaa wal gaafadhaa!” (2 Qor 13:12) jedhe sana gammachuudhaan raawwachuuf akka jirru amanuun immo abdiin nuu kenna.

Ajjeechaa Artistii Hacaaluu Hundeessaa’tiin wal qabatee jeequmsi siyaasaa biyya keenya keessatti ka’e wal amantaan sabaa akka hir’ataa adeemuu fi lammaileen biyyattii bara dheeraaf hafuura obbolummaatiin waliin jiraachaa turan qomoo fi amantaadhaan wal qoodanii ija hamaadhaan wal ilaaluu jalqabuun, yeroo akkasi amantoota (Kristiyaanota) ta’uun keenya hawaasaaf bu’aa maalii qabaa jennee akka of gaafannu nu godha. Mootummanis hiriira mormii itti fufiinsaan biyya keessaa fi biyya alaatti geggeeffama jiran akka carraa gaariitti dhimma itti ba’ee qooda rakkoo biyyattii karaa nagaa furuu humna hidhattoota qofaan seera kabachiisuuf yaaluun hidhaa fi ajjeechaan, dhugaa jal’isuun, maqaa balleessuu, fi komee sabaa dhaggeeffachuu dadhabuun qaanqeen abdiin mul’atee ture deebi’ee akka ukkaamamu godhaa jira. Nuyis alaala (halaala) teenyee miidhama saba keenyaa fi diigamaa adeemuu biyya keenyaa dhaga’uun yaada keenya miidhee dubbii Waaqayyoo dubbifannee gorsaa fi jajjabina Hafuura Qulqulluu dhaga’uuf miira tasgabbaa’aa akka hin qabaanneef dhiibbaa nu irraan ga’aa jira.

Hata’u malee, yeroo akkasii akka warra ayyaana Waaqayyootii fi amantiidhaan fayyaniitti abdiin Waaqayyoo bira akka jiru

lallabuu qabna. Waamichi amantii isa diigame gidduu dhaabbannee ergaa ijaaru, lola gidduu dhaabbannee ergaa araaraa, rakkina gidduu dhaabbannee yaada furmaata akka labsinuuf ilaalcha haaraa fi xiyyeeffannaa addaa nu gaafata. Barreessan ergaa gara lbroota, “Amantiin waan abdatan ‘Dhuguma in ta’a’ jedhanii fudhachuu dha; waan ijaan hin argines akka waan arganiitti ‘Jira’ jedhanii lakka’uu dha” (Ibr 11:1) jedha. Yohaannis immoo, “Nuyi kan Waaqayyoo’ti, namni Waaqayyoon beekus nu dhaggeeffata” (1 Yoh 4:6a) jedha. Ijoolleen Waaqayyoo jal’ina irratti jal’ina, jibba irratti jibba, lola irratti lola, soba irratti soba itti guutuun hin eyyamamuuf. Jal’ina qajeelummaadhaan, jibba jaalalaan, lola nagaa fi araaran, akkasumas soba dhugaa dubbachuudhaan mo’achuuf aboon nuu kennameera. Aboon kun dubbi Waaqayyo dhaga’anii abboomamuu irraa madda. Phaawulos, “Egaa amanitin dhaga’uu irraa in dhufa, wanti dhaga’uun ta’u immoo dubbii Kristosiin in beekama” (Rom 10:17) jedha.

Amantiin keenya dubbii Waaqayyoo dhaga’uu irraa waan dhufuuf namoota gara qajeelummaa, jaalalaa, nagaa fi araaraatti akka waamnuuf dubbii Waaqayyotu nu abbooma. Phaawulos, “Waan gaariidhaan isa hamaa mo’i malee, hamaan si hin mo’in” (Rom 12:21) jedha. Akka nama amantiitti ija hafuuraatiin yommuu ilaallu wanta hamaa biyyaa keenya keessatti ta’aa jiru kana dugda duuba inni hamaan sun dhaabatee akka jiru arguu hin dandeenyu taanaan ilaalcha gama tokkotti duufee qabannee socho’aa jirra jechuudha. Nama balleessaa hin qabne ajjeesuun, salphisuun, saamuun, jibbuun, dhiphisuun hojii isa hamaa sanaa ti. Hojii kanas nama keessaan hojjeta. Waaqayyo garuu hojii fayyisuu, wal tiksuu, wal jaallachuu,

fi mirga walii eeguutti nu waame waan ta’eef, yommuu gochaa akkasii balaaleffannu nama isa bifa Waaqayyoo’tiin uumamee fi Seexana isa hamaa hojjetu addaan baafachuu qabna. Yohaannis, “Michoota koo! Jaalalli kan Waaqayyoo waan ta’eef, kottaa wal in jaallannaa! Namni jaallatu hundinuu mucaa Waaqayyoo ti, Waaqayyoo’nis in beeka” (1 Yoh 4:7) jedha. Jaalalli sammuu keenyaaf nagaa kenna; jibbi garuu nu balleessa. Qooda walitti qabamuu gargar faca’aa adeemuun filanno nuyi jibbaa fi jaalala gidduutti goonu hammam bilchina hafuura irratti akka hunda’ee ragaa dha.

Lafa namoonni dubbi Waaqayyo dhaga’anii Yesuus Kristoositti amanannutti Waldaa Kristiyaanaatu ijaarama. Waldaan Kristiyaanaa hawaasa gidduu jiraachuun mallattoo abdiin Waaqayyo biraa jiraachuu ti. Amantiin keenya yeroo ollaan nyaara nutti guurru fi warri aboo qaban nu jibbanu deebiin nuyi kenninu warra Waaqayyoon biraa gargaarsa qabanu ta’uu keenya akka mul’isnu nu qajeelcha. Har’ras gaaffiin keenya deebi’uu yoo dides gaarummaadhaaf ta’uu danda’a jenne amanna. Waaqayyo iyyuu kadhata keenya dhaga’ee yommuu callisu qaba. Callisuun isa kun takka isa bira bubbullee ilaalchaa qajeelaa fi bilchina yaadaa kan hawaasa naannoo keenyaa irraa fooyya’e akka horannu nu gargaara. Adeemsa amantii keessatti obsaan eeggachuun ilaalcha mootummaa Waaqayyo keessaa isa kan biyya lafaa irraa addaan baafachuuf nu gargaara.

Ijoo dubbi Wangeela Maatewos waa’ee mootummaa Waaqayyoo ti. Yesuus duukaa bu’uun mootummaa Waaqayyoo keessatti simatamuu argisiisa. Bara waldaa Kristiyaanaa ishee jalqabaatti, Yihudoonni mootummaa Waaqayyoo’ti galuun saba Waaqayyoo warra

sanyii Abraham ta'an qofaaf kan malu se'anii turan. Kanaafis qomoodhaan saba Yihuudotaa keesaaa kan hin ta'in kadhanni isaanii warra Yihudootaa biratti akka sagalee nama "iyyaa" karaa irra adeemuutti itti dhaga'ama waan ta'eef utuma Yesuus isaan gidduu jiruu iyyuu isaan mufachisa ture (Mt 15:23). Phawuloos ilaalcha kana sirreessuuf "Waaqayyo ayyaana isaa isa nama hundumaaf fayyina kennu mul'iseera" (Tiitoos 2:11) jedha. Itti fufees warra Roomaa'tiin, "Namni Yesuus Kristos'itti amanuudhaan fuula Waaqayyoo duratti qajeelaa in ta'a; kana irrattis warra amanan hundumaaf garaa garummaan hin jiru" (Rom 3:22) jedha. Warri Yesuus'iin duuka bu'uu fi Yihudii ta'uu waliin makanii hubatan warra afaan Griikii dubbattan akka duuka-buutuu Yesuusitti ilaaluun isaan rakkisee ture. Kun rakkina keenya har'aatiin wal fakkaata. Phaawulos warra Galaatiyaatiin, "Egaa warri amanan Abrahaamiif ilmaan akka ta'an hubadhaa" (Gal 3:7) erga jedhee booda itti fufee, "Karaa Kristos Yesuus isin hundumti keessan tokko; Yihudii yookiis Griikii, garba yookiis birmaduu, dhiira yookiis dubartii gidduu garaa garummaan hin jiru" (Gal 3:28) jedha. Asi irratti wanti hubachuu qabnu, amantiin qomoo fi sanyii balleessa utuu hin taane, sanyii, qomoo, fi saalaan qoodanii wal tuffachuu, wal jibbuu, fi wal qoqqobuu balaalleeffata.

Yesuus rakkina ilaalchaa kana irraa isaan furuuf yeroo hundumaa yommuu dhukkubsatoota fayyisu "amantii" ijoo dubbi godhachuu irratti xiyyeeffata ture. Kanaafis ragaa Macaafa Qulqulluu baay'ee qabnu keessaa, "Amantiin kee guddaa dha" (Mt 15:28), "akkuma amantiin keessanii isiniif haa ta'u" (Mt 9:29), "Ani Israa'el keessatti illee amantiin guddaa akkasii gonkumaa hin argine"

(Luq 7:9), "amantiin kee si fayyiseera" (Mar 5:34); "Amantiin keessan waan hir'ateef . . . amantiin hamma ija sanaficcaa geessu utuu qabaattanii" (Mt 17:20) jechuu isaa herruun ni danda'ama. Akeekni isaas mootummaa Waaqayyoo isa karaa Yesuus Kiristoos gara biyya lafaa dhufetti galuuf amantiin murteessaa ta'uu argisiisuuf dha. Amantiin kan qomoo tokkoo keessatti isa kaan caalaa argamu utuu hin ta'in, kennaa Hafurri qulqulluun namaaf kennu dha. Utuma dubbii Waaqayyoo dhaga'uu iyyuu hafuurri namaa amantiidhaan gara uumaa isaatti dhi'aachuuf dandeettii dhuunfaa isaa ta'ee hin qabu. Hafuurri Qulqulluun inni dandeettiin namaa lafa ga'ee dhaabbatu beeku garuu nama gargaaree waan namni yaadaan qabatee hin beekne amantiidhaan nama dubbachiisa, ni hojjechiisas.

Yommuu Hafuurri Qulqulluun amantiin nu keessatti uumu fuula Yesuus dura akka keessummaatti dhaabachuu dhiifnee waaqeffannaa haala keessa jirru gararraa ta'e keessa seenna. Kana booda Waaqayyoo waan har'ra nu dhiphisaa jiru qofaa irratti utuu hin taane, egeree keenya irrattis itti gaafatamummaa akka fudhate nuu galuu jalqaba. Wanti Waaqayyoo jireenya keenyaa kessaa fi naannoo keenyatti hojjetus gaaffii keenya qofaa uttu hin taane, gaaffii ollaan keenyaa nu irratti qabuufis deebii ta'a. Iccitiin amantiin keenyaa Kiristoos bira dhufuu fi dubbii isaa dhaga'uu keessa jira. Muddama keenya isa har'raatiif furmaata barbaacha yommuu gara isaatti dhi'aannu, Yesuus gaaffii nuyi isa hin gaafatin kan jireenya keenya isa boriifis dhimma baasu nuuf deebisa.

Egaa amantiin kan utuu dubbii Yesuus dubbatu dhaga'aa jiranii akkasumas utuu Yesuusiiin

kadhataa jirani Hafuurri Qulqulluun nama keessatti uumu dha. Har'ras Yesuus Kiristoos muuxannoo tajaajila keenyaa fi eenymmaa keenya caalaa amantii isa dubbii isaa dhaga'uu irra dhufu nu keessatti argachutti gammada. Yesuus hojii Hafuura Qulqulluudhaan walii galu waan hojjetuuf namni amanitiin keessatti argame akka isa biraa deebi'u hin eyyamu. Yommu haallii fi namni (*koronnaa* fi siyaasni) asumatti Yesuusiin biraa deebita nuun jedhu, Hafuurri Qulqulluun immoo "Amantiin kee guddaa dha" (Mt 15:28) nuun jedha. Namni Mootummaa Waaqayyoo'tiif malu nama akkasii ti malee nama akka ilaalcha warra amantaa yookaan biyyatokko geggeessanuutti madaallii darbe miti. Yommuu kadhannan keenya olla keenyatti iyya fakkatee isaan jeequ, dhugumaan garaa Yesuusitti (*Jesus' heart*) dhi'oo jirra waan ta'eef haa jabaannu.

Dhuma irrattis, haala rakkisaa amma sabni keenya keessa jiruun yommuu tuqamnee gaddinuu, akkasumas Waaqayyo saba keenyaaf moo'icha kenneefii hidhamuu, reebamuu, salphifamuu, fi ajjeefamuu irraa isaan boqochiisuuf akka jiru faggotti arginee yommuu gammachuun nutti dhaga'amu waan goonu hundumaa akka nama amantii qabuutti haa goonu. Kanaa achi, akkuma Phaawulos nuuf dhaame, "Egaa yoo nyaattan yookiis yoo dhugdan yookiis waanuma hojjetan hundumaa ulfina Waaqayyoof hojjedhaa" (1 Qor 10:31).

### III. Greetings from OROECM President, Obbo Addisu Shunkuri:



Greetings to all our members and our friends far and near in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank God for sustaining us in our faith during this challenging time. Please all of us, let us keep our trust in the Almighty and continue to pray that He rebukes the Coved-19 pandemic that created uncertainty in our world and that soon we will be able to gather back in our church and have a day of thanksgiving and worship together.

Please also remember our people back home who are suffering from the warlike situation on top of the pandemic. Thank you and God bless us all!

Adisu Shunkuri

### IV. Tribute to the Life of Hacaaluu Hundeessaa, an Oromo Artist and Human Rights Voice.

By Sagalee Abdii Editorial Team

Over the last eight months, that is since Feb. 2020 the entire world has been living in the most challenging time in its recent history because of the COVID- 19 Pandemic. There have also been protests and riots all over United States, particularly in the Twin Cities of

Minneapolis and St Paul triggered by the cruel killing of Mr. George Floyd, a black American by Minneapolis police officers, one of them pinning Mr. Floyd's neck down on the ground using his knee. It was the most inhumane and cruelest way of taking human life seen on TV probably for the first time. The video showing the killing also triggered protests all over the world against cruelty and racial injustices.

*In the geographically center of the world, Oromia<sup>1</sup>, (the land of our birth dear to us), our Oromo people, in addition to the danger and vulnerability to the pandemic are living under total insecurity for their lives in the land of their ancestors because of the continued political instability in the country.*

Members of Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church in Minnesota, OROECM a member congregation of the Minneapolis Area Synod of ELCA are extremely saddened and very much concerned to hear the assassination, *under the cover of darkness*, of an Oromo artist and human rights voice, Hacaaluu Hundeessaa in the evening of 29 June 2020. He was a young man of 34 years of age, a husband and father of 3 children, the youngest being 1 month old at the time of the killing. The spontaneous protests that erupted all over Oromia following the killing also led to further killings of at least 239 people and over 10,000 put in prison according to a report from the government, the number increasing since then. The killing of Hacaaluu also triggered protest throughout the world by Oromos from all walks of life in Diaspora; thus, *Hacaaluu Hundeessaa became the Oromo George Floyd paying the ultimate price, in raising the quest for human rights and justice for his people on world stage.*

Hacaaluu was a well-known Oromo activist for human, cultural and political rights expressing his view **peacefully** as an artist and singer. He was in prison under the last Ethiopian regime

of EPRDF at least for 5 years for expressing his concern about the systematic violation of the human rights of his people. ***Still we do not exactly know who the real killers were, but different groups blaming each other and finger pointing. Some say the assassination was orchestrated by the government and on the other hand the government blames certain political movements to create instability in the country and has said that 3 people had been detained in connection and the protest still going on losing more lives.***

Hacaaluu's family and Oromo people are demanding swift transparent justice. ***'Adding insult to injury'*** as they say, as if the assassination of Hacaaluu and the hundreds who were killed following his death and the thousands more that were hauled into jail is not painful enough by itself, the government of PM Abiy Ahmed detained more Oromo political activist and leaders such as Jawar Mohamed, Bekele Gerba, Abdi Ragasa, and about 60 others who are still languishing in prisons and the condition of the place where they are detained, reports indicate very crowded and dangerous for their health, particularly during the current Covid-19 pandemic and the whole episode remains suspicious.

***What we can say for sure is that whoever murdered Hacaaluu in cold blood, his life cut short from his parents and his family are enemies of Oromo people, because he was a proud and brave Oromo nationalist who voiced his view peacefully in a dignified manner!***

---

<sup>1</sup> "Han'dhuurri Biyya Lafaa", Tulluu Aayiraa, Luba Daffaa Jammo, in his book, Huursaa. This is true for any spot in the world since the world is round.



**Hacaaluu Hundeessaa, Goota Oromo (Oromo Hero) with his family**

The systematic human rights abuse in Ethiopia against the Oromo people for over a century and half has been a norm for the successive Abyssinian governments controlling the power center, not that Oromo people did anything wrong but stem from pure *envy because of the natural resource God blessed their land with*. Closer to our time, over the last 4 and half decades there have been 3 regimes in power in Ethiopia totally in control of the fate of all Ethiopian people at their mercy, **all of them claiming to be democratic in name but ruthless dictatorship in practice.**

However, when in April 2018 the present Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed became the leader of EPDRF and head of the government following the resignation of the previous Prime Minister as a result of a widespread Oromo protest there was some sign of hope that the new leader and the new government will refrain from ***the old Ethiopian regimes practice; and the mentality of “megizaat”***, to rule over the people with impunity but all of them doing in the name of democracy. *But what people found unusually positive development, never happened before in the history of Ethiopia, seldom even in the history of other nations, was when Obbo Lammaa Magarsaa gave his place as the then President of Oromia Region in order for Mr. Abiy to qualify to run for the position of Prime Minister.*

*At the beginning, there were some positive steps that the Prime Minister took, such as peace initiative between Ethiopia and Eritrea, freeing of political prisoners of many years, inviting opposition groups in exile to come back home and participate in the building of the country. One of the tangible expression of the positive view of most people was, when the Prime Minister and his group, among them Obbo Lammaa Magarsaa, the then President of Oromia visited Minnesota in the summer of 2018, our people turned out in a large number and welcomed them warmly, a clear show of goodwill gesture. Of course, there were some who were skeptical even then.*



The initial positive expression was sort of confirmed by the awarding of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize- to the Prime Minister. Unfortunately for some unexplainable reason soon, the country found itself back to 'square one' with the resumption of suppression of human rights especially in Oromia Region; people killed, imprisoned and their normal lives disrupted even to the point of not being able to carry out their normal daily activities like still the old way of farming and gathering their meager harvest to feed their families, especially in western and Southern Oromia. **The hope and trust of the dawning of a new era more or less dashed.** How sad and surprising that the show of goodwill from inside and outside of the country was forgotten in no time? **The killing of Hacaaluu in the evening of Monday, 29 June 2020, a day to be remembered as one of the sad days in Oromo history and the killings and the imprisonment of many that followed highlighted the reality on the ground, basically 'history repeating itself' as they say.**

There is one thing that cannot be denied though; that is the 2019 Peace Prize, **the symbol of peace, even envied by some** is in Ethiopia, a country currently with no peace but has become more or less a war zone. It should be noted that God, history and the whole world are watching! We would also like to remind us **that the symbol of peace in Ethiopia should be a challenge (didhaa) to all for a peaceful resolution of all conflicts for the sake of peaceful co-existence as people!**

**Our faith and the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ compel us to speak out against all forms of injustice in no uncertain term,** that we have been voicing our concern as a church and as communities, for decades not only about the injustice committed against our people but against all God's people everywhere.

The night our Lord the Prince of Peace was born and laid in the manger the angels, the host of heaven sang, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, on earth peace and good will among people ". Luke 2:14. **Thus, the precondition for peace on earth among nations, people and in fact among all God's creation is "goodwill" working for justice which rains down' from heaven, from God<sup>2</sup>.** In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus quoted from the Old Testament and said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." As the followers of the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ even if it may be difficult to understand what exactly "love thy neighbor" means; at least we should try our best Not to hate anyone, we should not have anyone on our mind whom we hate! We should keep in mind that the Lord did not say first love thyself, instead said "thy neighbor", of course it does not mean we should hate ourselves in order to love our neighbors. People differ and may not agree on issues and values they hold but we should not harbor hatred against anyone.

- 1) *As a church we refrain from speculating as to who murdered the innocent young man, Hacaaluu Hundeessaa, whose only crime was to bring the human rights abuse of his people to the attention of the world. **We as Christians, as well as all God-fearing people of all other faiths, Christians, Moslems and Waaqeffataa, all the faiths that Oromo people adhere to, share Hacaaluu's unwavering stand for justice and human rights for his people and all God's people.***

---

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 37:17, 45:8

- 2) ***Those who plotted the killing of an innocent man in the dark and carried out in the dark must have believed that they could hide from humans to carry out the wish of their master, the devil but they did not think that God the Almighty was watching from heaven above their evil deeds; and He one day will bring this evil deed to light. Evil always works under the cover of darkness; the Lord was betrayed and handed over to His enemies under the cover of darkness.***
- 3) ***In one of his statement on the killing of Hacaaluu Prime Minister Abiy described it as evil<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, a despicable evil, otherwise no one with a touch of humanity would plot or order the killing of a person like Hacaaluu, decent and a man of integrity, an artist with exceptional gift of sweet voice from God. No matter as who and how it was plotted and executed, we hope that the evil deed of all those who were involved “would haunt them” depriving them peace of mind and the truth will come to light hopefully soon, and justice served. It is about this evil act that we join all peace and justice loving people to demand from the Prime Minister and his government to bring to justice swiftly and transparently all those who plotted and committed this heinous crime. If anyone kills in cold blood a person like Hacaaluu it means that no one would be safe in that country. Hacaaluu’s blood is crying to God from where it was spilled, from the street of Finfinnee and we hope that justice will be served both on earth and in heaven.***
- 4) ***At this point in time our serious concern and call upon all Oromo elders, traditional and political leaders and the society as a whole, young and old, in the name of the Almighty is, we beg and besiege one another to put aside our trivial differences that divided us for the last few decades and***

***weakened our cause and resolve to stand together<sup>3</sup>. It is about time to pause and take deep breaths as people and seriously assess the future of our nation. Group and personal interest must be put aside immediately, and national survival should be our top priority! Listen to one another and seriously think and find a way to resolve our differences among us instead of paving the way for others to use us against one another!***

- 5) ***The other serious consideration is that we should not be controlled by our emotion (miira) but control it as people with respectful tradition, should not engage and waste our time on reacting to the cheap, low and phony insults thrown at us from naturally hypocritical groups from here and there just to irritate and distract us from our focus on important issues. For them it is their way of life, their bragging and hypocrisy by insulting others will not make an iota of difference to who they claim to be and are. Remember the famous advice from the former First Lady Mrs. Mitchel Obama of the US?, “when they go low we go high”! Thus, we should be smart enough to channel and redirect our energy for better use.***
- 6) ***From history we know that Oromo people had a democratic tradition of managing their communities/society; their most important values were trust in Waaqa (God), good health and peace! They did not go and settle among their neighbors but welcomed strangers to settle and live among them to earn their living. Most likely they were among the first in human***

---

<sup>3</sup> The public virtual Conference organized by Global Oromo Inter-faith Council, GOIC conducted on 05 September 2020 with the theme “*The Role of Oromo Religious Institutions in Building Oromo National Unity and Consensus*” and the 28 August 2020 Prayer Night for Justice and Peace organized by Coalition of Oromo Churches in Minnesota are already positive sign in realization of the urgent need for our people to come together to exchange ideas for our national survival and how to play our historic role in our part of the world.

history to provide **citizenship** to strangers through an elaborate rite of “**guddifachaa**” (adopting).

7) As a church most of our members come from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, EECMY, probably the only democratic institution in that historically autocratic nation, as far as we know. Beginning right from its establishment on 21 January 1959 as an organized national church during the Imperial era, EECMY put in place a democratic system of electing its leaders down to the Synod levels. EECMY church represented many nationalities of Ethiopia: Oromos, Amharas, Tigray, Sidama, Walayita, Haadiyyaa, Kambaataa, Anuak, Gimira, Maajii, Majangirs and Nuer just to mention a few; thus, EECMY could have been a model for United Democratic Ethiopia<sup>4</sup> a representation of all Ethiopians. Even under the communist regime and the nominal democratic EPRDF, EECMY followed genuine democratic practices. We remember and are proud of our early church fathers/mothers such as Abbaa Gammachiis (Onesimus Nesib), Obbo Emanuel Abraham, Dr. Emanuel G/Selassie, Rev Gidaadaa Solan, Rev. Mamo Corqaa, Aadde Elsaabex Karoorsaa, Rev Gudina Tumsa and among the living Rev. Tasgara Hirpo, the icons of true faith, democracy and human rights and many others of our church fathers and mothers that we could name but cannot do it here because of space. Although EECMY was numerically a small church compared to other faith groups, even in its early years it had a well-respected place in Ethiopian society because of its unequivocal stand on the question of human rights, its people’s rights and also for its effective holistic ministry; to serve the whole person, both the spiritual and the bodily needs in this life. Rev. Gudina paid the ultimate price for his righteous stand. Thank God that EECMY and the congregations it

represents are our mother church/congregations; and we still carry and hold dearly those values. Above all, from early on EECMY as member church of the World Council of Churches, (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) had contributed to the visions and growth of these worldwide church organizations, the Communion of Churches! In those days EECMY was not only pride of Ethiopian churches but also of all African Lutheran churches.

- 8) Ethiopia as a country should have learned and still should learn from this humble Christian institution, EECMY how it came up with such elaborate and dignified democratic institution and we know that certainly it was a Divine guidance. This church, our church EECMY should always remain faithful and uphold dearly and preserve those indispensable values, stand the challenges that come its way from time to time; without wavering standing for justice and human rights. **If the church is faithful to her call, does not stand quietly and watch human rights violations God will always lead us to the truth and justice. The church may face difficulty from time to time, but God is always on the side of the truth and justice.**
- 9) We also would like to call upon the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy and his government and the Oromia Regional leaders to pause and seriously think if the response and measures currently being taken are going to lead to a solution and peaceful coexistence of the Ethiopian people. **Leaders should be mindful that when God puts them in place to lead His people, His plan is not for them to rule over His people oppressively from top down but to be humble and serve them, being extra conscious that God is watching their every action. History and experience clearly**

---

<sup>4</sup> Copyright AS.  
Page 11 of 23

*show us that once people come to power, it seems that “power” overtakes them, and they tend to forget that they are humans and behave as if they will live and remain in power forever. This has been the case throughout human history from way back including Ethiopia. But it would be wise to keep in mind and in their daily life that **God is still in control and one day, soon or later nature will take its own course. Thus, it would be prudent to serve God’s people that He put them there to lead in humility and justice.***

10) *In the gospel of John 21:15-17 Jesus asked Peter, “do you love me” repeatedly 3 times? At the end, a distressed Peter said, “you know Lord that I love you”. The Lord said, “protect, feed and take care of my sheep”. That is what God expects from leaders when He calls them to power; to protect, feed and take care of His people, His sheep not from top-down but from down among the people. Hacaaluu and people who were killed are not going to come back but we pray for their family, for those people who were wounded and are in hospital or at their homes for speedy recovery. At the same time, for the sake of peace and stability in the country we urge the government, not lightly, to release Oromo political leaders and the thousands who are put in prison without delay through fair, honest, and transparent judicial process and focus on resolving the current issues peacefully instead of through killings and imprisonment, resorting to the failed old practices.*

11) *Sadly, none of us is sure where the current situation is going to lead our people and the future of that country. **We strongly urge the leaders in power at all levels should know that killing and hoarding people in prison is not a solution; should have learned from history that all the past killings did not solve the grievance of the Oromo people for that matter and it will not stop this time either. It is wise and prudent to think of the***

***alternative to killings and imprisoning. This is also the time when the country needs the wisdom and experience of community and religious leaders to boldly intervene and help in resolving the crisis. The killers should know that eventually they will all die as nature will take its own course, but history and the generations will continue.***

12) *Again, OROECM members call upon all Oromo religious, civic, and political leaders to put aside our differences, pause and carefully think where the current situation is leading us and the future of our people. Once we agree to stop undermining one another on the basis of our trivial issues it will be easy to talk as one people with other Ethiopians about the future of that nation. As people of democratic culture, we see a big role for Oromos to hold that country together in this age and time when the peaceful coexistence of people are widely called for and are vital.*

13) ***Hacaaluu was and will remain an Oromo hero. His people will promise to take care of his parents and young family and pray that his soul rest in peace with the Lord.***



14) *On Sunday, 05 July 2020 our church members came together in our church after more than 3 months because of the coronavirus, during which our church services have been online but the Sunday, 05 July 2020 we came together to thank God, by lighting candles and holding them up in prayer for the life of Hacaaluu Hundeessaa and other young and old people; fathers, mothers and children who sacrificed their lives like him for justice. We prayed for his family and our people; that was the least we could do to honor Hacaaluu and we will continue!*

15) *Thus, as a church we are sending our sincere condolence and Sagalee Abdii (the Voice of Hope) in prayer to God to Hacaaluu's family and to all those people who are affected, lost their loved ones one way or another and feel insecure in their homes, to put their trust in God the Almighty that He will protect and sustain His people. Waaqi keenya, Abdiin keenya Jiraataa dha; (our God, our Hope is a Living God)! We also extend our respectful invitation to other Oromo churches, religious groups, and community leaders that we should join one another in prayers and intercessions without ceasing on behalf of our people in dire need at this time in our history. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will among all people, our people"! Luke 2:14.*

*God bless us all and open our eyes to live for peace and justice for all His creation!*

*Minneapolis, MN, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2020*

Candlelight Vigil for Remembrance of Artist Hacaaluu Hundeessaa at OROECM, 07/05/2020

## V. Brief News from Around OROECM: By Admasu Simeso

### a) OROECM Father of the Year:



OROECM celebrated the 2020 Fathers' Day on 21 June 2020 in the church sanctuary with some members present observing the rule of Social Distancing because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Obbo Asrat Tesfa who has been a long-standing member of our church was chosen as this year's 2020 Father of the Year of our church. Sagalee Abdii congratulates Obbo Asrat for the honor he deserved.

### b) Birth of children to OROECM Members



- 1) Hiwot B. Woyesa and Zekarias Feyissa with their two children Haleluya and Raji Feyissa, both girls. Sagalee Abdii says welcome to the world to Raji and congratulation to the parents and Haleluya.

We are also delighted to announce through our publication, Sagalee Abdii that Hiwot was appointed as OROECM Office Administrator starting as of 15 July 2020. Our church is blessed to have Hiwot as a staff member of our church, Hiwot gifted with absolute command of both Afaan Oromo and English languages and she also sings as our worship leader during present time of virtual church services. Above all God blessed Hiwot with a gift of spirit of

humility with strong characters scarce gift nowadays.



2) Aadne Chaltu Deresu Teressa and Obbo Aaron Abdissa were blessed with a baby girl Eden Aaron Abdissa, born 19 July 2020. It seems that Eden has already learned how to laugh. Congratulation to both parents and grandparents.

c) **Marriage: There were two marriages of two couples in OROECM:**





Aadde Tsehai Wodajo and Mr. Lyle Wright, 07/26/2020

We say congratulations to the couple, Aadde Tsehai and Mr. Wright!



The Bride Groom Ayyaantuu Fayisaa accompanied by her Parent Obbo Haile Fayisaa





Aadde Ayyaantuu Fayisaa and Obbo Ibsaa Yadesa, 08/29/2020. The wedding was officiated over and blessed by Pastor Wondimu L. Sonessa of OROECM



The Bride Groom Ayyaantuu Fayisaa and the Groom Ibsaa Yadesa with Ayyaantu's parents Aadde Yadasee Ammayyaa and Obbo Haile Fayisaa.

## VI. Prayer Night for Justice and Peace by Coalition of Oromo Churches in Minnesota.

On Friday, 28 August 2020 Coalition of Oromo Churches in Minnesota organized a prayer night for justice and peace for our people and our homeland. The get together was not only by member churches of the Coalition of Oromo Churches in Minnesota but included our people from various Oromo religious and faith backgrounds gathered at Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul, MN to pray together to God about the current situation our people are in.

The participants included religious leaders from various Christian Churches; (Catholics, the recently established Oromo Orthodox<sup>5</sup> Church, various Evangelical churches) Muslims and Waaqeffataa.



---

<sup>5</sup> The establishment of Oromo Orthodox Church for the first time was a historical landmark because there never been Oromo Orthodox Church in Ethiopia and the Gospel never preached in Afaan Oromo from Orthodox Church. The language of the church even in Biyya Oromo was Geez which people did not have any clue about it. The church was in the forefront in the scheme of making our people into Abyssinians including changing their names by giving them new names that they called Christian names such as Wolde Mariam, Waltte Mariam, Haile Selassie Wolde Goorgis and Haile Michael as if Oromo names were not worth to go with Christian faith.



Worship Chorale of Oromo Orthodox Church



Partial view of the gathering at the MN State Capital, St. Paul MN.

People from the various faith groups took turns and prayed according to their faith and practice. It was noted by various speakers that currently in the challenges that our people are in back home, there are mischiefs going on to spread division among our people on the bases of region and religion to divide us and divert attention from the pressing issue of our survival as people.

However, the participants made it clear, in no uncertain term that our people are the most diverse society adhering to diverse faith groups who lived together peacefully for centuries. *But at present the enemies of our people, the enemies of peace and justice are trying to sow division among our people on the bases of region and religion.*

But the clear message from the gathering to the entire world to know was that *"while we adhere to our various faith as we believe and worship our God in our own places of worship; churches, mosques what brought us together here this day is to stand together and with our people as Oromos in this challenging time that we are faced with"*. This reminds us of a statement attributed to the former Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia in which he said, *"biyyi kan waliiti, amantiin kan dhuunfaa", (Hagar yegaaraa naw, hayimaanot yegil), "the country is for everyone common, but faith or belief is individual, personal"*

*At the gathering at the State Capital our people from various faith backgrounds all prayed for justice and peace for our people, for all people and also pledged that they stand together as people on the quest for peace and justice.* Among the speakers and people who offered prayers was, Pastor Wondimu L. Sonessa of Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church in Minnesota, OROECM who emphatically stated that, *"the church is not confined to her sanctuary but her call is to go out and be part of the community and be with the people during peace or in suffering"*. He stressed that, *a church which does not stand with the people, all people in their suffering is not a church"*.

Thus, the church, according to her call, should be in the forefront among the people leading in the quest for peace and justice for God's people and all God's Creation. From the history of Christian church, we learn that true church leaders such as Rev. Martin Luther King and others stood for justice and peace to the point of sacrificing their lives. In our Oromo recent history, a good example was Rev. Guddina Tumsa who paid the ultimate price for a quest for justice for his people. The call and mission of the church in this world is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and live for justice!

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, peace on earth and good will among God's people"*

Minneapolis, MN 09/02/2020

## VII. Fair Share of the Water of the River Nile

By Admasu Simeso

Over the last almost one year, in addition to the covid-19 pandemic and the widespread conflict in Oromia region of Ethiopia, following the killing of Oromo artist Hacaaluu Hundeessaa the other hot issue that dominates the Horn of Africa Region news has been the issue of the long standing contention between Ethiopia and Egypt, the latter with the support from the Sudan, over the use of the water of the Blue Nile River, (*Bishaan Abbayyaa*). The latest rivalry was triggered by the starting of the building on the Blue Nile the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, GERD by Ethiopia. Discussions and negotiations among the parties involving international mediators such as the USA, the UN and the African Union have been going on all this time but still no sign of an agreement in sight.

The recorded history of the Nile River goes back to more than 5000 years. We learned in history that Egypt is the Gift of the Nile. But what those who wrote the history overlooked to mention was that “the River Nile, the Blue Nile, (*Bishaan Abbayyaa*) which provides more than 80% of the water of the Nile was a gift from God to Ethiopia<sup>6</sup> and the countries down the river. The Bible has it that the baby Moses, the future leader of Israelites who led them out of bondage from ancient Egypt was bathed by his mother in River Nile when he was a baby.



<sup>6</sup> The name Ethiopia (Land of Kush) originally comes from the Greek term Aethiopia for the Upper Nile Region, Africa south of the Sahara, meaning land of dark skin people.



The Dam under Construction on Laga Abbayyaa (River Nile)

*Bishan Abbayya* (Nile River) as it is known in Western Oromia has a special place in our history and heart because quite a number of our famous rivers from Western Oromia highlands provide a great volume of water to the Nile River by such rivers as Dhidheessa, which becomes Daabbus down the stream, Buraar, Qumbaabe, Supee, Laga Mooraa, Laga Baaqilaa, Qambarrii, Kommi, Gachoo, Laga Haadha-Jaarsaa, Gawwisoo, Alaltuu, Huursaa, Jawwee and Haroo-Dimaa etc. Bishaan Abbayyaa has a lyrics and songs in Afaan Oromo.

The challenge that immediately faces Ethiopia, especially Oromia Region, on the top of the war-like internal suppression and the serious spread of the Coved-19 is the stalemate that is currently going on between Ethiopia on one side and Egypt and Sudan on the other over the use of the water of the Nile River, the disagreement so serious that Egypt is threatening to go to war if Ethiopia continues

the construction and filling of the Dam on Blue Nile.

Until now Ethiopia has never used the water from the Nile River for any project and for millions of years the river freely flowed down the stream, the flood full of soil enriching the Nile Delta in Egypt. It was the soil from Western Ethiopia mainly Oromia, estimated to be about 40 million tons of silt deposited annually in Nile Delta and our people never complained, although we as people have full God given rights for equitable and fair use of our natural resource. On the other hand, Egypt built the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s, 60 years ago on Nile River, Ethiopia did not complain nor opposed at that time as Egypt is vigorously doing now about the Dam currently under construction by Ethiopia.

Early ancient beliefs including the Greek Philosophy recognized that, “Waaqayyo”<sup>7</sup>, **the Creator (God) first created four essential elements for life: earth, water, air and fire. From these four elements, as His blueprint God made the rest of creation from combination of some or all of these elements. Our Christian Bible and the Holy books of all the Three Abrahamic Religions adhere to and confess that God first created “heaven and earth”<sup>8</sup> and created the first man Adam on the sixth day from**

---

<sup>7</sup>All the people of the world have different names for the Creator of all things, whom our Oromo people call “Waaqayyoo”: in Arabic, Allah; Hebrew, Elohim; Greek, Theos; English, God, Amharic, Igzi’aabiher; Anuak, Juwok; German, Gott; French, Dieu, Latin, Deus etc.

In the Book of Exodus 3:14 when Moses encountered Elohim and said He was going to send Moses to the Israelites Moses asked Him, “who would I say sent me”? Elohim said, say “I am who I am” sent you. Here what we learn is God is always Is not was nor will be, He is always Is outside the realm of time and space.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 1:1.

**earth in it contained all the four elements. God breathed into Adam the air and fire. Thus, all living things were made from these four elements.**

God assigned the responsibility to take care of His creation and these elements to humans and all living things to use them responsibly. All the four elements are essential for the survival and continuation of all living things, God's Creation and humans should take care for all God's creation and use the resources that God put them at their disposal freely and share fairly without greed.

What the two people, Ethiopia and Egypt should know, and all fair-minded people should understand is that the resource that God has provided to us and all His creation should be equitably shared without greed. Ethiopia's project in no way should deprive Egypt of the water totally or nearly as the Egyptian people depend on it for thousands of years.

**On the other hand the Ethiopian people need to use the water in fair share to look after themselves. With goodwill and fairness, a mechanism could be worked out by the experts; the engineers create a mechanism as how to fairly regulate the flow of the river, filling the dam gradually without either country trying to control everything.**

Egyptians should not see Ethiopians as their enemies but instead as friends, because we provide them with the most essential resource for human needs. In our Oromo culture, *"she/he who gives someone a glass of water is a real friend and kind". Our people give one another water before food. Our people are blessed with a culture of sharing but fair share.*

We are at a critical age in human history that the world is interdependent and responsibly share the resources that God has given us not try to fight over it. We should care not only for humans, but for all God's creation, the fishes of the Mediterranean Sea and the birds and animals along both the White and Blue Niles from Uganda to the Sea.

As lay people we do not want to delve into the depth of the complex negotiation that it requires. *But one thing that should be clear is that to survive as human on this planet we should all commit to the fair share of the resource God has provided to all His creation without greed and mutually work out a mechanism that will enable us to live in peace and goodwill with one another. Humans should not fight over what God had provided to them freely but learn how to share fairly and thank God for it; and all those countries and organizations involved in the negotiations should keep that in mind and try to resolve the issue peacefully instead of taking side.*

*As a church and as people our call is for fair share of the water of River Nile and peaceful co-existence of the people of the two countries.*

*Minneapolis, MN, 09/03/2020*

Sagalee Abdii Editorial Team:

Obbo Alemayehu Baisa, Obbo Daniel Namara, Aadde Dune Silga and Obbo Admasu Simeso.



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!

---

Chali Yadesa for the design of the new Sagalee Abdii logo and Gamachiis for the formatting and layout of the publication and all the technical input and Dawit for web posting design and all the Sagalee Abdii Edditorial Team Obbo Alemayehu Baisa, Obbo Daniel Namara, Aadde Dune Silga and Obbo Admasu Simeso. Without their help it would have cost our church a substantial amount. Waaqayyo isaan ha'eebbisu!

Sagalee Abdii

---

