

HOLISTIC MINISTRY

By Dagaga Gemachu

Meet Some Missionaries, June 2024

My Background

I am Rev. Dagaga Gemachu Regassa, born in 1988 in Ibantu, a rural village in East Wallaga region of Oromia, Ethiopia. Growing up in a farming family, I learned the values of hard work and the importance of community, even as we endured the challenges posed by the oppressive Derg regime, a socialist military junta that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1987. This period was marked by severe persecution of Christians; churches were destroyed, and many believers were imprisoned or killed. The resilience and faith of my Christian parents during these trials profoundly shaped my own spiritual journey.



Rev. Dagaga Gemachu, NALC Global worker and Lead pastor of OCFN

As a member of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus (EECMY), I embraced strong Christian values and the lesson of discipleship, guiding my deepening faith. I eventually became a youth leader in our church, marking the beginning of my dedication to God's service.

Supported by European missionaries, I moved to Addis Ababa for Bible studies at the certificate level, which broadened my horizons and deepened my faith. Encouraged to further my theological education, I moved to Nairobi, Kenya, in 2011, joining the Oromo Christian Fellowship Nairobi (OCFN). There, my leadership potential was recognized and nurtured. With fellowship support, I earned an associate degree from the International College of Bible Theology in 2014 and began serving as an evangelist with OCFN, focusing on the Oromo people for three years.

In October 2016, amid political turmoil, I felt a divine call to return to Ethiopia. This decision led me to lead the Biftu Bole congregation of the EECMY as a leader and missionary department coordinator. From 2017 to October 2023, I played a crucial role in establishing over 100 churches, significantly advancing our church's mission across Ethiopia.

In 2019, I obtained a Master of World Mission from Leadstar Theological College (now Leadstar Christian University), enhancing my missionary and leadership skills. That year, I also married Bruktawit Samuel, a dedicated health officer who left her job to join our missionary life, embracing significant sacrifices for our calling. We are blessed with a son, and together, we continue our service, guided by faith and commitment to spreading God's Word. My life's journey underscores the power of faith and the strength from a life dedicated to service and the greater good.

Rev. Dagaga and his wife Bruktawit with their son Naga



Called to the Oromo Christian Fellowship in Nairobi

The history and mission of the Oromo Christian Fellowship Church in Nairobi has significantly impacted its community for 23 years. Originating from humble beginnings, OCFN was founded by individuals escaping adversity, serving as a beacon of hope and faith. Despite numerous challenges, including persecution, the church's commitment has flourished.

Currently, OCFN holds services in the Evangelical Lutheran church building, as it lacks a dedicated worship space, highlighting its grassroots nature and dependence on Nairobi's broader Christian community.

OCFN Sunday service and worship at the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Nairobi, Kenya



The church's mission is underpinned by two fundamental objectives:

- 1. Evangelization and Discipleship:** OCFN's core mission focuses on evangelizing refugees and the local Oromo community in Nairobi, aiming to transform them into committed disciples of Jesus Christ ready for spiritual endeavors and kingdom-building. This mission is particularly challenging as the church primarily serves refugees, who arrive with significant physical and spiritual burdens. With a congregation largely composed of young members, OCFN's role is crucial. Through dedicated outreach and discipleship, OCFN has nurtured many into pastors, evangelists, and church leaders globally. The church also actively works to protect its youth from destructive addictions, serving as a stabilizing force in the community.



OCFN Church celebrates Christmas, marking the birth of Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Outreach to the Borana Community: OCFN has extended its missionary efforts beyond Nairobi, reaching out to the Borana community in Northern Kenya, particularly in Marsabit County near the Ethiopian border—a region approximately 700 km from Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. Despite operating with limited resources, the church's fervent commitment to spreading the Gospel has led to remarkable achievements. OCFN's efforts have facilitated the establishment of twelve new churches in the region, collectively bringing over 5,000 new souls into the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, the church has deployed 15 dedicated missionaries who continue to work tirelessly to expand these outreach efforts.



A new church studies the Word of God and prays under a tree



A church made from iron sheets was built with OCFN support for the people shown praying under a tree

These examples showcase OCFN's significant impact both locally and regionally, transforming the spiritual landscape through dedicated missionary work among the Borana and support in Nairobi. OCFN remains a symbol of resilience and faithfulness. The following photos from a field trip illustrate OCFN's activities and support in Marsabit County, Kenya.



A large church built at Dirib Gombo with financial support from OCFN



A church built and new choir uniforms funded by OCFN at Goda Wayye near the border of Kenya and Ethiopia

Holistic Ministry

OCFN's commitment encompasses spiritual and essential social services, addressing the Borana pastoral community's challenges. This region frequently experiences severe droughts that affect food, water, and livestock, crucial to the community's livelihood. In response, OCFN provides vital humanitarian aid with food and water supplies to alleviate drought impacts. This holistic approach meets both spiritual and practical needs, emphasizing the church's dedication to supporting the Borana through environmental and economic hardships, aligning with its mission to promote resilience and hope.



An example of food and clothes support provided with OCFN to Borana community affected by extreme drought

OCFN faced various challenges, notably lack of ordained pastor to effectively oversee, and coordinate its expanding church activities. This had particularly impacted the ministry's ability to administer holy sacraments and provide consistent Bible teaching, which are central to its operations.



Missionary Rev. Teshome Geneti from EECMY sharing the Word of God at Marsabit (dhokatu Village) under a tree



Having tea together after they heard the Gospel and received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior

To resolve this, OCFN reached out to the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) to request support in appointing a pastor. As a result, NALC, through the sending agency Awakening Lives to World Missions (ALWM), appointed me as a global worker to Nairobi. Embracing the call wholeheartedly, I moved to Nairobi, undertaking the role to guide and grow the fellowship.



Rev. Dagaga praying during Sunday Service at Lutheran Church in Nairobi



Photo of participants after Ordination, front l-r: Rev. Carol, Rev. Dr. Gemechis D. Buba, Rev. Dagaga Gemachu, and NALC Bishop Daniel Selbo

I was formally ordained on March 10, 2024, in Nairobi by NALC Bishop Daniel Selbo and his team, including Rev. Dr. Gemechis D. Buba. Following that, I have been serving as the Lead Pastor OCFN. This appointment has significantly bolstered the church's ability to manage its activities more effectively and has been a pivotal step in addressing the challenges faced by the fellowship.



Ordination ceremony at the
Oromo Christian Fellowship
Church, Nairobi, Kenya

My Mission and Vision

My mission

1. Transform OCFN members into true disciples of Jesus through continuous discipleship and Bible study, preparing them to carry out God's work.
2. Organize and expand our mission in North Kenya to effectively reach the Borena community with the Gospel.

My Vision

To see the Borena Community transformed and liberated from Satan's bondage, living freely through Christ Jesus.

Join Us!

Special Thanks

We are deeply thankful to God and grateful for the modest gifts from our members that power our mission. We also thank our mission partners: Ebenezer Oromo Evangelical Church, Biftu Bole Mekane Yesus Church, Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus, NALC, and ALWM sending agency, whose support and prayers have been vital.

Invitation for Partnership

As Jesus said in Luke 10:2, *"The harvest is great, but the laborers are few."* OCFN's extensive mission includes missionary support, church building, and humanitarian efforts. As a church serving refugees, we invite individuals, churches, and organizations to join us in this noble endeavor to expand God's kingdom.

For more information, visit: <https://www.alwm.org/kenya>

For more information about Awakening Lives to World Missions (ALWM) and its programs, please visit their website!



Rev. Dagaga Gemachu (MA) is a NALC Global worker and lead pastor of the Oromo Christian Fellowship Nairobi (OCFN). His focus is on evangelization and discipleship of refugees in the local area and its outreach to the Borana community in northern Kenya. He and his wife, Bruktawit, have one son.

Contact Dagaga at: dagagagemachu@gmail.com

Links:

Rev Dagaga: <https://www.alwm.org/kenya>

Oromia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oromia>

Ethiopia: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia>

Derg: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia/Socialist-Ethiopia-1974-91>

EECMY: <https://www.oikoumene.org/member-churches/ethiopian-evangelical-church-mekane-yesus-eecmy>

Addis Ababa: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Addis-Ababa>

Nairobi: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nairobi>

Kenya: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kenya>

OCFN: <https://www.cgmmag.com/historyofmision/oromo-refugees-plant-churches/>

Oromo: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Oromo>

Biftu Bole: <https://www.facebook.com/BiftuBoleMYC/>

Leadstar: <https://leadstarchristianuniversity.com/>

Borana: <https://www.peoplegroups.org/Explore/groupdetails.aspx?peid=14769>

Marsabit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsabit_County

NALC: <https://thenalc.org/>

ALWM: <https://www.alwm.org/>

Selbo: <https://thenalc.org/our-staff/daniel-w-selbo/>

Buba: <https://www.facebook.com/DrGemechis/>

information: <https://www.alwm.org/kenya>

website: <https://www.alwm.org/>