More Than Words

By Rev. Dagaga Gemachu

Wisdom From the Fields, November 2026

Where God Leads, We Follow

> "The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.'"
>
> — Genesis 12:1

Throughout Scripture, we see that God does not always lead His people where they would naturally choose to go, but where He can use them for His Kingdom purposes. As a family, we believe our responsibility is not simply to choose where we would like to serve, but to listen to God's direction and faithfully go where He sends us. Whether the place is familiar or unfamiliar, comfortable or challenging, our desire is to make ourselves available for His Kingdom purposes and trust Him to use our lives and ministry for His glory.

My Calling and Ministry Journey

My name is **Rev. Dagaga Gemachu**. I was ordained under the authority of the **Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)** and commissioned as a global worker by the **North American Lutheran Church (NALC)**. I am married to my beloved wife, **Bruktawit Samuel**, and God has blessed us with two children, our son **Naga**, six years old, and our daughter **Ilili**, one year old.



Dagaga Gemachu family, l-r: Naga, Dagaga, Ilili, and Bruktawit Samuel

My ministry journey is first and foremost a story of God's calling and faithfulness. From childhood, I sensed a desire to serve God and His people. After completing Bible college, I made a deeper commitment to ministry as an evangelist and began to pursue God's calling more intentionally.

From **2019 to 2023**, I served with the EECMY Biftu Bole Congregation as a **Mission Office Coordinator**. This was an important season of preparation in my life. Through this ministry, I gained experience in mission coordination, leadership, church ministry, and partnership. Looking back, I can see how God used that season to prepare me for ministry beyond my familiar environment.



Dagaga Outreach

In 2023, God opened a new door for our family to serve in Kenya as global workers with the NALC. In **October 2023**, I was appointed as the **Lead Pastor of Oromo Christian Fellowship Nairobi (OCFN)** and also served in mission-field coordination.

Moving from Ethiopia to Kenya with my family was a significant step of faith. We left behind familiar surroundings, relationships, culture, and ministry networks and entered a new country and ministry environment. Although leaving our comfort zone was difficult, we believed that God's call was greater than our comfort. As a family, we accepted the call and trusted God to lead us.

Our years in Nairobi have been a significant season of ministry, learning, growth, and experiencing God's faithfulness. My ministry has focused on discipleship, pastoral care, mission, the Holy Sacraments, marriage and family ministry, church documentation, and mission coordination. During these three years, hundreds of people came to Christ and were baptized at the main church in Nairobi and at the northern part of the Kenya mission field among the community. Serving in Kenya has also taught me valuable lessons about cross-cultural ministry, leadership, and serving God's people in a different environment.



Pastor Dagaga

A New Season of Calling and Discernment

As we look toward the future, my family and I have spent significant time in prayer and discernment concerning the next chapter of our ministry. Through this process, I have sensed God's leading to transition into a new mission context through **Ilaamee Ministry** in Ethiopia. I understand this transition not

simply as a change of country or ministry position, but as another step in responding to God's call. The years we have spent in Kenya have prepared us through pastoral ministry, discipleship, mission coordination, youth ministry, family ministry, leadership, and cross-cultural service.



Photo taken from the gallery of the Ilaamee Ministry "Hope and Restoration" Crusade, held 2025 at Wollega Stadium in Western Ethiopia.

Why Ethiopia?

I believe Ethiopia is an important mission context for this season of my ministry. The country is facing significant social and economic challenges. Conflict and insecurity have displaced communities and disrupted the lives of many young people. Unemployment, economic hardship, uncertainty, addiction, migration, and social pressures are affecting a generation searching for direction and hope.

Many young Ethiopians are uncertain about their future. Some have experienced displacement, while others leave their communities looking for work, security, and opportunity. Some attempt to migrate through dangerous and irregular routes, and some tragically lose their lives. Yet behind these challenges are young people with dreams, gifts, abilities, creativity, and potential.

I believe the Church has a responsibility to meet this generation with the **Gospel, compassion, discipleship, practical support, and hope**. Young people need to know that their lives have value and that their future does not have to be defined by conflict, unemployment, addiction, displacement, or migration. Above all, they need to hear the hope found in Jesus Christ. As an Ethiopian with an Oromo cultural and ministry background, I have a deep personal connection to the country and understand many of the realities facing its communities and young people.

My experience in Kenya has further prepared me for this ministry. For me, returning to Ethiopia is more than returning home; **it is an opportunity to serve my homeland through the mission of Christ.** I return with gratitude for Kenya. I

return with love for Ethiopia. I return with concern for a generation searching for hope. I return with a desire to serve the Church. And I return with a message that I believe the Church must continue to proclaim.

Why Ilaamee Ministry?

Ilaamee Ministry is an interdenominational organization that works with all Evangelicals and Gospel believers, and strongly resonates with the ministry calling I believe God has been developing in me. Its message, **"Still There Is Hope,"** speaks directly to what I desire to proclaim in Ethiopia. In the midst of conflict, uncertainty, unemployment, displacement, addiction, migration, and social challenges, I believe the Church must continue to proclaim hope. That hope is found in **Jesus Christ**.

My Vision

To see Ethiopians become hopeful and restored through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, experiencing spiritual transformation, renewed purpose, and freedom from the effects of conflict and brokenness.

My Mission

Proclaiming Hope and Restoration — To proclaim the hope and restoration found in Jesus Christ to a nation facing conflict, uncertainty, displacement, economic hardship, and other challenges.

Investing in Young People — To disciple, mentor, equip, and encourage Ethiopian youth to discover their God-given identity, gifts, purpose, and responsibility, while addressing the loss of hope that can contribute to dangerous and irregular migration.

Awakening the Church for the Great Commission — To equip and encourage churches through teaching, training, discipleship, and mission mobilization so that believers become active participants in the Great Commission and the mission of God.

Prison Ministry Coordination — To coordinate and develop prison ministry in partnership with churches and appropriate institutions, proclaiming the Gospel of hope and restoration to prisoners and supporting their spiritual and pastoral needs.

A Particular Burden for Young People

One of the strongest burdens God has placed on my heart is for Ethiopian youth, particularly Oromo youth. Many young people are facing unemployment, insecurity, uncertainty, addiction, social pressure, and loss of hope. For some, these challenges contribute to decisions to leave the country through dangerous or irregular migration.

The message I want to communicate is not simply, **"Stay."** The deeper message is: **Your life has purpose. Your gifts have value. Your country needs your contribution. Christ has called you to serve. Still there is hope.**

Awakening the Church and Prison Ministry

I believe the Church has a significant role in responding to the challenges facing Ethiopian society. The Church is called not only to worship but also to proclaim the Gospel, make disciples, develop leaders, serve communities, care for families, and participate in the Great Commission.

I hope to work with the EECMY and other evangelical and Lutheran churches and ministries through training, teaching, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and mission mobilization. My desire is not to build a ministry around one denomination or institution, but to contribute to the wider mission of the Church in Ethiopia.

Prison ministry is another key area of focus. I believe people in prison are also valuable to God and need to hear the Gospel of hope and restoration. Through preaching, Bible teaching, discipleship, pastoral care, prayer, and partnership with churches and proper institutions, I hope to contribute to ministry among prisoners and their families. Even in difficult circumstances, **there is still hope in Jesus Christ.**

My Assignment as a Global Worker of NALC

As I transition into this new mission context, I will continue working with my sending agency, **Awakening Lives to World Mission (ALWM)**, and also hope to **continue serving as a global worker of the North American Lutheran Church**. I am deeply grateful for the prayer, trust, encouragement, support, and partnership that NALC and ALWM have provided throughout our ministry journey.

As we enter this new season, **we need partnership in every area of the ministry**. This mission cannot be accomplished by one person or one family alone. We need churches, pastors, Christian leaders, mission organizations, and individuals who will pray with us, encourage us, serve with us, support the ministry, open doors, build relationships, and help us reach people who are searching for hope.



Dagaga Gemachu, 2025

Still There Is Hope!

There is hope for the young person who has lost direction. There is hope for the family affected by conflict. There is hope for the person struggling with addiction. There is hope for the displaced. There is hope for the prisoners.

And above all, there is hope in **Jesus Christ**.

As our family prepares for this new chapter, our prayer is that God will use us faithfully to proclaim the Gospel of Hope. We know the road ahead will have challenges, but our confidence is in the God who called us, led us, sustained us in Kenya, and continues to guide us into the future.

To God alone be the glory!

Get involved!

For more information about Awakening Lives to World Missions (ALWM) and its programs, please visit https://www.alwm.org/



Rev. Dagaga Gemachu serves in Nairobi, Kenya, as a Global Worker of the North American Lutheran Church. Born and raised in Ethiopia, he is the Lead Pastor of Oromo Christian Fellowship in Nairobi, Kenya. His wife, Bruktawit Samuel, shares his commitment to serve wherever God leads. They are blessed with two children.

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Links:

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

NALC: https://thenalc.org/en-us/

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

OCFN: https://www.facebook.com/p/Oromo-Christian-Fellowship-in-Nairobi-OCFN-100067345726812/

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

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

Ministry: https://www.alwm.org/kenya

Borana: https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/19651/ke

Ilaamee Ministry: https://ilaamee.org/

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

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