

## **Lessons from the Living Legacy of Rev. Gudina Tumsa's Missional Leadership**

**From 1929 - Mid 1950s**

**From Bodjii to Nedjo and Nekemte**

*Salient lessons from  
The formational Years of Rev. Gudina Tumsa's  
Missional Leadership*

*Rev. Dr. Gemechis D. Buba*

*Chicago, IL*

*USA*

*January 2009*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Most of the documents I read prior to preparing my presentation were written and presented by outstanding church leaders and theologians who were predominantly contemporaries and personal acquaintances of the Rev. Gudina Tumsa. I have to confess the fact that I have not personally met Rev. Gudina Tumsa in person. However my mother tells me that he has touched and blessed me once while I was being carried as a baby. That is how far our face to face encounter and personal touch goes. However Rev. Gudina was the most popular subject of conversation on our breakfast, lunch and dinner table. My father who was one of Rev. Gudina's contemporaries and a lifelong personal friend has never run out of Rev. Gudina story to tell and quotations to quote. Therefore Rev. Gudina's personal and spiritual impression on my father was very real and very deep that he has openly and consistently shared with me remarkable stories about this giant of faith. Having spent almost all of my life as a young person and as a young adult under my fathers' close and distant influence, I now feel like I have known Rev. Gudina personally.

In addition to my father, Rev. Gudina's stores were shared with me by my beloved seminary professor from USA through Germany, the Rev. Paul Hoffman. Paul Hoffman was by far more influential in my life than most professors I had throughout my personal and academic formational years. Professor Paul deeply involved in Rev. Gudina Tumsa's ministry especially in the last few years of his ministry while the socio-political circumstances of the then communist Ethiopia was at all times high. Paul Hoffman's direct and indirect quotes, references and comments on Rev. Gudina Tumsa's legacy was informative, inspirational and provocative to myself and to most of my contemporaries during his teaching visits at the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary in the late 1990s.

Furthermore my encounter with the Rev. Gudina is through the eyes 'Oromo pop culture.' 'Oromo pop culture' inclusively refers to Oromo singers, painters, philosophers, educators, students, authors, politicians, historians and religious leaders. Rev. Gudina is looked as one of the major historical icons not limited to the history of the Mekane Yesus church but an icon representing the religious community and more important to major voices of freedom and justice in the socio-political realm from the late 1950s to the late 1970s. Therefore he name is mentioned widely and repeatedly keeping his legacy alive through 'Oromo pop culture.' Furthermore his legacy is also being lifted up among Ethiopianist writers and commentators such as the most recent Amharic publication, 'Demakochu *Tsehayat Lalit*' co authored by Solomon Tilahun and Simret Gebremariam. (2008). This book puts Rev. Gudina Tumsa among twenty most influential Ethiopians along the lines of Onesimus Nesib, Mr. Yidnekachew Tesema, Mr. Tesfaye Sahlu, Mr. Germame Neway, Laureat Tsegaye Gebremedhin, Author Baalu Girma and Athlet Derartu Tulu. Records like these indicate the fact of the beyond the Oromo pop culture Rev. Gudina's contribution and legacy to the betterment of all Ethiopians is being acknowledged beyond the usual circles. Through these types of works emerging leaders and citizens in my generation will have a broader chance of encountering the person and works of Rev. Gudina.

In addition to the aforementioned windows my encounter with Rev. Gudina was through the works of Oyvind Eide, Habtamu Bula and the documentations produced by Gudina Tumsa Foundation in the last few years. This works were eye opening and informative. Books produced by GTF deal with the subject from a couple of angles. 'Witness and Discipleship' documents and presents essential writings of Rev. Gudina Tumsa while 'The life and ministry of Rev. Gudina

Tumsa' documents multifaceted and multilayered comments attributed to the persona and works of the Rev Gudina Tumsa by their contemporaries, colleagues and acquaintances. Both of this works have greatly contributed towards my personal growth in knowing the person, purpose, practices and contextual realities of Rev. Gudina Tumsa mission and leadership.

Last but certainly not the least window of opportunity to look into the person and works of Rev. Gudina was through a very close relationship with the rest of the family. Adde Tsehai Tolessa, Lensa Gudina, Aster Gudina, Kulani Gudina and Boru Gudina. Getting to know the entire family and spending as much time as possible with all of them has left with a very deep, personal and precious impressions about Rev. Gudina and his legacy as a visionary and missional giant. He was a man of full life in and out of his home. He was living a life worthy of his calling and worthy of his responsibility in and out of his home. In order for him to succeed and be a blessing to millions the magnitude of sacrifice this family paid was beyond words to describe. The strength of his wife and the enduring spirit of his children was actually the foundation that sustained his ministry over the years and it is still the force that is keeping this magnificent legacy alive and glaring.

In summary I am writing this piece based on all of the aforementioned sources of information ranging from an in-depth sharing to slight mention of Rev. Gudina's legacy in the nations pop culture. Based on insights, information, ideas and principles gleaned from the multifaceted encounters with Rev. Gudina's living legacy this brief analysis will deal particularly with missional leadership as a pragmatically missiological mode of Rev. Gudina Tumsa's leadership. That mode of leadership is held together by a very will nit fabric of theoretical foundations, practical principles and purpose driven lifestyles. Therefore it gives multitudes of insights in the process of identifying, forming and deploying new brand of leaders for a new era in the life of the nation and the church. Thus this papers calls our attention to the living legacy of Rev. Gudina Tumsa's person, purpose, principles and practices of missional leadership as model to be learned from and emulated.

## **II. DEFINING MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Prior to labeling Rev. Gudina Tumsa as a very strong and vivid example of missional leaders it is important to define missional leadership as a pertinent missiological phrase. In order to do that we will collect and inculcate some biblical, ecclesiological and missiological insights as functional frame of reference in order to guide our work.

"In the New Testament biblical perspectives, churches are expected to be formed and to function as mission communities." (Gemechis, 2006) Therefore the idea of being missional is at the very essence of the churches' formational and functional process. That is why leaders are called and expected to be mission in almost everything they do. "Mission communities are called to represent the compassion, justice and peace of the reign of God. The distinctive characteristic of such communities is that the Holy Spirit creates and sustains them. Their identity (who they are) and their character (how they are), their motivation (why they are), and their vocation (what they do) are theological and thus missional" (Guder: 142). Whether it is in African or in the west any attentive observer can easily observe a very prevalent tendency and inclination towards institutional centralization and organizational hierarchy in the formational and functional processes of the church.

Rev. Gudina and his contemporaries were forcibly engaged in the missiological functions of intentional new church development. In order to do that matters pertaining to the missional identity of evangelical Christianity in Ethiopia and missiological practices of the Mekane Yesus church in particular were constantly at the forefront. At the very core of all that the rise and function of missional leaders such as Rev. Gudina and his contemporaries was a major leverage in the churches missional journey. Darrell Guder, professor of Missiology writes, "The key to the formation of missional communities is their leadership." (Guder: 183)

Leaders set the missiological tone and the functional tenacity of any church or faith community. "Missional leaders are instruments of the spirit serving as agents translating the language of the Holy Spirit and transforming the community in preparation for the works of mission." (Gemechis: 2) Leadership is the gift of the spirit. Leaders are people used by the spirit to lead communities and societies towards intended goals and objectives that particular community.

"Leadership is the critical gift provided by the spirit because, as the Scriptures demonstrate, fundamental changes in any body of people require leaders capable of transforming themselves." (Guder: 183) In the life of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, there were many spirit led and spirit empowered leaders. Rev. Gudina was without a doubt one of those key leaders in the life and mission of this church. The role of these key leaders including Rev. Gudina was translating the language of the spirit and providing clarity and/or understanding of the mission call of the church. This task initiates change that transforms both the leader and the faith community.

The foundation of missional leadership is squarely based on the scriptures, in the apostolic tradition and the historical accounts of a living experience of churches across the ages that are emerging across the world and across many denominations. In the context of Ethiopian evangelicalism and in the Rev. Gudina Tumsa's ministry the phrase missional leadership can be defined in the following multiple ways:

- Missional leaders are leaders with a clear internal conviction or spiritual call and external affirmation of that call and gift by the faith community they are called to lead.
- Missional leaders are those leaders' committed devoted, determined and disciplined students of the Bible. These leaders demonstrate this task through their consistent and diligent study, devoted life style and contemplative reflections.
- Missional leaders are leaders who are always willing and able to wrestle with the theological ambiguities and moral dilemmas/questions of their times and their generation without fear and hesitancy.
- Missional leaders are leaders who are skilled in understanding the socio-political and cultural changes and processes within their communities and who are skilled enough to discern the times and willing to adjust without compromising their essential values and beliefs.
- Missional leaders are leaders who are gifted and courageous to lead the community of faith or the church as a missional community with an uncompromising sacrificial

spirit, longsuffering, endurance and bearing with all the risks that come with the prophetic calling of a leader.

- Missional leaders are leaders who are committed to consistent acts of prayer, fasting, worship, personal integrity and sacrificially devoting oneself to the cause of the gospel in the face of adversity, persecution and conflict. Missional leaders gain strength and the tenacity to do what they do by tapping into faith practices.
- Missional leaders are leaders who are devout students of missiology, strategic thinking, and arts of contextualization, practical theology, social anthropology, political theology and wholistic mission principles. Through these disciplines missional leaders maintain their pragmatic activism and contextual realism.

This piece of work will strive to look at Rev. Gudina Tumsa's mode of missional leadership based on these definitions and explanations of missional leadership

### **III. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE RISE OF REV. GUDINA AS A MISSIONAL LEADER**

Leaders are not born into leadership. They are formed, reformed and transformed under many circumstances of life. When leaders are made there are many factors that come into play in making those leaders into the person they turn out to be. Looking at those major and minor factors would help us learn how multiple major and minor factors surrounding one's life shape the leaders person, principles, purposes and practices.

#### **Adversity shapes leader's early life**

This portion my study deals with the earliest life of Rev. Gudina's journey from Bodjii Karkaroo to Nekemte. During these days his life was faced with multitudes of adverse circumstances however his reaction where not one of pessimism and despair. But he was full hope, courage and hard work. Situation like that usually crush and destroy young leaders. However some of those leaders with the tenacity and capacity to withstand those usually end up succeeding in life as leaders and productive citizens of society.

In the case of Rev. Gudina Tumsa survived and thrived in a dire situation at a very young age. It was those situations which shaped him into the leader he became rather than breaking him and diminishing his life as a leader. Millions of young leaders are faced with adversity in different stages of their life. In those circumstances they are given ample opportunities to wrestle with adversity and come out on the other side of life as winners. In order to do that having a winner mentality is a must to have.

In line with this concept, the current President elect of the United States, Mr. Barack Hussein Obama authored a book entitled, 'The audacity of Hope.' Actually the title of his book was taken from an inspiring sermon of his Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright of Trinity United Church in Christ. With that sermon and many other similar sermons Dr. Wright strives to inspire young leaders born an adverse situation in the south side of Chicago where poverty, crime and hopelessness is rampant. President Barack was a member of that church for twenty years, where he was receiving inspiring messages addressed to thousands of black men and women in that corner of Chicago Illinois. Thus hope lifted him up for the pews of Trinity Lutheran church in the south side of Chicago all the way the oval office in the white house.

Rev. Gudina was a man of hope. His entire life was driven by bold and courageous hope against all odds. Particularly his early days are characterized by deep commitment to winning in life and in ministry by depending on the glimpse of hope through divine revelation he received through the preaching of the Gospel received at the earliest days of his life. Today his audacity of hope speaks volumes to millions living in similar hopelessly dire socio-economic and socio-political circumstances. The message is clear, face adversity courageously and never shy away from it. But trust in the Lord, have a winner mentality, work hard and never give up that way leaders are shaped at the earliest stages of their life.

#### Born at the Banks of a River,

According to Tesgara Hirpo's article in the most recent book 'Goota Oromia' edited by Prof. Mihammed Hassen and Daraaraa Maati, Rev. Gudina Tumsa was born in 1929 in a place called Bodji Karkaroo in the province of Western Wollega, Oromia Ethiopia. According to Rev.

Tesgara Bodjii Karkaroo is a historic site especially in the process of the rise and existence of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. Bodjii was a place governed by an Oromo governor called Dibaabaa Bakare. At that time in that place Gospel was proclaimed in Afaan Oromo. At the same time the school system started in that place was run in Afaan Oromo.

The two key leaders in the preaching of the Gospel and in starting the school system Gebreestatiwos Zemikael and Daniel Dabala were indigenous leaders. (Matti and Haasen: 89-90) This aspect of Rev. Gudina's life is significant in forming his missional leadership. It was here that he gained the historic foundations of his Christian, national and denominational identity. Therefore the historicity of Bodjii Karkaroo and everything that comes along with it had minor and major implications on his life.

I have intentionally called this fact as being born by the banks the Gospel river. In the United States there a portion of that nation which is usually referred to as the Bible belt. To that is ironic just because of the fact that the Gospel more a free flowing river of God's grace than the binding and/or the punishing functions of a belt. Gospel is a river that constantly flows into peoples' life to transform and then carry them forward to next stations of life. The river of the Gospel flew into the region where Rev. Gudina was born through the witness of indigenous evangelists such as Zemikael and Debella. Later through preacher/teachers such as Onesimus Nesib and European Lutheran missionaries. Being born in Bodjii was not enough to make Rev. Gudina into the person he later became. But wading in the river and getting a cooling and transform dip into that flowing grace of God was a deeply transforming factor in his life.

The river of the Gospel through many twists and turns reached Bodjii the birth place of Rev. Gudina. The message of the Gospel that came through many costly sacrifices and diligent works of Onesimus and his team was at that time the only and the major beam of hope and a transforming power for people like Rev. Gudina. Just like it says in John chapter 'He came to his own and his own received him not. For those who received him he became life eternal.' The value of being born at the river was not being born into that opportunity. However it was the individual's choice and commitment to take an uncompromising advantage of that river. Just like they say, you take a horse to a river but you cannot force that river to drink.

Today access to the river of the Gospel is readily available in many nations of Africa such as Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa and Madagascar. If there is anyone who want to fetch and drink from this river there is absolutely no cost other than the readiness of heart and commitment of life. Therefore it is time for this generation to take note of valuable life lessons from leaders such the Rev. Gudina Tumsa pay a very serious attention to the value of availing once life to the transforming power of the Gospel without any doubt or hesitation.

At this juncture I would like to stress and underscore the value of Rev. Gudina's birth at the banks of the Gospel river in Bodjii. He was providentially born at the banks of the Gospel river. Obvious it was the works of divine providence. However taking advantage of opportunities offered by this river takes responsible and committed action of a serious person with the courage to go deeper and come out changed, transformed and deeply enriched. That was in short what happened as Rev. Gudina encountered the Gospel river for the first time.

### The Righteous Indignation of a Missional Leader

Bodjii in the days of Rev. Gudina's childhood was not a place where Christianity was widely practiced. However the worst form of 'Qallu' traditional religious practice was practiced. According to Dr. Yonas Deressa, Gudina had a Qallu uncle who was practicing the worst form of an African/Oromo traditional religion. Rev. Gudina's uncle was even soliciting and taking young girls as a payment for his services to people. That can obviously be labeled as pedophilia. It is one of the filthiest crimes committed by human being on young, tender and frail children. In addition to these rampant and overt sexual perversion and abuse under the cover of religiosity this young and tender children were suffering from demonic possession and all of the physical, spiritual, social and economic problem it entails. In the words of Dr Yonas this incident is described as, "Observing how the evil spirit possessed and enslaved those young ladies before they were exorcised was one Gudina's childhood memories." (Dr. Yonas Deressa on the Life and Ministry of Rev. Gudina Tumsa, GTF, 2003, p.4)

Observing these types of tragic human suffering naturally ignited holly and righteous indignation in the life of missional leaders. People who choose to be indifferent, careless, complacent,

passive or even choose to be neutral in the face tragedies of this magnitude are obviously disqualified from missional leadership. In the early days of Rev. Gudina observing the perpetuation of traditional and social evil of this magnitude added much fuel to the actual sense of urgency in the missional and evangelistic zeal to the early days of Rev. Gudina's missional leadership. The power and value of the Gospel in liberating people from any and every human bondage took Rev. Gudina's life under its total grip. This overwhelming faith in the power of the Gospel never left.

Adverse circumstances and social evils ignite righteous indignation in the mind and spirit of a given leader. Missional action flows out of that indignation. The prominent civil rights movement leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. like to repeatedly quote a philosopher Dante, who once said, 'the hottest part of hell is reserved for those people who choose neutrality in the face of human and social adversity.' (paraphrased quotation) This statement clearly challenges and fights against the perpetual lifestyle of leaders in the face of utter passivism and complacency in the name of neutrality while looking at the multifaceted and multilayered evils against humanity.

Holy and righteous indignation was ignited in the life of Rev. Gudina at the earliest days of his life. Once his life was enlightened, inspired and empowered by the power of the Gospel he was totally taken over by this intrinsic human instinct and inclination we call a righteous indignation. For him life outside of God's grace and life under any form of oppression and human degradation became totally unacceptable and unbearable.

The current and upcoming African church and civic leaders should avail themselves to the nudging and igniting effects to the Gospel when they look at human misery of any sort. Christian leaders must step aside from complacency and pasifism in order to step up their acts and react to the past, present and future evils in society. These evils should never be tolerated or succumbed to. Any and every form of evil whether it is spiritual or physical should be met with holy and righteous indignation of a leader.

### Emulating Principles and Practices of wholistic Mission

When Kes. Gebre Ewostatewos Zemichael and Daniel Daballa introduced the preaching the Gospel and establishment the school in the Rev. Gudina Tumsa's birth place there was differentiation between the two. One was not more important than the other. The initiated the school so that those who came to faith can also read the Bible in their own language. Even though these two pioneers died an early death the missional venture they initiated continued without interruption. This historic action was more or less the birth place of wholistic mission in the mind and life of Rev. Gudina.

The reality in which he lived was not a life of utopianism or theoretical idealism, however it was practical Christianity lived in front of his eyes. Christian leaders at his disposal were displaying missional leadership through their courageous missional undertakings. As a young and new Christian leader he had multiple encounters with the Christian leaders whose passion and mission was serving the whole person rather than dealing with an exclusively spiritual ministry. In this case we see the value of leadership which is practically demonstrated rather than leadership which is thought as a theory.

The major assumption gained through this fact of modeled and emulated leadership was the fact that balanced combination of faith practices and secular education would undoubtedly result in the transformation of a given society. Rev. Gudina built his faith practices, theological conviction and missiological paradigm based on the theology and pragmatism of principles of wholistic mission and ministry.

In the context of African Christianity the principles and practices of wholistic mission and ministry can never be replaced or even mitigated. It is one of those God given missional and ministerial principles to be pursued if any given African church is serious about making a wholistic and meaningful impact on the lives of a given society.

## Roots of Lay Ministry and Leadership

At the earliest days of his life Rev. Gudina saw lay people preaching the Gospel in addition to their jobs and other responsibilities. "...Gudina heard about the preaching of the Gospel at an early age. He was also very eager to join the school, which he did at the age of 10. As he was learning, he also heard the Gospel from his teachers. Obbo Negassa Fayissa, one of his teachers, was known as a godly man, who led many to Christ." (Dr. Yonas Deressa on the Life and Ministry of Rev. Gudina Tumsa, GTF, 2003, p.5)

This aspect of Rev. Gudina's life was where he gained a very strong belief in lay movement that is still carrying Mekane Yesus church forward. The idea of strengthening and boosting lay led mission and ministry was not something he read or learned in Seminary class rooms. Lay ministry was the very means God used to bring his life to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. In his Christian formation days lay leaders such as teachers, farmers and health practitioners preaching the Gospel by going from one place to the other was a normal ministerial and ecclesiastical practice.

As leaders whose life is touched and transformed by the powerful ministry of the laity Rev. Gudina became an ardent advocate and perpetual proponent of mobilizing the laity for mission and ministry. This act was not to discourage theological education or ordained ministry but it was out of his belief in the priesthood of all believers. In the context of African church where the church is growing at a very explosive and rapid rate the only way to match that growth with an appropriate and fitting leadership was and is through lay leadership development and mobilization. The European and American practice of one or more professionally trained and ordained pastor for the ministry of a single congregation is unimaginable at this time.

In my conversation with my father (Desta Buba) I am informed that Ephesians 4:11 was repeatedly quoted and preached by Rev. Gudina to encourage the laity into mission and ministry. Ephesians 4:11, "It was he who gave some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 *to prepare God's people for the works of service*, so that the body of Christ may be built up, until we all reach unity in faith and in the knowledge of the son of God

and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (The Leadership Bible, NIV, 1998)

According to my father's observation and comment Rev. Gudina was an ardent advocate and proponent of lay leadership and ministry for the sake of strengthening and growing the church. He was actually defining the role of trained and ordained Pastors and evangelists as an empowering and strengthening agents rather than become the sole leaders of the ministry.

Based on his experience at the earliest and youngest days of his Christian life he continued to practice what he saw and believed in. From the days of his conversion through the mission and ministry of lay evangelists and ministers in his area he started serving the Lord from his own family. With a very limited biblical and Christian knowledge he dared to serve his family and even confront the traditional religious leaders and practitioners who were misleading and exploiting people based on their extortionist and exploitative practices in the name of religion. He did not wait to receive permission from somewhere to serve the Lord. His conversion and deep Christian convictions were strong enough to commence his journey as a servant the Lord.

Furthermore during his early ministerial days in Nekemte he was serving the Lord as a lay person. Whether it was during his days when he was serving as translator in the Hospital or during his days of service as health professional he was serving the Lord with deep commitment and conviction. For him becoming a Christian was equivalent to receiving a call to Christian service.

These convictions of lay ministry combined with wholistic ministry are the two pillars under girding the mission and ministry of the Mekane Yesus church. These two pillars are also the two propellants behind the rapid and expansive nature of church growth in Ethiopia. The early practices of lay ministry in the life Rev. Gudina combined with Onesimos Nesib's monumental services without ordination combined with His Excellency Emmanuel Abraham's long years of lay leadership as the national leader of the Mekane Yesus church laid the foundations for the unshakable convictions of the Mekane Yesus church to be and to remain as a church that is fully committed to lay ministerial and missional movement.

### House Churches and The Mekane Yesus Church Growth

House churches and small group Christian meetings were how churches grew in Bodjii area. The house church model of church planting and expansion is still practiced across the board in the entire circle of Ethiopian evangelicals. The same lay person Rev. Gudina saw preaching was hosting a house church in his house. According to Dr. Yonas, "Another Godly man, Hunde Gutema, used to come from Mendi and preach the Gospel in the home of Ato Negassa Fayisa." (Dr. Yonas Deressa on the Life and Ministry of Rev. Gudina Tumsa, GTF, 2003, p.5)

The combination of lay people preaching the Gospel and opening their homes to host house churches were very important factors in the development of evangelical Christianity in the context of Ethiopia. Rev. Gudina's missional thinking and practices were shaped with these types of tangible faith practices. House churches were where most churches were born and came into existence. Rev. Gudina grew up watching these practices not as some unusual Christian practice. But as a means used by the church at that time for the spread of the God and for the sake of laying the foundation of congregations.

These ecclesiastical form of existence and missional/missionary means of growing the church were practices all the way through days of Emperor Haile Selassie and the communist time. It is still practiced today as a major mechanism through which churches are branching out to grow and become a full fledged church and missional agent.

House churches are going to be with us for many more years to come. This form of being a church is not just for the sake hiding from persecution and going underground to hide from people and policies in adversity to the church, but it was a very healthy way of doing ministry. Most of the major services offered to the contemporaries of Christ on earth was offered in people's homes or houses. Christ was committed to ministerial sustainability by going to people's houses and bring the good news of the Gospel. Eventually house churches gave birth to the monumental segment of the church history we call the Apostolic church.

In the words of my father Rev. Gudina was deeply committed to the principles and practices of house churches. As he received ministry through house churches in his birth place Bodjii he remained committed to that missional and ministerial conviction.

### Call and Cost of Prophetic Ministry

Christian leadership is highly dependent on the tenacity and deep sense of call that leaders claim to have. Rev. Gudina without a doubt was a man with a very deep conviction and sense of call for sake of mission and ministry of the Gospel and justice for all. This deep sense of call and authentic commitment to the essence and meaning of that calling was sealed by the cost he paid in order to carry out and live his life to the fullest extent of that calling.

In order to come to the bottom of this issue and find out the source this conviction one has to ask the question, where and how Rev. Gudina gained that deep conviction and assurance in his sense of calling. According Rev. Tessara Hirpo, the earliest exposure of Rev. Gudina to the preaching the Gospel in his own language by this lay preachers gave him to comparatively look at the Qallu practices done particularly by his uncle and the liberating power that is embedded in the Gospel. (Hassen and Maatii: 98) Looking at those abhorrent practices in the name of Waaqa or God and under the disguises of religion were unacceptable to the young Gudina Tumsa. In biblical terms that can be seen as the holy and prophetic indignation undergirding the prophetic calling and ministry of the Rev. Gudina Tumsa.

In the words of Dr. Yonas, “It was there and then that Gudina understood the liberating power of the Gospel of Christ that Jesus Christ is stronger than Satan, and all evil spirits, and he can liberate those possessed. After that, Gudina committed himself to telling others to believe in Jesus Christ, the crucified Savior as the love of God filled his life.” (Dr. Yonas Deressa on the Life and Ministry of Rev. Gudina Tumsa, GTF, 2003, p.5) This sense of call was the most dominant factor in Rev. Gudina’s life. Based on it he walked the walk, talked the talk and paid the ultimate cost of Christian ministry just like his Lord.

After gaining this sense of calling and the assurance of faith Rev. Gudina was confident and bold enough to confront the person and practices of his own uncle who was a practicing ‘Qallu’.

Righteous indignation followed by direct and bold confrontation to tackle the problem are remarkable and consistent practices marking the life of a prophet and prophetic ministry.

After getting a strong sense of calling with a decision to serve the Lord, Rev. Gudina went back home and directly confronted his uncle. He even cut down the tree that was considered sacred. According to Habtamu Bulla, Rev. Gudina was highly criticized by the followers of his uncle. However rather than running and hiding from their criticism he boldly encouraged to believe in the saving power of the Gospel. That is where he gained his prophetic courage and the boldness of dealing with all sorts of evil in a direct and fearless way. That prophetic courage became the trade mark of his mission and eventually he paid the ultimate cost of prophetic calling and ministry.

#### Wholistic Educational Foundations and Commitment to Self Reliance

Leaders are informed and/or educated individuals. The form of education or information they gain and/or they have may come from multiple sources and through multiple methods of learning. However whether they come through formal or informal sources leaders deserve to be informed and educated individuals in their own rites.

Right after finishing his fourth grade education Rev. Gudina was urged to go Nedjo and join the Swedish Mission School for further education. Rev. M. Lungdren and Rev. P. Stjarne were the two missionary teachers who gave him a chance and admitted into the school. The Nedjo education gave him multiple opportunities. To mention few,

- He was exposed to non Oromo, European ministers of the Gospel,
- Gave him a chance to learn English and even translate English sermons into Oromo,
- Availed him ample opportunities to go out and preach the Gospel on weekends and
- Afforded him with a deeper biblical knowledge and life of the Christian faith.

According to Rev. Tesgara, "Rev. Gudina couldn't afford to pay his way through school in Nedjo, however he managed to work for and with the missionaries to make his payments." Therefore in addition to the four lessons earned via his Nedjo experience Rev. Gudina gained a deeper appreciation for the theory and concept of *self reliance*. He was not ashamed or even afraid of doing anything to earn his living. Dignity and respect for work was another leadership quality he was demonstrating from his earliest days in the church.

After completing sixth grade Rev. Gudina left for Nekemte for further education. However lack of support forced him to seek other avenues of life. So he went to the Teferi Mekonen hospital for a job. There he was employed first as an interpreter for missionary doctors and nurses."

- Sixth grade education,
- experience with Swedish missionaries,
- experience as a lay preacher and
- Bible knowledge
- Commitments to be a self supporting individual were very significant achievements in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

However he was still determined and committed enough to humble himself and take any job available to work his way up. That speaks volumes about his tenacity, determination and dignity for work. Even during those tough times he was faithful to his calling that he was preaching the Gospel during lunchtime and evenings. By doing that he quickly gained the respect and admiration of his superiors and was admitted to the nursing school of the Teferi Mekonen Hospital in Nekemte to be trained as a dresser. According Rev. Tesgara "He was married to Adde Tsehai Tolessa a native of Nekemte in 1951 while he was studying as a dresser." (Hassen and Maatii: 99)

Rev. Gudina at that time was a lay preacher trained as a dresser. Early on in Bodjii he witnessed the combination of Christian ministry with the establishment of primary education. Thus his life as a medical professional with a commitment to the ministry of the Gospel was a very vivid example of wholistic ministry. Thus while he was serving in Nekemte his life became the personification of wholistic mission. That personification is when a preacher serves people as a

preacher and health care provider. Therefore the dualistic approach to ministry where people try to divorce the heavenly from the earthly, the temporal from the eminent, the spiritual from the physical or even the religious from the secular is alien not the theoretical framework of Rev. Gudinas' thinking but it was even alien to his own persona. According to Dr. Yonas Rev. Gudina served by combining Medical care and the preaching of the Gospel in Nekemte, Bakko and Arjo for four years. Missional leaders are characterized by this type of multifaceted mission and ministry. Their approach is indiscriminate and their goal is reaching and serving the whole person.

### Leader's Family Responsibility

The other adverse situation in Rev. Gudina's life was the fact that he was responsible for the rest of his family. His parents died at the early age therefore as the oldest in the family he was responsible to care for the rest of his family. One the most evident characteristics of missional leaders is their adamant care for their family.

Missional call is not pursued at the expense of care and compassion for ones' own family. When people are called to be caring and compassionate about others they are also expected to display sincere compassionate and caring services from their own household. Rev. Gudina was a shining star in that life style. My father met Rev. Gudina and the rest of his family in Nekemte. He even went to school with the Baro Tumsa and Negassa Tumsa the two younger brothers of Rev. Gudina Tumsa. In my father's words their family unity was amazing. Discussion around their dinner table was characterized by much learning, serious debates and humor.

After Rev. Gudina's move to Nekemte, he was married to Adde Tsehai. When he heard the sudden death of his mother he consulted with his wife about bringing his two younger brothers and his younger sister to Nekemte. In her words she was, "Negassa was about ten and Baro was about seven years old when Gudina went to Bodjii and brought them to Nekemte." Gudina's young family was all of a sudden burden with the very heavy responsibility of raising up his own children and his new extended family circle.

He was deeply committed to the academic excellence and spiritual depth of his brothers. He was also determined to instill a very well balanced work ethics at the early ages of his brother. Obbo Negassa Tumsa has repeatedly mentioned to me that Rev. Gudina was determined to help his brothers excel in their education. He wanted them to be disciplined and principled individuals with a very deep sense of their Christian convictions. He was also instilling in them a real sense of pride in themselves and have confidence in themselves as they grow up. In the words of Obbo Negassa Tumsa, 'he was both loving as a father and strict as a disciplinarian.' They were not living a very abundant lifestyle. However he was determined to make ends along with his hardworking and dedicated with to provide for the family.

According to Dr. Yonas, "Even though his salary was low, and he was supporting his family and orphaned brothers and sister and it was not easy to make ends meet, it was said that he never complained about it." (Dr. Yonas Deressa on the Life and Ministry or Rev. Gudina Tumsa, GTF, 2003, p.7) Missional leaders are successfully contributing members of a family unit. Success in home management usually lays the ground work for success in other areas of life.

### Prayerful Leadership

Effective missional leaders are people of prayer. Leaders who don't pray are usually leaders without strong bearing and depth of life. Rev. Gudina's life can be credited to many things including his love for reading and academic discussions with friends of the same caliber. However the essence of his success can never be credited to anything more than his commitment to his consistent life of prayer.

My father ones told me that he learned the practice of humbly kneeling down during prayer from Rev. Gudina Tumsa. Rev. Gudina used prayer as a discipline to clear his thoughts and discern the future and hear the voice of God. His ministry was almost all the time in very tense and tumultuous circumstances. Therefore prayer was how he anchored his life in the word of God and in that very moment. In those days of chaos and tumult he kept himself together and focused on the central and most essential acts to the church with the help of prayer.

According to the words Rev. Gudina's friend and colleague Paul Hoffman, "Prayer ...played an important part in Gudina's own personal life and that of his family. Prayer at the beginning or ending of meetings or conferences, which he chaired or participated in, was not just a tradition to be followed, carry-over from a previous pietistic time and place. No! Especially at difficult times or before or after difficult, controversial meetings, common prayer – that is shared personal prayer to Jesus on behalf of persons or about situation or courses of action-seemed to be an existential necessity for him. It also showed with what genuine spirituality Gudina approached the persons he had to deal with, the situations with which he was confronted, or the leadership which was expected of him." (Rev. Paul Hoffman, on the Life and Ministry of Rev. Gudina Tumsa, GTF, 2003, p.16)

Prayer as exemplified by the Rev. Gudina Tumsa is not an option for any missional leader. His life was formed, reformed and transformed by and through his consistent life of prayer. Leaders have so much to learn from this power, principle and practice of prayer.

## Bibliography

Buba, Gemechis Desta., *The Making of Missional Leadership: The case of Oromo New Church Development Ethnic Specific, Immigrant NCD*, Columbia Theological Seminary, 2006

Eide, Oyvind M., *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia: A study of church and politics with Special Reference to the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus 1974-1985*, Uppsala, University, 1996

Hassen, Mohammed and Maatii Daraaraa., *Goota Oromiyaa*. Oromia Publishing LLC, Atlanta Ga. 2008

Mahajan, Vijay., *Africa Rising: How 900 Million African consumers offer more than you think*. Wharton School of Publishing, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 2009.

Oden Thomas C., *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity*. IVP Books, Downers Groove Illinois. 2007

### GTF Publications;

Witness and Discipleship, Leadership of the church in the Multi-Ethnic Ethiopia in a Time of Revolution. The Essential Writings of Gudina Tumsa, Edited by the Gudina Tumsa Foundation. Addis Ababa, 2008.

The Life and Ministry of Gudina Tumsa: Lectures and Discussions Missiological Seminar 2001 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Edited by the Gudina Tumsa Foundation, Addis Ababa, 2008.

### Amharic Books;

Fekadu Gurmessa Kussa; The history of the Mekane Yesus – Establishment and Growth, EECMY Yemisrach Dimts, Addis Ababa January 1999.

Solomon Tilahun, Simret Gebremariam; Condensed history of 20 Famous and historic Ethiopian personality. Rev. Gudina Tumsa was listed as one of the twenty famous Ethiopian Personalities, Rehobot Printers, 2000 E.C.

**Bible Quotation**

The Leadership Bible, New International Version, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1998.