

The Legacy of Rev. Gudina Tumsa in the Spiritual Charismatic Movements of EECMY.

"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many."

Isa. 51:1-2.(NIV)

When I was in junior secondary school one of our class mate asked us a riddle. He said:- "Once upon a time a car has got accident and passengers got injured. People from the surround run to the spot and watched what has happened. Some one was very much interested in the vehicle and was looking into the damaged part of it. Another person was watching on the suffering and dying people and was trying to encourage them. Still another person was taking care for the wounded and controlling the blood and tying the broken bones. Still another person was watching over the cause of the danger and was measuring the road side and how far the vehicle has gone out of the way. He asked who are these people? Some students tried to answer this and that, but none has got the correct answer. So he said these people are a mechanic, a paster, a doctor and a traffic police."

There is so many things happeninig arround us and many people pass-by without noticing it. But everyone has its own interest area. I just wanted to mention this to say how I got to know Rev. Gudina Tumsa. As Rev. Gudina Tumsa was a person of diverse quality every one at his day and even today wants to relate him to his/her/ interests. Some people refer to him as a good christian leader, some as a good politician others as a good spiritual father and still some as prominent nationalists. As for me I would like to say how I got to know him personally and also what I have heard of him from other as well.

In 1976 when I first joined Mekane Yesus Seminary and for the first time met Rev. Gudina Tumsa was right after his release from his two month pirson. It was the time when he was lost for two months and nobody knew where he was. He was moved from place to place so that people could not visit him. As I was then interested in politics I was eager to see him as a hero of politics in that very risky condition of the provisional military government of Ethiopia. But what I have heard of him witnessing was that eventhough his doctor advised him to take medicine everyday, the Lord has helped him to survive without it in those bad days in the prison. He added that depending on the good care of God in those days is very important and without it no one could stand in the faith. Immediately my oppinion about Rev. Gudina Tumsa was changed to another position and I started to see him as a church father of great faith.

It was in March 1977 that I started to participate in the Spiritual Charismatic movement meetings at the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary. Soon the Synod leaders started to question our position of doctrinal bases. We were gathered for discussion and Rev. Gudina Tumsa, who was then the chairman of the Seminary board, was invited to hear us. He looked very normal, not ferious as it was with some of our leaders of that day, but with bright and sympathysizing fatherly face recieved us. Some of our fellow students came with different questions to challenge us and the seminary principal for he was also accused of permitting the gathering. For me it was time of decision whether I should abandon Mekane Yesus Church or leave the Seminary and join politics which I

theme for the General Assembly held at Yirgalem. In that study paper ten points were given as a recommendation to the Assembly out of which I refer to seven of them:-

(1). *Efforts should be made to keep those members of the Mekane Yesus Church who feel affiliated with the Pentecostal Movement within the church as far as it does not violate the principles and confessions of the church.*

(2). *No general rules for church discipline should be worked out, but pastoral wisdom should be employed in individual counselling.*

(3). *Teaching should be carried out on all levels in the church in order to enable leaders and members of the congregations to deal biblically with the questions raised by the Pentecostal movement.*

(4). *Study material should be made available to this effect.*

(6). *The possibility of organizing special meetings or services for a more free exercise of the spiritual gifts as well as stronger participation from the congregation should be investigated.*

(9). *Contact should be taken with leaders of the Pentecostals with a view to reaching agreement on important matters, study the Bible together and work harmoniously together as different churches.*

(10). *The Pentecostals should be looked upon as Christian brethren, and the rule of Gamaliel should be employed to the largest possible extent, "If this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" (Acts 5:38-39)*

But to my dismay the Assembly accepted as an information but did not react on it. (GA.8-34-73) while another paper on Church growth by Rev. Gunnar Kjaerland was referred to a working committee of the Assembly. (GA.8-16-73). It seems as the matter seemed very urgent that it again came as one agenda that two years later the 32nd Executive Committee held Janu. 21-22/1975 reconsidered it and paper was presented by Rev. Olav Saveras on the spiritual movement based on observation in some churches and the EC discussed thoroughly and decided as follows:-

EC-32-13: The Rev. Olav Saveras presented a paper on the spiritual movement observed some places in the Church. Several committee members gave their opinion on this matter.

The discussion continued and on resolution no. 16/32 decided as follows:-

EC-32-16: The discussion of the spiritual movement continued and the matter was discussed at length. In the discussion it was said that the Church without abandoning her doctrine had to be led by the spirit of God. The matter was considered very important. It was decided the Theology Commission and the Study Department should study the question and prepare guidelines to be sent to the synods for comments.

From the above statement I understood how much Rev. Gudina Tumsa was striving to make the EECMY understand the importance of the charismatic movement. But I could not find source document as what guidelines the Theology Commission or Christian education prepared or if it was again forgotten or ignored as the study paper of the Rev. T. Engelsviken which was presented for the 8th General Assembly. What so ever the case it was Rev. Gudina Tumsa contributed a lot to the present situation of the Charismatic movement in EECMY.

had left behind and joined theology. Rev. Gudina was leading the discussion. He started with experiences of his time of study in the United States. He said;

"When I was in the United States for study one day my friends invited me to a spritual fellowship and I did not realize as it was a fellowship but thought it as a church. The other week when we gathered again each one was asked what the Lord has done in their church, and then I was confused and asked my friend what it meant each his church. Then my friend told me that the members of the fellowship are coming from different church denominations. From that time on wards I didn't miss a day and it really helped me to grow in spiritual life. Then he added the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is the outcome of the early 19th Century spiritual revival in Europe, it was not the state churches which reached Africa with the Gospel so we welcome spiritual revival into our church today. If there is anyone who is not in reality an adherent of Mekane Yesus church doctrine of faith but hidding under the umberella of our Church he/she is a thief! he exclaimed."

He continued and said, we keep unity with other church denominations without loosing our identity. If there are christians those follow other christian denomination they are still our brothers and sisters in Christ so we love and respect them with their doctrinal background but we do not accept liers. He added, 'our church needs the praying ministers. Martin Luther said that when he prayed for half an hour in the morning he did half of his day's job, if you don't want prayer it is good that you leave this seminary on time rather than wasting your days here. You cannot pass through these difficult days without prayer.' No one dared to raise any question. After the meeting was over some of our friends want out of the chapel grumbling saying that Rev.Gudina Tumsa himself was a pentecostal. For me and for my friends those were taking part in the charismatic movement fellowship it was a victorious day. I loved the Mekane Yesus Church and her leaders more than before. I realized as there are top leaders who understood the work of the Holy Spirit in their contemporary church. I decided to tolerate with church leaders who then did not realize their contemporary situation. That meeting and the words from Rev. Gudina Tumsa helped me to remain the rest of my life as Lutheran confessor. Later on when I was misunderstood by my colleagues and immediate bosses I always referred to the word of Rev. Gudina Tumsa.

When the Spiritual Charismatic movement was just started in the Seminary the first participants were not tolerated and as a result Rev.Tasfaye Dinagde was one of the first of those days. Though source documents are not available when Rev. Tasfaye Dinagde, who is now-a-days in USA and called Rev. Waktola Dinagde, has been expelled from the Mekane Yesus Seminary in November 1974; Rev. Gudina Tumsa took care of him and brought to the attention of the 476th EECMY church officers held on Dec. 11,1974 and employed him as assistance secretary of Youth Work as of 20th of November 1974.

I also discovered that Rev. Gudina Tumsa tried for many years to make EECMY leaders understand and tolerate charismatic movent in the church. On the 24th Excutive Committee held June 22, 1972 Rev. Tormod Engelsviken presented a paper on how to take care of the spiritual revival in the church,(EC 24-24 'C-2' and Rev. Gudina Tumsa gave more explanation on the presentation. The EC decided that the paper be more developed and be one of the theme for the 8th General Assembly to be held in January 1973 at Yirgalem.(EC.24-25). The paper was developed and presented as one of the

If Proper research be made it is possible to bring witness as many as possible that the present day EECMY unit leaders would confess the reality that if it hadn't been not for Rev. Gudina Tumsa many of the today's leaders would have left the Mekane Yesus Church and would have joined other denominations. It was obvious I would have been one of those. I dare to say that had other leaders of the Mekane Yesus Church (unit leaders) accepted the proposal of Rev. Gudina Tumsa on time there wouldn't have been as many christian denominations in Ethiopia as we see them today. The tremendous grows of the numbers of EECMY's members is because of the reality that the Church has accepted Spiritual Charismatic movements and Rev. Gudina Tumsa still stands as the back bone of this growth of numbers of EECMY Church members. God multiplied him though he was alone when he first accepted spiritual revival in the United States. So we remember him as the father of spiritual Charismatic movement of the EECMY.

Presented by Taressa Qanno(pastor)