

WALATTA PETROS AND HAKALLA AMALE

PIOUS WOMEN OF ETHIOPIA

Original Biographies from the *Dictionary of African  
Christian Biography* with commentary by  
Dr. Jonathan Bonk, Project Director

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The ***Journal of African Christian Biography*** was launched in 2016 to complement and make stories from the on-line *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* ([www.DACB.org](http://www.DACB.org)) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms.

Published in monthly installments with an annual cumulative volume available on line or in print, the *JACB* is intended to promote the research, publication, and use of African Christian biography within Africa by serving as an academically credible but publically accessible source of information on Christianity across the continent.

All editorial correspondence should be directed to: [jjbonk@bu.edu](mailto:jjbonk@bu.edu) and [joacb@bu.edu](mailto:joacb@bu.edu)

Editor: Jonathan Bonk

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Lamin Sanneh and Michael J. McClymond, editors. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Christianity*. London, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2016. Pp. 784. \$225.00 ISBN 978-1-4051-5376-8

*The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to World Christianity* presents a collection of essays that explore a range of topics relating to the rise, spread, and influence of Christianity throughout the world.

- Features contributions from renowned scholars of history and religion from around the world
- Addresses the origins and global expansion of Christianity over the course of two millennia
- Covers a wide range of themes relating to Christianity, including women, worship, sacraments, music, visual arts, architecture, and many more
- Explores the development of Christian traditions over the past two centuries across several continents and the rise in secularization (from the cover)

The Stories of Walatta Petros and Hakalla Amale  
*Dictionary of African Christian Biography*  
*Journal of African Christian Biography*  
Vol 1, No 1 (June 2016)

The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life survey made public on August 15, 2010 showed that Africa is the most religious continent in the world.<sup>1</sup> The share of Africans who described religion as “very important” in their lives ranged from 98% in Senegal to 69% in Botswana. That compared with 57% of Americans, 25% of Germans, and 8% of Swedes.

The study also reported that the number of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa had increased more rapidly than the number of Muslims, from 7 million in 1900 to 470 million in 2010. Today, approximately one out of four Christians in the world resides in sub-Saharan Africa, with a continental tally of 542 million, making it the religion of a majority of Africans south of the Sahara.<sup>2</sup>

It is fitting that the inaugural issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* should feature the stories of two very different Ethiopian women—one a pious noblewoman from the highlands, the other a peasant from the south.

Anyone with a nodding interest in Ethiopia will at once associate the country with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, a venerable institution tracing its roots back to a micro calamity that took place some seventeen centuries ago. Accompanying their uncle Meropius on a voyage that was to have taken them from Tyre to India, two young Syrian brothers were the only survivors of a massacre that took the lives of all hands on board—retaliation for the crew’s miscreant behavior at an Ethiopian Red Sea port where the ship had stopped the day before to take on fresh water. Frumentius and Aedesius were taken to Aksum, where they became tutors to Prince ‘Ezānā, first-born son of Emperor ‘Ellä-’Amēda. They could not have been aware that their protégé was destined to become the Aksumite Empire’s greatest ruler, and its first Christian emperor. Frumentius was subsequently consecrated bishop by

Athanasius, then Patriarch of Alexandria.

From that time, the heartlands of Ethiopia have remained adamantly and profoundly Christian despite relentless, at times severe, pressure by Muslim invaders who succeeded in obliterating all traces of Nubian Christianity. Roman Catholic Jesuit missionaries came perilously close to eliminating the Orthodox Täwähädo Church when they persuaded King Susänyos (1572-1632) to proclaim Roman Catholicism the official religion of his realm, but were stymied by Wälättä Petros (Ge'ez: **ወለተ፡ ጳጳሱ**, 1592–November 24, 1642), the sainted religious and monastic leader whose story is featured below.

The first four centuries of the Ethiopian church were marked by an impressive scholarly productivity which included the translation of the Bible into Ge'ez. For the next eight hundred years (700-1500), the country was effectively cut off from most of the Christian world. Academic speculation tends to the view that it was during this period that the Church's theology and practice became suffused with the distinctively Hebraic and monastic traditions that today distinguish it from all other Christian traditions. Today, as the official religion of the only country on the continent to have decisively thwarted nineteenth century European colonization, the Orthodox Church continues to be integral to Ethiopian self-definition, particularly among highland Ethiopians.

Unfortunately, while surviving Ahmed Gran's religiously driven campaign of religious and cultural genocide in the mid-sixteenth century, the Orthodox Church suffered enormous losses, particularly throughout the south. Thousands of Orthodox churches were destroyed, and with them a vast, millennium-old accumulation of liturgical and historical vellum manuscripts. Conversion to Islam was the easiest key to survival.

It was only toward the end of the nineteenth century that faltering efforts were mounted by the Orthodox Church to recoup its losses. These attempts were only partially successful, however. For despite its longevity, and possibly because of its close ties with brutally imposed Ethiopian imperial power, Orthodoxy was less than welcome even in those parts of the country not directly overrun by

**Lamin Sanneh. *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford Studies in World Christianity). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xxii, 362. \$21.95 ISBN 978-01-9518961-2**

Long the dominant religion of the West, Christianity is now rapidly becoming the principal faith in much of the postcolonial world--a development that marks a momentous shift in the religion's very center of gravity. In this eye-opening book, Lamin Sanneh examines the roots of this "post-Western awakening" and the unparalleled richness and diversity, as well as the tension and conflict, it has brought to World Christianity.

Tracing Christianity's rise from its birth on the edge of the Roman empire--when it proclaimed itself to be a religion for the entire world, not just for one people, one time, and one place--to its key role in Europe's maritime and colonial expansion, Sanneh sheds new light on the ways in which post-Western societies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America were drawn into the Christian orbit. Ultimately, he shows, these societies outgrew Christianity's colonial forms and restructured it through their own languages and idioms--a process that often occurred outside, and sometimes against, the lines of denominational control. The effect of such changes, Sanneh contends, has been profound, transforming not only worship, prayer, and the interpretation of Scripture, but also art, aesthetics, and music associated with the church. In exploring this story of Christianity's global expansion and its current resurgence in the non-Western world, Sanneh pays close attention to such issues as the faith's encounters with Islam and indigenous religions, as well as with secular ideologies such as Marxism and nationalism. He also considers the challenges that conservative, non-Western forms of Christianity pose to Western liberal values and Enlightenment ideas.

Here then is a groundbreaking study of Christianity's role in cultural innovation and historical change--and must reading for all who are concerned with the present and future of the faith. (from the cover)

Other features include a chronology of Walatta Petros's life, maps, a comprehensive glossary, and detailed notes on textual variants. (from the cover)

**Martin Meredith, *The Fortunes of Africa: A 5000-Year History of Wealth, Greed, and Endeavour*. New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2014. Pp. xxii, 745. \$35.00 ISBN 978-1-61039-459-8 (HC) / 978-1-61039-460-4 (EB)**

Africa has been coveted for its riches ever since the era of the Pharaohs. In past centuries, it was the lure of gold, ivory, and slaves that drew fortune-seekers, merchant-adventurers, and conquerors from afar. In modern times, the focus of attention is on oil, diamonds, and other valuable minerals.

Land was another prize. The Romans relied on their colonies in northern Africa for vital grain shipments to feed the population of Rome. Arab invaders followed in their wake, eventually colonizing the entire region. More recently, foreign corporations have acquired huge tracts of land to secure food supplies needed abroad, just as the Romans did.

In this vast and vivid panorama of history, Martin Meredith follows the fortunes of Africa over a period of 5,000 years. With compelling narrative, he traces the rise and fall of ancient kingdoms and empires; the spread of Christianity and Islam; the enduring quest for gold and other riches; the exploits of explorers and missionaries; and the impact of European colonization. He examines, too, the fate of modern African states and concludes with a glimpse of their future.

His cast of characters includes religious leaders, mining magnates, warlords, dictators, and many other legendary figures—among them Mansa Musa, ruler of the medieval Mali empire, said to be the richest man the world has ever known. “I speak of Africa,” Shakespeare wrote, “and of golden joys.” This is history on an epic scale. (from the cover)

Muslim invaders. Since conversion to the state religion had often been legislated and violently coerced, religious Orthodoxy and imperial oppression were inseparable.

Among the large populations of unwilling converts were culturally, religiously and linguistically distinctive peoples in Harerge, Bale, Sidamo, Gamo Gofa, Kefa, Ilubabor, and Welega provinces. Difficult to pacify, and on the fringes of mainstream Ethiopian life, these peoples became the imperially sanctioned province of foreign missionaries from the West, through whom, it was hoped, *pax Ethiopiana* might be achieved. Western missionary education and medicine, offered in Amharic, would eventuate in pacification and a sense of inclusion in the national “we.”

Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries who arrived in the mid-nineteenth century made cooperation with the Orthodox Church in Tigre their *modus operandi*. But by 1935, eight Protestant mission agencies—some denominational, others non-denominational, most of them evangelical—were at work in Southern Ethiopia: the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society (BCMS), the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), the United Presbyterian Mission of the USA, the Church Mission to the Jews, Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen (EFS - Sweden), Bibeltreue Freunde (until 1911, part of EFS), and Hermannsburger Missionsanstalt. Obligated to temporarily suspend operations when the Italians briefly (1935-1941) occupied the country during the Second World War, missionaries discovered communities of flourishing evangelical faith when they returned after the war. Between 1950 and 1975 these agencies were joined by numerous others, variously engaged in evangelism, education, and community development.

Today the largest Protestant denomination in the country is the Word of Life Evangelical Church (Kale Hewyet), related to erstwhile Sudan Interior Mission, an international mission agency now known simply as SIM International. While other significant Protestant churches in Ethiopia include the Evangelical Church Mekene Yesus (Lutheran), the Seventh Day Adventists, and a number

of dynamic groups tracing their roots to missionaries from the Reformed, Baptist, and Pentecostal/Full Gospel traditions, this book is about the Kale Heywet Church. More narrowly, but significantly, it is about the largest and arguably the most dynamic of its many culturally delineated branches, the Wolaitta Kale Heywet Church, without whose hundreds of dedicated evangelists the astounding growth of Christianity throughout the south would be inconceivable.

Meanwhile, the Orthodox Täwahədo Church, with an estimated membership of some 36 million, continues to thrive as a powerful influence in the life of the nation.

It is only fitting that this pilot issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* should showcase two Ethiopian women who—apart from their deep piety and profound influence on their faith communities—could not be in more stark contrast. One, a noblewoman, born to privilege, well educated, powerfully connected to the top echelons of the country's structures of power; the other, a poor peasant, illiterate, kidnapped as a young woman to become the third bride of a polygamist. Both women have left their indelible mark on Christianity in that land. And here are their stories.

**Jonathan Bonk**, Editor

selected compendium insists that war should not be the solution to our grievances. The collection makes an interesting reading. *Prof. I. Deji Ayegboyin, Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan.* (from the cover)

**Galawdewos (Author), Wendy Belcher and Michael Kleiner (Translators). *The Life and Struggles of Our Mother Walatta Petros: A Seventeenth-Century African Biography of an Ethiopian Woman.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015. Pp. xxxvii, 500. ISBN 978-0-691-16421-2**

This is the first English translation of the earliest-known book-length biography of an African woman, and one of the few lives of an African woman written by Africans before the nineteenth century. As such, it provides an exceedingly rare and valuable picture of the experiences and thoughts of Africans, especially women, before the modern era. It is also an extraordinary account of a remarkable life—full of vivid dialogue, heartbreak, and triumph.

*The Life and Struggles of Our Mother Walatta Petros (1672)* tells the story of an Ethiopian saint who led a successful nonviolent movement to preserve African Christian beliefs in the face of European protocolonialism. When the Jesuits tried to convert the Ethiopians from their ancient form of Christianity, Walatta Petros (1592-1642), a noblewoman and the wife of one of the emperor's counselors, risked her life by leaving her husband, who supported the conversion effort, and leading the struggle against the Jesuits. After her death, her disciples wrote this book, praising her as a friend of women, a devoted reader, a skilled preacher, and a radical leader. One of the earliest stories of African resistance to European influence, this biography also provides a picture of domestic life, including Walatta Petros's celibate life-long relationship with a female companion.

Richly illustrated with dozens of color illustrations from early manuscripts, this groundbreaking volume provides an authoritative and highly readable translation along with an extensive introduction.

of global Pentecostalism. Anderson argues that its spread is so dramatic because it is an "ends of the earth" movement-- Pentecostals believe that they are called to be witnesses for Jesus Christ to the furthest reaches of the globe. His wide-ranging account examines such topics as the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, the role of the first missionaries in China, India, and Africa, Pentecostalism's incredible diversity due to its deep local roots, and the central role of women in the movement. He describes more recent developments such as the creation of new independent churches, megachurches, and the "health and wealth" gospel, and he explores the increasing involvement of Pentecostals in public and political affairs across the globe. Why is this movement so popular? Anderson points to such features as the emphasis on the Spirit, the "born-again" experience, incessant evangelism, healing and deliverance, cultural flexibility, a place-to-feel-at-home, religious continuity, an egalitarian community, and meeting material needs-- all of which contribute to Pentecostalism's remarkable appeal.

Exploring more than a century of history and ranging across most of the globe, Anderson illuminates the spectacular rise of global Pentecostalism and shows how it changed the face of Christianity worldwide. (from the cover)

**Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo and Samson Adetunji Fatokun, editors.**  
***Religion and Security Issues: Proceedings of 2013 Biennial International Religious Studies Conference. Religious Studies Series, Volume 5. Ibadan, Nigeria: University of Ibadan, Department of Religious Studies, 2015.*** Pp. xiii, 414.  
No price given. ISBN 978-978-946-901-7

Security challenges have resonated in world news and in the local media in the in the last three decades or so, more than ever before. Fomenting insecurity continues to be a good business for those who invest as well as those who invest in arms. The world would be a better place if these reprobates can be put out of a job. This carefully

## Endnotes:

1. This was among the discoveries of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project. The Future of World Religions. <http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/>. More than 25,000 sub-Saharan Africans responded in face-to-face interviews in more than 60 languages. A summary of the research by *Huffington Post* (June 15, 2010) reported that religion was "very important" to more than three-quarters of the population in 17 of 19 sub-Saharan nations. According to the survey, 98 percent of respondents in Senegal say religion is very important, following by 93 percent in Mali. The lowest percentage was reported in Botswana, 69 percent, which is still a healthy majority. The study is part of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project. More than 25,000 sub-Saharan Africans responded in face-to-face interviews in more than 60 languages ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/15/survey-finds-africa-is-mo\\_n\\_539704.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/15/survey-finds-africa-is-mo_n_539704.html) -- published initially on June 15, 2010 and updated on May 25, 2011).

2. See "Profiles of the 270 largest of the 10,000 distinct religions worldwide," in *The World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Survey of Church and Religions in the Modern World*, ed. David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), vol. 2, pp. 3–12. The latest figures are provided by Todd M. Johnson, Gina A. Zurlo, Albert W. Hickman, and Peter F. Crossing at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. They appear in their article, "Christianity 2015: Religious Diversity and Personal Contact," in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 2015), pp. 28–29. There are signs, however, that by 2070 Islam will have

become the fastest growing religion in the world. See Emma Green, "Islam Could Become the World's Largest Religion After 2070," in *The Atlantic* (April 2, 2015). Her source is the Pew Research Center's report, released on April 2, 2015, "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050. Why Muslims Are Rising Fastest and the Unaffiliated Are Shrinking as a Share of the World's Population," (<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>).

## Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

**Samson Adentunji Fatokun, editor. *Christianity and African Society: A Festschrift in Honour of Pastor (Dr.) Gabriel Olandele Olutola*. Ibadan, Nigeria: University of Ibadan, Department of Religious Studies in conjunction with BookWright Publishers, 2013. Pp.xvi, 584. No price given. ISBN978-978-088-928-9**

The book is a collection of scholarly articles that survey Africa's contact with the Christian Faith. The book makes a critical assessment of the impacts of Christianity on African society from inception till date. Chapters are approached by different scholars from historical, theological, sociological, cultural, political, technological, and gender perspectives. In sum, the book brings out the distinctive areas Christian presence has positively and otherwise impacted on Africa as a continent by way of interaction.

**Allen Anderson. *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity (Oxford Studies in World Christianity)*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xvi, 311. \$26.95. ISBN-13: 978-0195386424 ISBN-10: 0195386426**

No branch of Christianity has grown more rapidly than Pentecostalism, especially in the southern hemisphere. There are over 100 million Pentecostals in Africa. In Latin America, Pentecostalism now vies with Catholicism for the soul of the continent, and some of the largest Pentecostal congregations in the world are in South Korea.

In *To the Ends of the Earth*, Allan Heaton Anderson explores the historical and theological factors behind the phenomenal growth



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**Walatta Petros  
1592 to 1642  
Orthodox  
Ethiopia**

Saint Walatta Petros (Ge'ez: ወለተ፡ ጳጳሮስ, Wälättä Pētros, 1592–November 24, 1642) is one of thirty women saints in the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church and one of only six of these women saints with hagiographies. She was a religious and monastic leader who led a revolt against Roman Catholicism, defending the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church when the Jesuits persuaded King Susənyos (1572-1632) to proclaim Roman Catholicism the faith of the land. Her name means "Daughter of [St.] Peter." Her followers wrote down the story of her life about thirty years after she died, in 1672, with a monk in her monastery named Gälawdewos serving as the community's amanuensis (this hagiography has been translated into English).

She was born in 1592 into a noble family, her mother was named Krəstos ʿƏbaya (In Christ lies her greatness) and her father was named Baḥər Säggäd (The [regions by the] sea submit[s] [to him]). Her father adored her, treating her with great reverence and predicting that bishops and kings would bow down to her, giving her the name of the man upon whom God built his church, Peter.

She was married at a young age to Susənyos's chief advisor, Mälkäʾä Krəstos (Image of Christ). After all three of her children died in infancy, she grew tired of the things of this world and determined to leave her husband to become a nun. Not long after, in 1612, Susənyos privately converted from the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church to Roman Catholicism, and over the next ten years, he urged those in his court, including her, to convert as well, finally delivering an edict banning orthodoxy in 1622. When Walatta Petros first left her husband, around 1615, he razed a town to retrieve her and she returned to him so that more people would not be harmed. Then she discovered that her husband had been involved in the murder of the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo

Church and she again determined to leave her husband, starving herself until he let her go. She immediately went to a monastery on Lake Ṭana and became a nun at the age of 25, in 1617. There she met, for the first time, Ǝḥətä Krəstos, the woman who became her constant companion in life and work and the abbess of her community after Walatta Petros's death.

Walatta Petros lived quietly as a devout and hard-working nun and might have remained as such if the king had not banned orthodoxy. Her hagiographer reported that she did not want to keep company with any of the converts, so she took several nuns and servants and fled her monastery, going 100 miles east of Lake Ṭana to the district of Şəyat. There she began to preach against Roman Catholicism, adding that any king who had converted was an apostate and accursed. The king soon heard of these treasonous remarks and he demanded that she be brought before the court. Her husband and powerful family came to her defense, and so she was not killed, but was sent to live with her brother in around 1625, on the condition that she stop her teaching.

However, she soon fled him (taking the same nuns and servants) and moved from Lake Ṭana to the region of Waldəbba, about 150 miles north, which was then drawing many monks and nuns who refused to convert and were fomenting against the new religion. While there, Walatta Petros had a vision of Christ commissioning her to found seven religious communities, a charge she only reluctantly took up. She left and went to the region of Şallamt, east of Waldəbba, and again began preaching against conversion. The angry king again called her before the court, and this time she was sentenced to spending Saturdays with the Jesuits, as the head of the mission, Afonso Mendes, worked to convert her.

When this was unsuccessful, the king banished her, alone, to the Ethio-Sudan borderlands, Žabay, a hot and barren place. There she endured many hardships, but many monks and nuns who did not want to convert found her and became members of her community. Due to the kindness of the queen, Ǝḥətä Krəstos was allowed to join her. Thus, Žäbäy was the first of the seven communities prophesized.

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### Sources for the story of Hakalla Amale

This article, submitted to the *DACB* in 2002, was researched and written by Belaynesh Dindamo of the Kale Heywet Church Women's Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It is based on the author's interviews of Hakalla Amale, and on eyewitness accounts by her son, Assefa Jate (a KHC leader) and by KHC Pastor Ato Kedamo Mechatu.

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### Sources for the story of Walatta Petros

This article, submitted to the *DACB* in 2016, was researched and written by Wendy Laura Belcher, Associate Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature and Center for African American Studies at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey, USA.

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After three years the king relented and she went with her followers to live in the region of Dambāya, on the northern side of Lake Ṭana, setting up her second community, Čanq<sup>wa</sup>. More men and women followed her there, and when sickness broke out, she moved her followers to Məşälle, on the southeastern shore, her third community.

Finally, in 1632, fifteen years after Walatta Petros had become a nun, a disheartened Susənyos rescinded the conversion edict and died just a few months later. Walatta Petros was revered as a heroine for her resistance to early European incursions in Africa. For the next ten years, Walatta Petros's community continued to grow and the next king, Fasilädäs, looked on her with great favor. She set up her communities at Dämböza, Afär Färäs, Zäge, and Zäbol. Then, after a three-month illness, she died, twenty-six years after she had become a nun, and was buried at the monastery or Rema on Lake Ṭana.

In 1650, Fasilädäs gave land to establish her monastery at Q<sup>wa</sup>araşa, on Lake Ṭana, which remains her monastery today. Walatta Petros's fame continued to grow over the next century, and her monastery became an important sanctuary for those fleeing the wrath of the king, for whom she performed many miracles, as recorded in her hagiography.

Unfortunately, the edition of her life published in 1912 was based on one manuscript, and that very corrupted, so most of the research about her published before the recent English translation and edition, based on twelve manuscripts of the hagiography, contains incorrect information about her life.

**Wendy Laura Belcher**  
Princeton University

**Hakalla Amale**  
**c.1905 to 1991**  
**Kale Heywet Church**  
**Ethiopia**

Hakalla Amale was the first woman to be converted in the Kambatta Hadiya area. She is remembered for her strength in enduring persecution in the early days of the church.

She was born in Kaburbaya, Ballessa, Hosanna Shoa, Ethiopia, to Amale Kassamo (father) and Faysse Lamonko (mother) and spoke the Hadiya language. She became the third wife of Ato Jate Malegu who kidnapped her and forced her to marry him. His first two wives had given him only daughters and he trusted that Hakalla would give him sons. In fact, she bore him three sons, Assefa, Estefanos, and Eshetu.

Hakalla first heard the gospel from her uncle's son, Shigute Dadda, and came to faith in Christ at the age of eighteen, the same year she gave birth to her first son. She learned to read the Bible—a very rare achievement even for men at that time. Her family on both sides tried to force her husband to divorce her because of her faith, but he refused because she had given him a son. Hakalla was beaten with hippopotamus leather and forced to chew that same leather as a sign that she would deny the faith. But she would not deny Christ. In the late evenings, her brother and Shigute visited her to pray and strengthen her faith.

While Hakalla was pregnant with her second son, the persecution increased. The village elders came to her home, forced her outside, and demanded that she deny Christ, threatening to curse her if she refused. On that particular day she was preparing a traditional medicine which people believed made labour and delivery easier. In their presence, she drank the medicine in the name of Christ. The men then cursed her. Hakalla was willing to die rather than deny Christ. Later that day, she gave birth to a healthy second son and the people saw that the power of Christ had overcome the curse. Hakalla was then ordered not to communicate

with her neighbors at all. In spite of this the number of believers kept growing. When her relative, Ato Aba Gole believed, his conversion eased the persecution. Later, her husband believed. Hakalla witnessed in her own village and often walked or traveled by horseback to distant villages to witness and preach.

Hakalla is known for her strong witness in her family which led her husband, children, and grandchildren to Christ. She was the first woman to serve when the Dubancho church was established. A strong advocate of women's literacy, Hakalla traveled to Lemu, Kambatta, Shone, Sike, Wolayta, and visited many congregations even as far away as Ambo and Addis Ababa to teach women to read. She was a strong support when the women's group was organized and she was invited to join the Women's General Assembly at the national level to give her testimony. She was also the only woman with strong enough faith and determination to be allowed to enter prisons. She served Christian prisoners by traveling long distances to take them fresh food. She was also a model of hospitality and entertained many Christian guests and students, as well as some of her persecutors. Even in her old age she led the women's prayer group in the local church. She wrote a song: "Lord Jesus, my heart is longing to be with you" (*"Wedante Yesus hoi libey yinafkal"*).

In her eighty-fifth year, she told her children one day that she felt ill. Two days later she passed away.

**Belaynesh Dindamo**  
Women's Office  
Kale Heywet Church

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