



Funeral programme
for

CANON DR. AGNES ABUOM

Tuesday 13th June, 2023 At 12.00pm

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF KENYA
All Saints' Cathedral, Nairobi





FUNERAL PROGRAMME

FOR
LAY CANON, DR AGNES ABUOM

Service leader: **The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit – Archbishop Anglican Church of Kenya**

Assisted by: **The Rt. Rev. Prof. Joseph Galgalo & Rev. Canon Evans Omollo/Rev. Canon Habil Omungu**

Processional sentences

Opening prayer & Welcome remarks

Opening Hymn: When peace like a river

Psalm 23 – **Rev. JM Kariuki**

Eulogy: **Tabitha Chepkwony**

Tributes:

a) Family:

Daughter: **Tabitha Chepkwony**

Sibling: **John Kimurei Chepkwony**

In- laws representative: **Patricia Ongaro**

Nieces/Nephews representative: **Wycliffe Kipsang**

b) Friends/Professional Colleagues: **Lay Canon Prof William Otiende Ogara**



- c) Ecumenical Family: **Rev. Prof. Samuel Kobia** (remarks and recognitions)
- d) Anglican Church of Kenya - **Provincial Office**
- **ADS Kenya (Bwibo Adieri)**

Readings:

1st Reading: - **Neema Jeruto Kimurei**

2nd Reading: - **Leslie Jelagat Kipsang**

Hymn: When the Roll is Called Up Yonder

Sermon: **Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit**

Offertory Hymn: Ndiyo Dhamana (Blessed Assurance)

Vote of thanks: **Mr. John Chepkwony**

Prayer for the family (Tukutundereza)

Final prayers and benediction

Recessional Hymn: God be with you till we meet again

Viewing of the body at the Northern Lawn







EULOGY

OF LAY CANON, DR AGNES ABUOM.

EARLY LIFE

The late Lay Canon, Dr Agnes Tabyegen Abuom was born on 6th October, 1949 in Chepsuswa village, Kipchekwen sub-location. She was the first-born daughter of the late Mzee Augustino Chepkwony Arap Murei and the late Mama Jerida Jeruto Chepkwony. She was brought up in a family of three. She was a sister to the late William Kiplagat and John Kimurei Chepkwony and step-sister to Dan Chepkwony, the late Shadrack Chepkwony and the late Jackson Chepkwony.

EARLY CHILDHOOD


Agnes' father was an Assistant Chief (where she got her leadership from), while her mother was a community mobilizer, on matters pertaining to women and community empowerment.

Agnes, like every other African girl of her time, carried out daily household chores in the homestead, including cooking, cleaning and caring for her younger siblings.

EDUCATION

Agnes' father, a forward thinker, believed in educating the girl-child. In 1958 he enrolled his daughter at Kapkoi Primary School, where she studied up to Standard Four. While there, she would walk on foot to and from school - a distance of about 5 kilometers.

During those times, the girl-child's education was not embraced by the community, so Agnes' father decided to transfer her to a boarding school. She joined Goibei Girls Boarding School for her intermediate primary education between the years 1962-1965, after which she earned her Certificate for Primary Education (CPE) in 1965.



The Chepkwony family was sidelined by the community for the decision to educate a girl child and almost costed her father the job position as a colonial Chief preferred by the community.

For her secondary education, Agnes joined Goibei Girls Secondary School for the years 1966 – 1967. She was among the pioneers in the school, which was run by a Canadian missionary, Iris Scheel.

Agnes proceeded to Bunyore Girls High School for her Form 3 and 4 in the years 1968 - 1969. She succeeded in her O-level exams and joined Limuru Girls School for her Form 5 and 6 (A-levels).

She later joined the University of Nairobi in 1972 - 1975 to pursue a degree in Education Arts.

In 1976, she went to Sweden and earned a Diploma in the Swedish language. This enabled her to read, write and communicate in Swedish fluently.

Later in the same year, Agnes pursued a Bachelor's Degree in History and Development studies.

Between 1982 and 1987, Agnes pursued her PhD in History.

In 1997, she was awarded a Diploma in Organizational Development.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

The late Lay Canon, Dr. Agnes was married to the late Dr. Wilfred Abuom Ongaro at St. Lars Catholic Church in Uppsala, Sweden in the year 1987. She was widowed on the 5th of July 2014.

She was a devoted mother of Tabitha Chepkwony and grandmother to Neema Jeruto Kimurei.

She was an exceptional aunty of Wyciffe Kipsang, Loice Jepleting, Lilian Chepchirchir, Naomi Jenandi, Carolyne Jerop, Evans Kipro, Maxwell Chebui, Everlyne Jelimo, Nancy Chebet, Linet Jeptoo, Jeremiah Kipruto, Jemimmah Jeruto, Kiplimo, Philemon Kiptarus, Joseph, Jebitok, Kiprono and Owen kipchirchir.

She was daughter-in-law of the late Cyril Silver Ongaro and the late Teresia Aloo Ongaro. Sister in-law of Steven Ongaro, Margaret, Scolarstica, Lawrence, Partricia, Ladislaus Ojoo, the late Pascal, Charles, Anne Kimurei, Regina and Florah. The late was a cousin to many.



WORK EXPERIENCE

July 1975-1976: Dr. Agnes worked for Target/Lengo Newspaper as an editorial assistant.

January 1978-December 1980: Dr. Agnes worked as World Council of Churches (WCC) Associate Youth Director.

4th March 1981 -May 1983: Swedish Mission Council Development consultant.

1988 -September 1989: Dr. Agnes worked with the University of Zimbabwe as a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Religion.

1996-2000: Dr. Agnes was the regional director for Building East Africa Community Network (BEACON).

June 1991 -August 1997: Dr. Agnes worked as the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) provincial development and human resource coordinator formally the (CPK).

1999-2006: Dr. Agnes was the first African and the first woman to be appointed as the president of the World Council of Churches (WCC).


2006-2012: Dr. Agnes was an ecumenical accompanier for WCC.

In the 1990's she established - transforming analyzing accompanying, building community organization (TAABCO) and Building East African Community (BEACON).

2013-2022- She was elected as the first African woman moderator for WCC central committee.

Dr. Agnes was an ambassador for Thursdays in black, "towards a world without rape and violence". This movement grew out of WCC decade of churches in solidarity with women (1988-1998), in which the stories of rape as a weapon of war, gender injustice, abuse, violence and many tragedies that grow outward from such violence became all the more visible.

Agnes' passion for justice was legendary! It was in her being. As early as the 1970s, Agnes was at the Centre of the struggle for justice and rights for the students at the University of Nairobi. For her, the quest for justice was a matter of principle. Not one to be cowed by the university authority's intimidation and threats. She ended up being among the five student leaders who were expelled from the university. For Agnes, that was a price worthy paying; she would rather forego the privilege of a university student than compromise on such a fundamental value and principle as justice - and that defined her throughout her life.



Agnes' faith in God was as deep and wide as that of Abraham or Archbishop Tutu. It is that faith that fortified her passion for justice and sustained her participation in the many struggles she would be involved in during her life and work that span many decades. Her Christian faith grew and deepened with the greater responsibilities she assumed in her ecumenical work and ministry.

Over the years, the ecumenical movement both at the local and global levels became the spaces and contexts within which she served God and humanity. The recognition and appreciation of her involvement, contribution and leadership was signified by the positions to which she was elected in the governing bodies of the National Council of Churches of Kenya, NCCCK; All Africa Conference of Churches, the World Council of Churches, WCC.


Agnes had the courage of Daniel or Nelson Mandela. When it came to advancing her views and doing that which she was convinced of to be right and honorable she would not relent until she achieved it. In that respect she was never wanting where duty called or danger.

During late 1980s and early 1990s in Kenya people risked their lives to be involved in the struggle for human rights and multi-party democracy. Agnes became a champion of the struggle and that led to her arrest and political detention. She was held in the infamous Nyayo House torture chambers in Nairobi. She was badly tortured. But the attempts to break her back and denounce her advocacy and struggle for justice achieved the opposite effect: it strengthened her resolve instead.

Agnes was a trailblazer. Being the first woman to be expelled from a university in Kenya at a tender age might sound like praising rebellion; but when considering the cause for the same, one can only read trailblazing. Agnes was the first woman to be elected the WCC President for Africa at the Harare Assembly in 1998. During her tenure (1998-2006) she gave very strong leadership to the Ecumenical Journey of Hope for Africa Programme. She transversed the continent, encouraging and empowering churches and ecumenical organizations in their work striving for better life.

At the WCC General Assembly in Busan, South Korea in 2013 Agnes did it again; she became the first woman, and first African to be elected the Moderator of the WCC Central Committee. In that position, Agnes would become the face of what is usually considered the Churches' equivalent to the United Nations. Agnes held that position until 2022 including the Covid-19 period. In discharging her duties and responsibilities Agnes met not only leaders of the WCC member churches around the world; she met presidents, prime ministers, kings and queens around the world.

Humility was a virtue that came naturally for Agnes. She did not count her successes in academics (she was a PhD holder), leadership in the NGO world and especially the ecumenical community as something to grasp. She was a down-to-earth person. She could



hold a meeting with the president of a country in the morning and in the afternoon, hold meetings with village women sitting under a tree. And she would be perfectly comfortable in both. She was deeply involved in development work in Kenya and Eastern Africa region in general. Having written her doctoral thesis on the development work of the NCKK, Agnes was an authority in matters development. She put that knowledge at the disposal of the people and especially rural women. She used the knowledge to also advise churches and NGOs in the region. In that regard, she was always in great demand and she never disappointed.

Quite apart from her involvement in the ecumenical movement Agnes was a household name in the countries of Africa that went through liberation struggles against late colonialism and apartheid. Her support and solidarity for the liberation movements of the former Portuguese colonies, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa was phenomenal. One incident I will never forget happened in 1975 when the WCC had its first general assembly in Africa which took place in Nairobi, Kenya. One Carl McIntire, President and Founder of International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) routinely interrupted WCC general assemblies by having his ICCC Conference at the same venue immediately before that of WCC. McIntire came to Nairobi a couple of weeks before the WCC assembly and attacked WCC accusing it as an organization that supports terrorists meaning liberation movements. He went further and referred to Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe) as the only country in Africa that was ruled by civilized and decent leaders like the Prime Minister, Ian Smith. That was too much of an affront to independent Africa and totally unacceptable. Agnes, Prof Michere Mugo and I led public protests which culminated in a radio interview with the Voice of Kenya. Agnes spoke very strongly against the racist utterances of McIntire. The following day, he was deported from Kenya. (As narrated by Rev. Dr. Kobia)

Agnes was an indefatigable ecumenical living letter; since the days of the WCC Program to Combat Racism, PCR in 1970s and 80s through to the 21st century, Agnes was constantly sent by the ecumenical organizations to represent them in expressing support and solidarity with the oppressed and downtrodden in all the regions of the world. It is in those contexts where and when Agnes' gifts and skills in peace-making, negotiations and reconciliation were evident. Her power of persuasion was iconic. In more recent times, Agnes led ecumenical delegations to South Sudan, Somalia, DRC in Africa and to Palestine, and Israel in the Middle East. It included also missions to the Korean Peninsula in Asia to advocate for the Re-Unification of South Korea and North Korea. Some of the missions that Agnes led were not only tuff but dangerous. But in virtually all of them she helped to advance the process towards peace, healing and reconciliation.



A woman of short stature Agnes was a giant in understanding and service to humanity. Her footprints are all over the world and when the story is told about the churches' involvement in development and the ecumenical movements' contribution to peace-building and search for justice her name will occupy a significant space.

Fare thee well Agnes, and may your memory be eternal.

HEALTH

The late dr. Agnes was of good health until 2012 when she was diagnosed with a heart ailment. Since September 2020, she has been in and out of hospital until recently when she was admitted at Coptic and succumbed to acute heart failure on the 31st of May 2023 at 7:50 pm East African Time (EAT).









TRIBUTES

TABITHA AND NEEMA

Dear mom,

I will really miss you but I choose to celebrate you, the lessons and life skills you have passed on to me. One thing that will forever stand out to me and I intend to uphold it all my life is, even on your death bed, you still praised God and thanked Him for his goodness in your life. Your life is a testimony mama!

Roses are red, violets are blue.

I just want to let you know that I love you and I miss you. I remember how we would laugh and sing and the presents you would give. I really, really miss you.




JOHN KIMUREI CHEPKWONY

Dear sister,

Together on life's journey, we have travelled and kept each other company. I am grateful to have shared countless memories with you, along the way. We have shared laughter in our happy moments and leaned on each through difficult times.

I recall back then when you, our late brother William and I were at Kapkoi Primary School: you assisted me in crossing rivers and hills to school, from Chepsuswa Hills. I admired your determination and the desire you had for education, that changed our family's livelihoods. This is especially from back when society looked down upon our





family for educating a girl-child. I am proud of the great person you grew up to be – “Daktari”, as you were often referred to in the community.

I am also thankful for the good relationship you maintained with the late Dr. Wilfred Abuom Ongaro, who mingled freely with us and created good relations between our families and his, in Siaya-Alego.

I am grateful for the example you set in serving God without limitations. You played a pivotal role in our family and in your work toward peace, justice and reconciliation. I cannot forget the monthly worship sessions we had with my family, where we praised, prayed and shared the Word. You remained steadfast in prayer even on your deathbed. I remember one of the last moments when I visited you in the hospital and you were praying in the Kalenjin language. Your life remains a testimony. Indeed, you have fought a good fight; you have finished the race and kept the faith.

Rest well, my dearest sister. Till we meet again.



THE ONGARO FAMILY

Dr. Agnes Abuom was very influential and a beloved presence in our midst for many years. The world has lost a great leader but the lives she touched will always remember her. As our dear in-law, spouse to the late Dr. Wilfred Abuom Ongaro, the legacy of Dr. Agnes Abuom can be summated in five words: Sincere, Cautious, Persuasive, Mainstream and Sociable. Certainly, these aren't enough words that could be used to describe her natural life. I am sure there are many more.

From Mzee Cyril Ongaro family and the Alego- Siaya relations, we have painfully lost our dear in-law. We condolence with the entire family of the late Mzee Agostino Murei Chepkwony, Tabitha Jepkurgat Chepkwony, and granddaughter Neema Jeruto Kimurei. We will miss her dearly.

“May God bless and keep your memory of service and faith alive.”

Rest in peace, Dr. Agnes Abuom.

By. Stephen Ongaro - on behalf of Cyril Ongaro family- in Liganwa-Alego, Siaya.



THE MOST REV. DR. JACKSON OLE SAPIT

We the Anglican fraternity in Kenya have learnt with deep sorrows the passing away of our dear sister in Christ lay canon Dr. Agnes Abuom. We are forever grateful to God for having given us such devout Christian and a person of great international repute, having just recently completed her term as the moderator of the world council of churches, central committee.

As the former provincial development coordinator (1991-1997), Dr. Abuom played a pivotal role in advancing matters of national peace and advocacy. She was the second national director of Anglican development services, then the human development department of the Anglican church of Kenya. As the director, she provided strategic leadership to the development and advocacy work of ACK. During the period, ACK emerged as a pillar of social justice that stood out as a beacon of hope. Our bishops were provided with evidence-based facts for national advocacy. As a development worker and together with us, she initiated a restructuring that saw the development of the 10 regional offices and the re-invigoration of our networking, which took the church development work to the grassroots. As an organizational development practitioner and expert, she was instrumental in guiding the Anglican development services on governance issues.

Her life has impacted so many ecumenists worldwide as she leaves behind a rich legacy of humble, tested, thoughtful and committed leader. She never shied away from expressing what she believed was the right approach to building strong national, regional and global institutions. For this, and many other outstanding contributions, she will forever be remembered.

During the last (September 2022) standing committee of the provincial synod, we were honored to have her speak in one of the sessions. She affirmed that contextual ministry would help the church better confront emerging issues affecting the world such as climate change and the state of social ethical values. She urged that the church is called to be on the margins and lift the voices of those who cannot be heard and empower them to speak.

Her installation as the lay canon of the all-saints cathedral diocese, was essentially one way of demonstrating our love and recognition for her tireless service to humanity. We believe she is in the Lord, taking her turn with the faithful whom the lord extends His gracious invitation. "Come and share your master's happiness" (Matthew 25:23)



ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL

We are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Agnes Abuom, a remarkable woman whose dedication and passion have left an indelible mark on the world. We at Arigatou international, extend our heartfelt condolences to her family and the entire ecumenical community during this time of profound loss.

Dr. Abuom's contributions to Arigatou international, as a member of our advisory board, were invaluable. Her exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to the pursuit of justice and peace were genuinely inspiring. Her presence and guidance will be deeply missed as we continue our mission to foster a world where the rights and well-being of every child are upheld.

Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Abuom exhibited extraordinary leadership, serving as the moderator of the world council of churches central committee, among many other important roles in various ecumenical bodies and the Anglican church. She was a beacon of wisdom, clarity, diplomacy, courage, humility and righteousness. Her profound impact reached far beyond her local community, influencing interfaith spaces globally and shining a light on the African faith community.


During this difficult time, our thoughts and prayers are with Dr. Abuom's family and the global community of faith. May you find solace in the memories you shared and in the knowledge that her profound impact on the world will forever remain.



DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY

The dicastery for promoting Christian unity (DPCU) was saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Agnes Abuom of the Anglican church of Kenya. Dr. Abuom served as the moderator of the central committee of the world council of churches from 2013-2022, the first woman and the first African in history to hold this position. In this capacity, she welcomed Pope Francis to the ecumenical Centre in Geneva on 21st June 2018 during his visit to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the WCC.

During her long ecumenical career, Dr. Abuom served as the president of the WCC (1998-2006), then as a member of the WCC Executive committee (2006-2013), and finally as a moderator (2013-2022). A committed scholar and sought after speaker on justice, peace and reconciliation, Dr. Agnes was a development consultant to both



Kenyan and international organizations, coordinating social action programs for religious and civil society across the African continent. She was also the co-president of the national council of churches of Kenya and closely associated with the all-conference of churches, among other roles and collaborations that she carried out with zeal and dedication.

She travelled to the Vatican on several occasions to meet with the holy father and to promote collaboration between the WCC and various Dicastery's of the Roman Curia, including the DPCU.

May the merciful love of God bring her eternal rest and bless the fruits of her life and dedication to the mission of Christian unity.

Requiescat in pace!



REV. DR. SAMUEL KOBIA

I met Dr Agnes Abuom for the first time in 1974 in the context of students social and political activities. In the succeeding years we worked closely in many areas both locally and internationally. For both of us the ecumenical movement and community became the arena of many activities including the support for and solidarity with the liberation struggles in Africa and even beyond.

The last time I saw Agnes was just a few hours before she breathed her last on 31st May 2023 at the Coptic Hospital in Nairobi. I visited her that afternoon and spent time praying for her by her bedside. That evening her daughter, Tabitha called me to break the sad news that Agnes had passed on. Agnes departure is a huge loss not only to her immediate family but also to her larger family of friends and many organisations whose lives had been positively touched by Agnes services, friendship, fellowship and solidarity.

She was God's gift to the world and humanity. She had a rich and full life. And indeed, she could say with Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7; I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

May Agnes soul rest in perfect peace and rise in glory.



REV. DR. DAGMAR PRUIN, PRESIDENT BREAD FOR WORLD


Just months ago, Dr Agnes Abuom thoughtfully and energetically moderated the General Assembly in Karlsruhe, which took place under enormous pressure. Uncertainties considering the Covid-19 pandemic, deep division on some themes in the Fellowship, and the outbreak of war in Europe a few months ago, offered new and unexpected challenges. With focus and perseverance Dr Agnes Abuom steered the World Council through the event, and laid a solid foundation for a new phase of the “Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace”, a concept which she loved and lived by.

As Dr Agnes Abuom became Moderator of the Central Committee in 2013, she was hailed as the first female and the first African who took up this position. At the end of her service, we saw and confidently could say that she will be remembered not only for this, but for much more. In fulfilling this position, Dr Agnes Abuom has become a mother to many. A mother who cares. A mother who encourages. A mother who can take a stand, even at risk for herself.

We, in Bread for the World/Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, are deeply grateful to Dr Agnes for many things. For her leadership in WCC, for her courageous standing up for justice in her own country, even at her own peril. For her empathy for those in need. It suffices to mention “trauma healing” as a deep common concern shared by us. We are also grateful to her for her humanity, her deep warmth and joy, which always shone through in her presence, whatever the circumstances, no matter the workload.

Late 2022, former Interreligious Programme Executive of WCC, Dr Clare Amos, gave a wonderful tribute to Dr Agnes Abuom on Facebook. A tribute that was endorsed by many knowledgeable readers of these words. For no matter how deeply, she felt for and struggled on behalf of suffering people, and especially women and girls, in appalling situations, she always did manage to do so uplifting their strength, resilience and their dignity. She managed to do so in faith, and those she encountered have always felt this. Time and again, Dr Agnes Abuom reminded all of us that this struggle for justice and dignity is carried by the joy and hope of the resurrection of Christ.


We also are aware, how her consultancy work with you in TAABCO always aimed to support those most in need. Personally, I am deeply grateful for the good meetings that Dr Agnes and I have had in the short term of my tenure as President of Bread for the World, and for the insights and thoughts shared with me.



It is bitter to realize there will not be an opportunity again to consult her and ask her advice and counsel. May all those who mourn her, be grateful for such a filled, fulfilling life full of service and joy. May the Lord, who guided her through all the days of her life and work, rest her soul in peace, and keep her alive in our memories, with deep respect, warmth, and joy.

Yours in Christ

Rev. Dr. Dagmar Pruin
President Bread for the World.



BUILDING EASTERN AFRICA COMMUNITY NETWORK-BEACON


From Board of Trustees and Staff

Dr. Agnes Murei Abuom was the founder and the first Regional Coordinator of Building Eastern Africa Community Network (BEACON). She served as the Regional Coordinator for fifteen years from 1996 to 2010. She later served as one of the members of the Board of Trustees of the organization.

During the formative years of BEACON, Dr. Agnes Abuom's visionary leadership, courage, humility and exemplary service led to the exponential growth of the organization. Diligence and determination were the hallmark of Dr. Abuom's life. She made significant contributions to the peace building work at the Horn of Africa region especially at the time when the countries of Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea were experiencing internal conflicts and cross border conflict.

Another thing that stood out about Dr. Agnes Abuom is her firm faith in God. She was instrumental in bringing faith into matters of peace, social justice and economic justice into the East and Horn of Africa region. She ensured that all the work of BEACON was anchored in the word of God. She gave BEACON a strong foundation founded on the Word of God which has helped shaped the work of the organization over the years.

Dr. Abuom taught us that everyone matters and therefore ensured that BEACON work reached the most vulnerable and needy. She always quoted Colossians 3:23 saying "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart" as working for the Lord, not men.



As an organization, we remember vividly how Dr. Agnes Abuom emphasized the value of friendships. She was strong on networking with development partners, churches, church organizations and non-governmental organizations. Internally within the organization under her leadership she built a strong team through team building initiatives. This helped to create a strong sense of belonging among the staff. Regionally, she brought together churches, church organizations and NGOs to build solidarity on advocacy issues touching on peace and governance.

As a member of the NGO Board in the late nineties up to early 2000s she made significant contributions towards determining the development agenda of NGOs in Kenya. Rather than only giving service delivery, she advocated for CSOs to engage in good governance, rights-based approaches and pro poor policies so as to address the root cause of poverty, injustice and poor governance.

Dr. Agnes Murei Abuom's unwavering commitment to peace building, economic and social justice in the East and Horn of Africa and the world at large will continue to inspire and guide us in our collective pursuit of a more peaceful, just and sustainable future. In this moment of grief, we offer our deep and sincere condolence to Dr. Agnes Abuom's family, friends, colleagues and everyone who was touched by her work. May you find solace in the memory of Dr. Agnes Abuom's remarkable life. Let us all honor Dr. Agnes Murei Abuom's memory by continuing to fulfil the vision she so passionately pursued that of a peaceful and just world.


We shall miss Dr. Agnes Murei Abuom.



**INTERPEACE
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR PEACEBUILDING**

Message from the Chair of the Governing Board

I extend the most heartfelt condolences for the passing of our dear departed colleague and friend, Dr. Agnes Abuom. I hope that Agnes' family and all the many others touched by her affection and friendship will accept the deep sympathy of the Governing Board of Interpeace. We and the staff were profoundly touched by Agnes' good humour, thoughtfulness, encouragement of our work and commitment to peacebuilding values. This began when Agnes first joined Interpeace's affiliated Board for Eastern



and Central Africa in 2014 and continued in her role on our global Governing Board since 2019.

My letter reflects also my own personal appreciation for her service to Interpeace in the years that we have shared together on the Board.

As you commemorate and celebrate Agnes' life, Interpeace is honoured to be represented by Dr. Josephine Odera, a member of Interpeace's affiliated Board for Eastern and Central Africa. We will likewise honour her legacy during the opening of our global Governing Board meeting when we next meet.

Yours sincerely,

Amre Moussa



TAABCO RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

Tribute to Founder and Former Director- Lay Canon Dr. Agnes Abuom
From TAABCO CEO -John OKanga

All of us at TAABCO Research and Development Consultants mourn the passing of our founder, Lay Canon Dr. Agnes Abuom, and unite in honoring her exemplary life. Dr. Agnes Abuom was an accomplished development consultant; a committed peace-builder; and a gender & human rights advocate whose work was adored by all of us.

Dr. Abuom wore many hats in the ecumenical, development and humanitarian world; and her founding of TAABCO was integral to her impact in some of these areas. By 1997, Dr. Abuom had amassed a wide range of experience in both the ecumenical movement and civil society movements. She had been exiled and politically detained. Having worked both at the WCC and NCCK, she understood what it meant to have religion play a crucial role in development. A year before founding TAABCO, she had been part of a group that founded an umbrella of civil society organisations named Building East Africa Community Network (Beacon). Beacon's mandate was to bring together efforts of NGO's in the region and effect policy and programmatic changes towards shared goals in political, economic and social spheres. However, within one year of operation, BEACON had sufficed a serious gap in the capacity needs of these NGOs: A gap that TAABCO was going to fill.



Starting out as both a transfer of functions office for Bread for the World and its partners, TAABCO morphed into a pioneer of faith based consulting, little did anyone know of how much social impact the firm could have more than two decades later. After carving out a niche as the go to firm for civil society groups especially from the faith based sector, the firm has managed to transition from an intermediary between northern partners and southern partners to a full service reputable consultancy firm while preserving crucial elements of the founding values and culture. Over the years, Taabco has continually adapted to the changing needs of its clients to become one of the most sought after firms in Africa. For over two decades, the firm has consulted on complex multi-lateral & multi-donor funded programmes in the Horn of Africa, Central Africa, West Africa, Europe, Latin America and South Asia. Our long list of clients include: Fellowship of Churches and Christian Councils in the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), Federation of Women Lawyers, Participatory Ecological Land Use and Management, RECONCILE International/South Sudan, Bread for the World, Inter Church Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO) of Netherlands, Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation (EAFF) Norwegian Church Aid, Digni, Church of Sweden Aid, Misereor, Swedish Mission Council (SMC), PMU Inter- Life, Evangelische Entwicklungshilfe (EED) of Germany, Norwegian Mission Society (NMS), and the World Council of Churches (WCC) among many others.

On TAABCO's integral position, here is what Dr. Abuom had to say in a previous interview:

"As an institution, we geared towards a peaceful and just society that is free of poverty, affirms human dignity and embraces participatory leadership. We set out from the beginning to strengthen capacities of civil society organizations in the areas of leadership and management, peace building and conflict transformation, knowledge management and deepening dialogue within and among each other to help build partnership so as to manage change processes and facilitate poverty reduction through consultancies, research and policy analysis. We felt that it was a duty to promote viable realization of organizational development goals and strengthening capacities of client organizations to deliver service more effectively and efficiently, and I'm happy that we always dedicated our time towards this."

Over the years she became a mentor to many, offering guidance, inspiration, and encouragement. Just as she bequeathed everlasting love to you, she has also left a tradition of professionalism at TAABCO that will always reflect the firm's vision.

Thank You MAMA!

May Your Soul Rest in Peace.



ODUOR ONG'WEN

LAY CANNON DR AGNES CHEPKWONY ABUOM – A TRIBUTE

The society's challenges can be met in two ways – by either being indifferent or making a difference. Agnes chose the latter and has left an indelible mark.

I first knew of Agnes in the 1970s when, as a student leader at the University of Nairobi, she was among those conscientious students that dared speak truth to power. From 1991 onwards when I teamed up with her and the late Bishop John Henry Okullu to fight for return to pluralist politics and entrench democratic governance in Kenya, I came to appreciate the depth of her commitment to the creation of a just, caring and peaceful nation guided by UTU philosophy. With her and others, we became the pioneers of civic education and election monitoring through the National Ecumenical Civic Education Programme, which was a joint initiative of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), the Anglican Church (ACK) and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission.

Going forward, we worked with Agnes on many initiatives aimed at spiritually and economically empowering communities in the grassroots with the guiding motivation that in as much as humanity should be prepared for the Life After Death, there must be Life Before Death also. Among her enduring legacies were the establishment of the Building East African Communities Network (BEACON) and its institutional building wing TAABCO. Demanding as the running of these organisations was, she still found time to give undivided attention to the service of the Church through active participation in the leadership of ACK, NCCCK and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

As we appreciate her and celebrate her life, it is my prayer that she find mercy in the eyes of our Creator. AMEN

ODUOR ONG'WEN
June 10, 2023



TRIBUTE FROM KESWICK BOOKS & AMP; GIFTS LTD

Dr. Agnes Abuom was a fantastic leader who provided Strategic Leadership and direction to Keswick through the 10 years she was the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

She was honest, peace loving, straight forward and throughout her service to Keswick., she did not in any way offer any consultancy work as she avoided conflict of interest.

She was humble in the way she interacted with the staff and other Board Members despite her being the chairperson.

She was strict with matters of faith and before we started any board meeting she could take us through devotion and worship and was always thoroughly prepared for the meetings.

She was a gift from God to Keswick. We will miss a Shining light and our hope and prayer is that her legacy will leave for many generations to come.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.



TRIBUTE TO THE LATE LAY CANON DR AGNES ABUOM

Your Grace Archbishop Jackson, all Bishops here present, my fellow laity, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, do allow me to convey our sincere condolences to Tabitha, and the entire family of our late Sister in the Lord, Mother and Colleague, Dr Abuom.

I have known Dr Abuom for close to 35 years not just as a skilful and committed Senior Staff of the Anglican Church of Kenya, but as a fellow Consultant in many areas including Organization Development and Renewal. I have known Dr Abuom as a renown Global ecumenist who in humility spoke her mind even in times when her life was in danger. Do allow me to share three key messages about Dr Abuom's professional life and pilgrimage of faith.

First, Dr Abuom had a rich repository of knowledge and wisdom and she would not shy away from making use of such talent for humanity. One one occasion in July 2007, a year before the Lambeth Conference, she was part of the 12 of us invited by Trinity Church New York to facilitate dialogue and unity within the Anglican Communion. Over 100 Bishops from Africa, USA and Canada were gathered at a neutral town El Escorial, Spain. It was from this gathering where a major breakthrough was reached. In order to promote fellowship and unity within the Communion, there was a proposal by the Facilitation Team that the Lambert design takes more of safe spaces and less of plenary sessions in order to allow for prayer, personal learning and reflection. I could witness her most of the time in deep prayer and reflection. She did it.

Secondly, Dr Abuom was very well known as a committed worker. It didn't matter where she was. Her work stood out for itself. Whether she was in Uppsala facilitating the Swedish Mission Council, or in Teguci Gapla, Honduras facilitating PMER with Ecumenical Partners from Europe; In Germany as part of the EED Scatergan OD Program; In South Africa benchmarking practice with CDRA, or in CORAT Africa, BEACON and TAABCO advocating for transformative change, Dr Abuom remained committed to her work. Do allow me to quote from one of our colleagues Dr Rick James of INTRAC UK in his brief eulogy "she was such an extraordinary gift from God to us, the church and the whole world. We have lost such an incredible fount of wisdom and grace".

Last and not least we have lost not just a professional colleague but a lady of great wisdom and insights. Allow me to quote from one of her well-known favourite references "It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. This is what we are all about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something and to do it well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs" From Archbishop Romaro. Agnes your humility made you remain a worker and not a master builder, Amen!

Thank You all, Lay Canon Prof William Otiende Ogara

c/o NCA Office, AACC Building, 6th
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P.O BOX 52802-00200, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 020 4452468 Mobile: +254708184 541/738 827 941
6th June 2023.

The Family and all the Ecumenical Fraternity

RE: Condolence Message on the demise of Canon Dr Agnes Abuom

Greetings of peace from ACT Alliance Regional Office, Nairobi-Kenya.

We have learnt with profound shock and sadness the news of the death of Canon Dr Agnes Abuom, the “mother” of the Ecumenical family in Africa and the world over. It is indeed a pity and unsettling experience that her family and the entire ecumenical fraternity are going through.

Her presence, her wisdom, and her ministry in so many contexts touched the lives of many people and communities around the world. ACT Alliance has had strategic engagements with Dr Agnes that greatly contributed to strengthened collaboration between ACT Alliance and World Council of Churches. On many occasions I have personally been on peace missions with Dr Agnes in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa and her advocacy efforts always left a landmark.

We thank God for Dr Agnes’ dedicated service and commitment to serve God’s people in Africa and indeed the entire World.

On behalf of ACT Alliance secretariat and members, we offer our deepest condolences to the family and to the entire ecumenical fraternity as we celebrate the life and ministry of this amazing woman Leader.

May the Almighty God have mercy on the soul of Canon Dr Agnes Abuom.

We pray for comfort and strength for her family, the Anglican Church in Kenya, relatives and friends during this difficult time of mourning and sadness. (Psalm 46:1)

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Kisiigha Zimba".

Elizabeth Kisiigha Zimba
Regional Representative for Africa



A Tribute to Dr. Agnes Regina Murei Abuom (1949 – 31 May 2023):

A Follower of Christ and a Kindred Spirit of African Sainthood

Recently some of us celebrated the African Saints and Martyrs of the Christian faith. I was honored to be at St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church to join the faithful on such a beautiful remembrance of such virtuous members of the Christian fellowship of ancient days.


But in the back of mind and spirit, I was haunted by the passing of my beloved sister in the faith, Dr. Agnes Regina Murei Abuom. I learned of her passing while convening a United Nations Side event on faith and reparatory justice at the second session of the historic Permanent Forum of People of African Descent in New York City. I was visibly shaken and moved by the news at the time, but I also knew in my spirit that I was in the very place Dr. Abuom would have been pleased with.

Here I am reminded that she, along with our former WCC General Secretary, Bishop Olav Tveit and global delegation visited North America on a pilgrimage to be in solidarity with us concerning the perpetual challenge of racism here and globally. Then and in New York I recalled her faithful labors for unity, justice and mission resonated with my presence there.

Dr. Abuom was not only the first woman, layperson and first African to hold the post of Moderator of the World Council of Churches. She also represented the Anglican Church of Kenya and was a past WCC President. She found her way to WCC in 1975 at the historic first Assembly in Africa in her beloved home of Kenya. This Assembly played a pivotal role in embracing a more diverse representation of the WCC. Dr. Abuom was also educated in schools in Kenya and Europe and a church leader.

But at the same time, she walked closely with communities that were not at the center of ecclesial life. I was honored to witness and support her in the leading of the WCC through the exceedingly difficult period of COVID alongside our able WCC General Secretary & Acting General Secretary, WCC governing bodies and staff. Together the leadership was prayerful and yet clear-eyed about having a sense of knowing and living into the future hope of the wider fellowship of the WCC with grace, profound care and love.

But these accolades and much more still do not fully capture the virtues of what led to Dr. Abuom's pioneering roles for the season for which she was called. As one who can testify to some of the virtues she exercised in my up-close relationship with her in governance, programmatic and support of ecumenical works like the Pan African Ecumenical Empowerment Network/Pan African Women of Faith, I can say she "kept the faith" ("I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" 2 Timothy 4:7)!



Truly, Dr. Aboum was available to the beautiful diversity of God's people and kindhearted. She was affirming yet firm in her leadership. She was courageous yet humble. She was differential yet discerning.

She was attentive and at the same time a person of wonder, curious and ready to tarry in seasons of timely waiting for what the divine signs may show during moments of human impatience and at times, sorrow. This, even as she and our WCC Vice Moderator, Bishop Mary Ann Swenson mourned the transition of their husbands and the untimely passing of Vice Moderator Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima.

We mourned with and for them and persevered. Yes! She was given the divine strength to power on with the leading of spirit, "head and heart" as the great African American mystic, Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman, would say. Together, with her leadership, WCC, even now, is positioned for a new season of global Christian leadership in its 75th year.

Given all of this, can we not propose she has followed in similar footsteps of those African Church Mothers and Fathers who were sainted given their uplift and witness of the faith for and with all the churches? To be sure, her life, leadership and legacy reflected a virtuous life of faithful leadership that has and continues to play a key role before, during and after the recent WCC Assembly.

The following from Dr. Thurman is dedicated to the memory, life and legacy of Dr. Aboum who will forever live in the hearts and souls of many of us, including my own. I thank you and salute you Madame Moderator and past WCC President from Africa. To God be the glory! May you rest in eternal peace and power.

I Listen to the long stillness:
New life is stirring
New dreams are on the wing
New hopes are being readied:
Humankind is fashioning a new heart
Humankind is forging a new mind
God is at work.
This is the season of Promise
Amen and Ashe

Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith
WCC President from North America
Strategist for Pan African and Orthodox Faith Engagement at
Bread for the World (Washington DC)
National Baptist Convention USA Inc. Ecumenical Representative
Convener of Pan African Women's Ecumenical Empowerment Network/Pan African Women of Faith

07/06/2023

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE ON THE DEMISE OF DR. AGNES ABUOM

'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'" Revelation 21:4

It is with great sadness that FECCLAHA joins in the mourning for Dr. Agnes Abuom who we remember for being instrumental in the development of the FECCLAHA 2014-2018 Strategic Plan and the establishment of the South Sudan Women Link for peace (a national chapter under the FECCLAHA Regional Faith Women Mediation Network) in the year 2017. FECCLAHA also remembers her for being an ardent promoter of peace owing to her consistent call for dialogue in countries affected by conflicts. Through TAABCO, she worked with FECCLAHA to hold workshops related to Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP) programme in Burundi and South Sudan. She rallied everyone to alleviate the plight of women and girls.

Her profound love for peace and passion for the fight against Gender Based Violence (G-BV) was equally felt within the ecumenical fraternity where she was not only a key champion for 'Thursdays in Black' - a WCC led clarion call seeking to resist attitudes and practices permitting rape and violence in the world but also a key resource in matters peace.

To the immediate family, friends, and those she impacted as she rose through the ranks, we share in your sadness as you remember this great icon.

May her soul rest in peace.



Jeannette Uwizeye (Ms.)
Executive Director

"Journeying towards Sustainable Peace Justice and Development"

Burundi | DR Congo | Eritrea | Ethiopia | Kenya | Rwanda | Sudan | South Sudan | Tanzania | Uganda

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Geneva, 6 June 2023

Condolences to the family


Dear Tabitha and Neema,

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones. —Ps. 115:16.

We write on behalf of the whole staff and governing bodies of the World Council of Churches to convey our deepest sympathy to you over the death of your mother, Dr Agnes Abuom. To you and your whole family, we want to convey our sincere condolences: like you, we feel this loss keenly, and we will deeply miss her warm personal presence and deep wisdom.

We have, of course, followed her health closely from here, and have been in regular contact with our former general secretary, Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, as he has visited Dr Agnes in hospital. Nonetheless, news of her death has brought home just how vital her life and work have been in the ecumenical movement and in the worldwide quest for racial harmony, gender justice, church engagement, and international peace.

We at the World Council of Churches in particular have so benefited at every level from her decades of ecumenical engagement. From her early work with refugees and migrants to her pan African church service; from her longstanding commitment to global health and the battle against HIV and AIDS; from her championing the rights of women to her leadership of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace; from her determination as Moderator to reframe our understandings of diakonia and of human sexuality to the iconic ways in which she implemented our move to consensus-style decision making—Agnes was a peace pilgrim first to last.



But of course she not only shaped the movement she served, she broadened its reach and efficacy. By combining her deep Christian faith with fierce determination for social justice and a disarming, inclusive style, Agnes was able to effect change even beyond the churches. Her developmental and peacemaking work transcend our institutional fellowship to encompass the many other churches, peace organizations, the UN and NGOs, and political groups with which she worked for justice and peace over her long career. A true African but also a citizen of the world, Agnes showed us how Christian engagement, marked by love, can yield global, transformational change.

We can also say without qualification that Dr Agnes was the most beloved of ecumenical leaders in this last generation, and we have ourselves received hundreds of messages of condolences from her friends, colleagues, staff, and acquaintances. So many people find in her death a personal loss.

Of course, your mother was also a woman of prayer, a deeply spiritual person. In that spirit, we join our prayers as a worldwide fellowship of Christians to yours that Agnes, our sister in Christ, find eternal rest and great joy in the welcoming arms of God, the mother and father of each and all of us.

With deep sympathy,



Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches



Bischof Dr Heinrich BEDFORD-STROHM
Moderator, WCC Central Committee

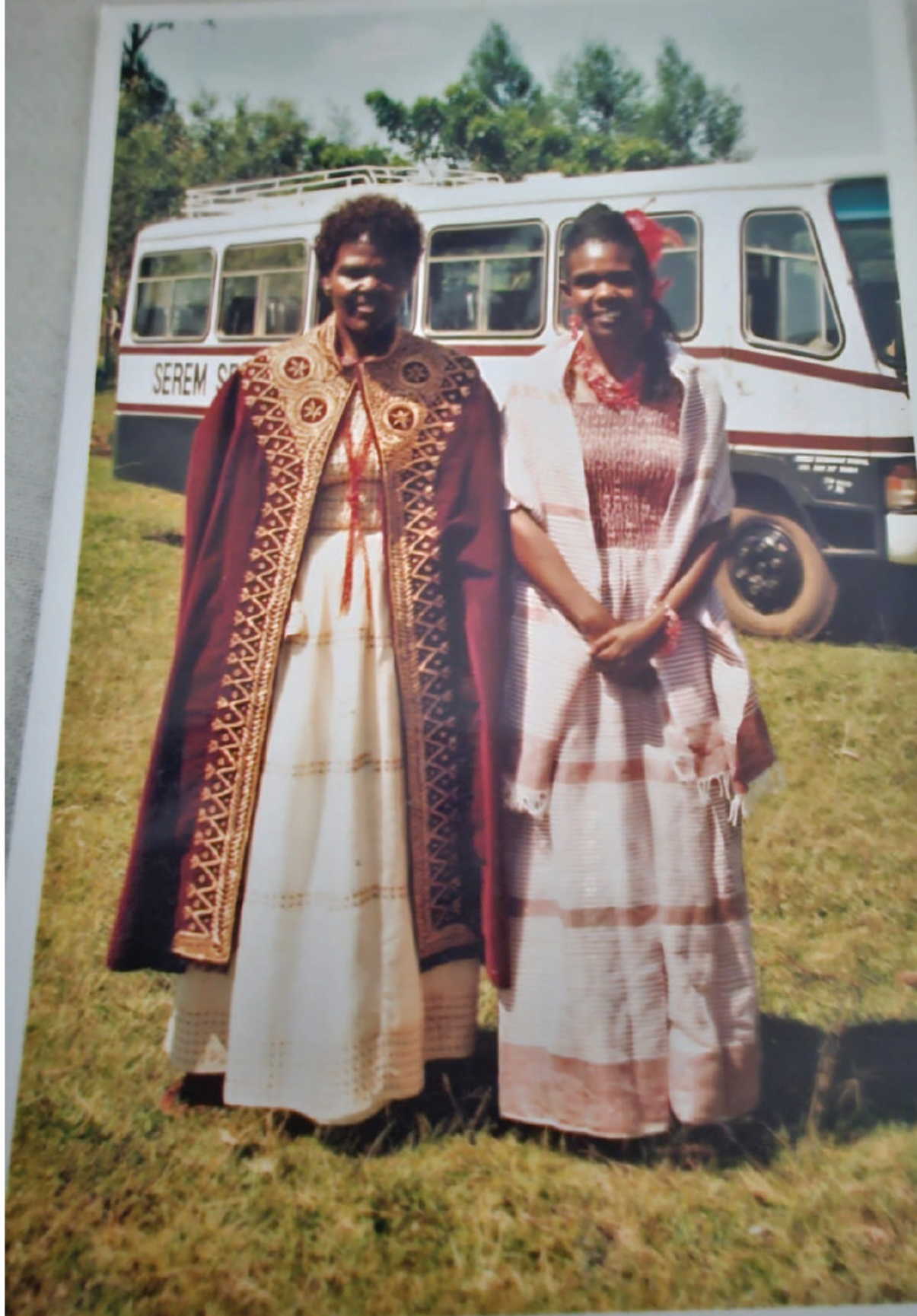
THE PICTORIAL LIFE JOURNEY



























SONGS

WHEN PEACE LIKE RIVER

1. When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul."

Refrain

It is well with my soul; it is well, it is well with my soul.

2. Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, let this blest assurance
control:
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate, and has shed his own blood for my
soul. Refrain

3. My sin oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! my sin, not in part, but the whole,
is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more; praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my
soul! Refrain

4. O Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a
scroll; the trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend; even so, it is well with
my soul. Refrain

5. But Lord tis for thee, for thy coming we wait, The sky not the grave is our goal,
The shout of the angel, The Voice of the Lord, Blessed hope, Blessed rest of my
soul.

WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED

1. When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more.
And the morning breaks eternal, bright and fair;
When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

CHORUS

When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder,
When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

2. On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise,
And the glory of His resurrection share;
When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.



SONGS

3. Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun.
Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care;
Then when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

NDIO DHAMANA YESU WANGU (BLESSED ASSURANCE)

1. Ndiyo dhamana, Yesu wangu, Hunipa furaha za mbingu,
Mrithi wa wokovu wake, Nimezawa kwa roho wake.

Habari njema, raha yangu, Yesu ndiye Mwokozi wangu,
Habari njema, raha yangu, Yesu ndiye Mwokozi wangu.

2. Kumsalimu moyo wangu, Mara namwona raha yangu,
Aniletea malaika, Wanilinda, taokoka.
3. Sina kinyume; nashukuru, Mchana kutwa huja kwangu,
Usiku kucha kuna nuru, Mwokozi wangu; ndimi nuru.
4. Hali na mali, anitwaa! Mara namwona anifaa,
Nami nangonja kwa subira, Akiniita nije mara.

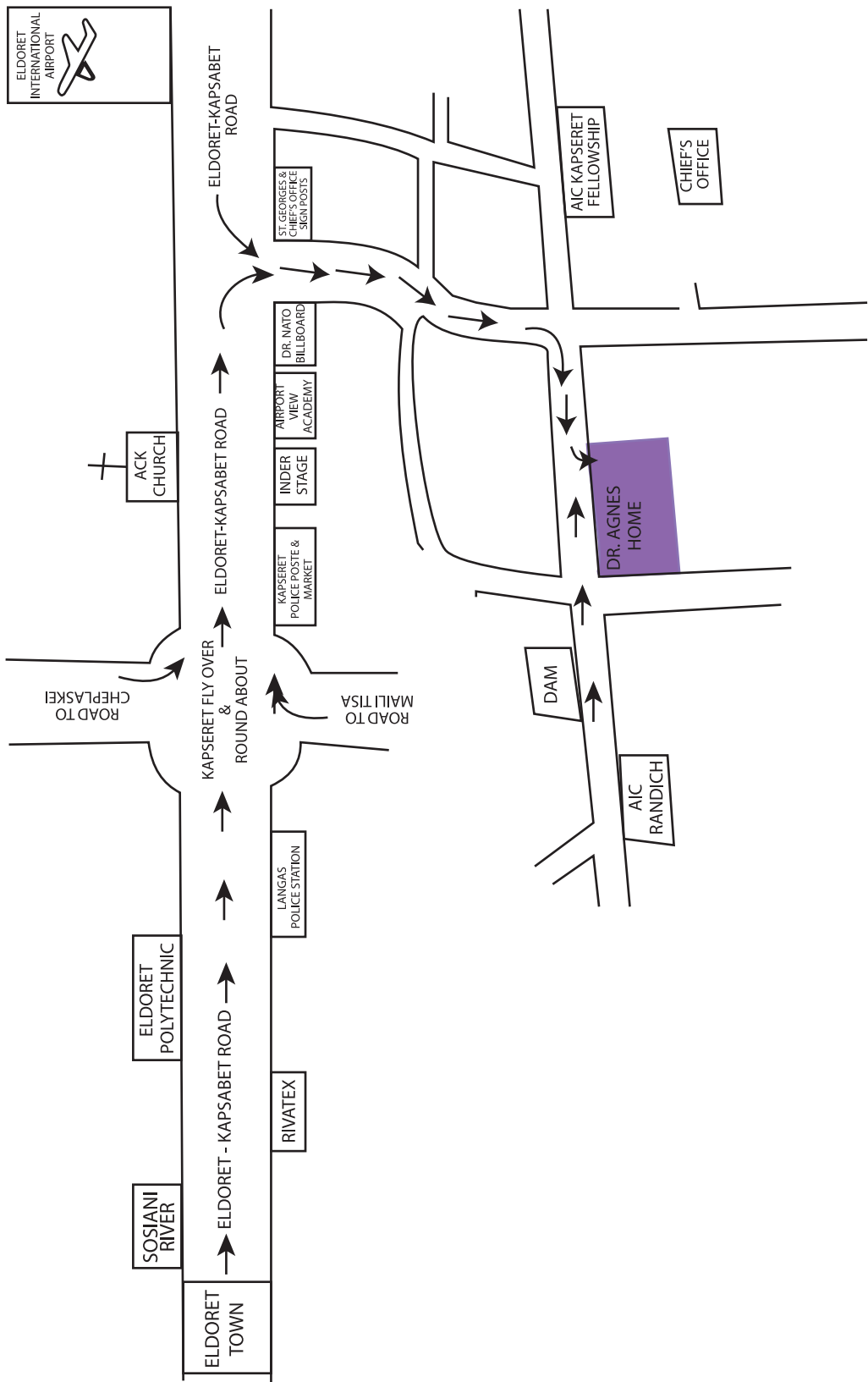
GOD BE WITH YOU

1. God be with you till we meet again! By His counsels' guide, uphold you, With
His sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again!

CHORUS

Till we meet! Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet! Till we meet! God be with you till we meet again!

2. God be with you till we meet again! Neath His wings securely hide you,
Daily manna still provide you; God be with you till we meet again!
3. God be with you till we meet again! When life's perils thick confound you,
Put His arms unfailing round you; God be with you till we meet again!
4. God be with you till we meet again! Keep love's banner floating over you,
Smite death's threat'ning wave before you; God be with you till we meet again!





On behalf of the entire family, we wish to thank you all for your prayers, support, compassion and kindness at such a difficult time. We really appreciate your generous contributions and comforting messages and we pray that God will grant you more strength and refill your pockets for standing with us. Special thanks to the funeral committee for your accompaniment, direction and thoughtfulness in organizing every aspect of this process. We didn't know where to begin from and you all have a special place in our hearts for your dedication. You have all ensured MAMA had a befitting send-off.

THANK YOU!