



THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF TANZANIA
DIOCESE OF CENTRAL TANGANYIKA
MSALATO THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

GLOBAL EPISCOPAL MISSION NETWORK (GEMN) CONFERENCE ONLINE
MAY, 12 -14TH, 2022

THEME: WOMEN IN MISSION

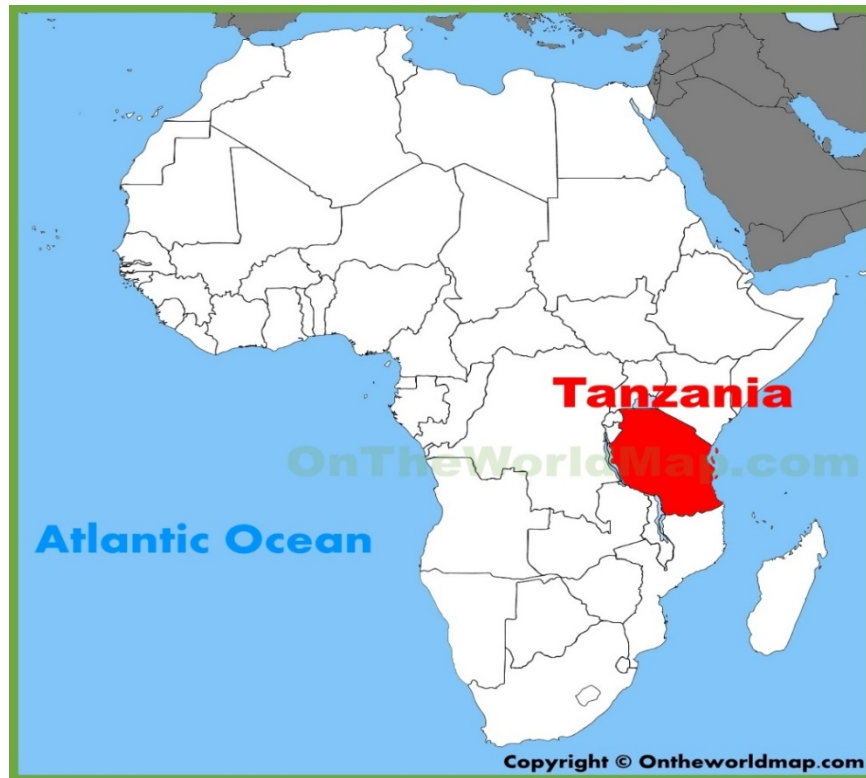
TOPIC: THE MINISTRY OF MOTHER'S UNION IN AFRICAN ANGLICANISM
SPEAKER: THE REV. CANON HILDA K. KABIA



A Product of Mothers Union (MU) in Tanzania and former Diocesan Secretary of *Ushirika wa Wanawake wa Kikristo (UWAKI)* meaning (The Fellowship of Christian Women in the Diocese of Central Tanganyika (DCT)).

In the Holy Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit you are welcome to listen to my presentation on the ramification of 'The Ministry of the Mothers' Union 'MU' in the African Anglicanism.

Tanzania is one among 54 countries of the African Continent. She is specifically located in East Africa



- ▶ The Almighty God brought me to Africa by birth in a Christian family who live in Dodoma City of Tanzania. I am going to limit myself in the Geographical location of Tanzania to represent the rest of Africa

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ The Anglican Church of Tanzania of which the Diocese of Central Tanganyika belongs to is part of the world wide Anglican Communion. Therefore she shares most of the beliefs and practices of other member of the communion. The Mothers' Union plays a very important role in the mission of the church from the grassroots level to national level. She also plays an important role in fostering relations with other members across the nations.
- ▶ Specific cultural and cross-cultural awareness is always at the heart of Mothers' Union activities. What I mean here is that specific cultural needs are taken seriously according to the place and situation. The Mothers' Union therefore helps the church to reach out to women in both rural and urban areas spiritually, socially and economically.

A VOTE OF THANKS

- ▶ The Global Episcopal Mission Network Conference Coordinator Nelson A. Spike assigned me to explore about the ramifications of the Mothers' Union Mission for grassroots theologizing, gender roles and women's empowerment in the African context. Here I am going to share the story. But kindly allow me to start by giving thanks to God for His love and care to us all and for enabling me to be part of you all who have joined this important event.
- ▶ Secondly I would like to thank the entire team of the Global Episcopal Mission Network who have been busying themselves in organising the conference for us. Thank you so much for your valuable job and love to us all. I wish we were all physically there to celebrate and clap hands for you. May God continue to bless you.

SO WHAT I DO FOR GOD IN THE MISSION OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA

- ▶ I am a Priest of the Anglican Church of Tanzania Diocese of Central Tanganyika ordained as a deacon in 2003 and priested in 2004, and in 2015 named a Canon. The Diocese of Central Tanganyika is the first to ordain women into the priesthood in the Anglican Church of Tanzania. Thanks to the visionary leadership of the Late Bishop Godfrey Mdimi Mhogolo.
- ▶ I am the current Principal (Dean) of Msalato Theological College (MTC), the first African Woman to the position to which I came in 2015 after 54 years since the establishment of the college in 1961 as a Bible School. We are a prayerful community. At the centre of the campus stands college chapel a visible reminder that our mission is to holistically educate and to foster the spiritual formation of leaders for the church in Tanzania and other parts of East Africa. This a reflection of Israel's experience of pitching the tent of meeting at the centre of the camp during the forty years of wandering in desert of a sign of God's presence among His people

SO WHAT I DO FOR GOD IN THE MISSION OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA CONTINUES

We believe in the Priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9). The aim of MTC is to enable men and women called either to the ministry of the Laity or ordained ministry.

- ▶ Also, I am a Female African Theologian in the Anglican Church of Tanzania Diocese of Central Tanganyika. Prior to that I worked as a Bible College Tutor, Dean of Students, Assistant Lecturer of St John's University of Tanzania (SJUT) and its Msalato Center and a Diocesan Chair Person of the House of the Clergy in the Diocesan Synod. For the last two Synods I was Secretary to Diocesan Synod of DCT, the first woman to hold that position.





SO WHAT I DO FOR GOD IN THE MISSION OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA CONTINUES

- ▶ I have been able to achieve all that courtesy to the Mothers' Union and *UWAKI* who have played an important role in training and equipping me.

HOW THE MINISTRY OF THE MOTHERS' UNION (MU) CAME TO THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN AFRICA

- ▶ Without tracing it back to the founder Mary Sumner and the Mary Sumner House in England it will be impossible to talk about 'MU' as a galvanizing movement of spirituality and solidarity in African Anglicanism as it is today.
- ▶ The MU is a place where women meet for scripture study, mutual support and community organizing in the African context because it is a Mothers' Union that was initiated by Mary Sumner in 1876. She started it in England specifically in the Old Alresford Parish near Winchester where her husband was a priest. Mary had a concern for young mothers as a specific reason to start the union.

MARY SUMNER'S CONCERN TO START THE MINISTRY OF MOTHER'S UNION CONTINUES

► LIFE STYLE TRANSFORMATION

In 1876 her eldest daughter gave birth to her first born. Mary recalled her own struggles when she was first a mother after giving birth to her first born. She realized the burden of motherhood. So she organized a meeting that brought together mothers from all social classes for motherhood training and to provide support to one another for a better life together as a community.

► In 1885 Mary was part of the audience in the Portsmouth Church Congress where she addressed the women churchgoers about the power of mothers in the responsibility of families, communities and national transformation. Many women present were inspired and went back to their parishes to found mothers' meetings on Mary's pattern. The Bishop of Winchester made the Mothers' Union a diocesan Organization.

MARY SUMNER'S CONCERN TO START THE MINISTRY OF MOTHER'S UNION CONTINUES

► Mary continued mission through visits to women, read the Bible and pray for themselves and for others. It is on that ground the concept of the Ministry of Mothers' union continued to grow and spread rapidly to other dioceses in England and beyond. The MU developed with its philosophy 'Together we are stronger' and the following became its aims

- 1. Strengthen communities all over the world*
- 2. Help the most disadvantaged at home*
- 3. Shape how we advocate for the rights of families*
- 4. Build supportive, loving relationships*
- 5. Develop your own relationship with God.*

► Today the MU is in the Anglican Church all over the world.

MARY SUMNER'S CONCERN TO START THE MINISTRY OF MOTHER'S UNION CONTINUES

- ▶ The concerns that pushed Mary Sumner to start the Ministry of Mothers Union still stands as an ongoing agenda of the church and secular communities around the Anglican Communion to date.

OTHER CHURCH MINISTERIAL CONCERNS LIKE THAT OF MARY SUMNER

- ▶ It is on that ground the church and its educational institutions including theological colleges and universities have realised the gaps through the ministry that they have been providing to people of God by the Mother's Union groups or by the church itself or by educational institutions. The need for corrections and improvements in the church and communities is big thus some initiatives for transformation have been taken in African Anglicanism.
- ▶ The ministry of the church in African Anglicanism for many years has been mainly focused on soul winning without regular and strategic approach to improve holistic welfare of the church members and the surrounding society. The approaches of the church and its educational institutions have so far been in terms of donor funded projects and handouts especially in time of disasters. There is a need for leaders in African Anglicanism to see itself as being responsible for its

OTHER CHURCH MINISTERIAL CONCERNS LIKE THAT OF MARY SUMNER CONTINUES

development and that of its surrounding community.

- ▶ This implies that the concept of holistic ministry needs to be embraced by all church leaders. The Diocese of Central Tanganyika has introduced Church and Community Mobilization Process (CCMP) as one of the subjects taught at college.
- ▶ In April 2016 MTC started to offer a Diploma in Church and Community Mobilization Process (CCMP) with the aim of to empower lay and ordained ministers and leaders of church groups: Women, Children, Youth and Men to provide holistic ministry to church groups, church members and its surrounding community so that they can sustain themselves using their locally available resources.

THE IMPACT OF MOTHERS UNION/*UWAKI* IN THE LIFE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH AND ITS SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

► Grassroots Theologizing

Many women who are *MU/UWAKI* leaders have received theological training in one way or another in the African Anglican church today. Those trained by Msalato Theological College and other theological colleges in Africa are actively involved with helping grassroots theologizing amongst women in the church.

► A number of CCMP trainers of the Mothers Union in Tanzania and other denominations have been trained at MTC. Bible Studies are used to train them from one stage to the other. Each trainer is assigned with the task to train two churches in

THE IMPACT OF MOTHERS UNION/UWAKI IN THE LIFE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH AND ITS SURROUNDING COMMUNITY CONTINUES.

- ▶ their respective dioceses by applying the same training method. The trainee of trainees also train group of facilitators who also will educate other two churches in their dioceses. Subjects covered by the course are CCMP, Self Help Groups, Village Community Banks (VICOBA). These are aimed at addressing the problem of poverty from a Biblical perspective.
- ▶ When *MU/UWAKI* members meet for their weekly sessions they pick up on a Biblical subject and invite some one with authority on that subject to come and talk to them. Issues like marriage, husband and wife relationship, child upbringing, hospitality, good neighbourliness and other aspects of Christian life are normally covered. Equipped with such theological knowledge they actively participate in pastoral ministry to the community and evangelist outreach. Here are a few examples in photos/pictures to support the opinion,



THE IMPACT OF MOTHERS UNION/UWAKI IN THE LIFE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH AND ITS SURROUNDING COMMUNITY CONTINUES

► Gender Roles

The problem of gender disparity amongst African Cultures is a seriously problem. In line with one of Mary Sumner's aims the *MU/UWAKI* is actively involved

1. Women's empowerment socially, economically and spiritually.
2. The role of the mother in child upbringing in collaboration with the father
3. The role of a wife in marriage (The wife is the husbands mirror)
4. The removal of unhealthy cultural gender practices
5. The role of the woman in the community and national at large
6. Advocacy for gender equality at all levels etc.

THE IMPACT OF MOTHERS UNION/*UWAKI* IN THE LIFE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH AND ITS SURROUNDING COMMUNITY CONTINUES

► Women's Empowerment

- The *MU/UWAKI* in many dioceses have been involved in equipping women with different accessible skills such as tailoring, weaving, embroidery, BATIKI production, chicken and animal husbandry, gardening (fruits and vegetable production or hotly culture) etc
- Equipped with such skills women can generate accessible income which they can freely put to use for their personal and their families suitable development/welfare. Many women and young women are now actively involved in small industry entrepreneurship with environment protection sensitivity.

CHALLENGES AND WAY FOWARD

- The birth of the MU movement was the result of Mary Sumner's response to the challenges of her day regarding women in the church and the community at large. Since 1876 times have changed. Problems facing women and young women in the church and community today are different for instance: Globalization, technological advancement, political participation by women, leadership roles for women, gender corruption, abuse of children, gender equality, the use of the Smartphone and internet are slowly destroying community. Chatting throughout the night by young people is destroying community and family interactions. Pornography the serious world wide problem.

CHALLENGES AND WAY FOWARD

- ▶ Gender based violence influenced by technology is a serious problem, property ownership, inheritance issues and many others.
- ▶ New modes of intervention are demanded or required so the MU needs to address itself to these new challenges through educational and scriptural engagement. Technology is good when used appropriately but it is harmful when not used appropriately. The MU needs to acquire skills in gender protection, advocacy against gender violence, new economic interventions amongst women and community at large

CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD CONTINUES

if poverty is to be tackled effectively in a fast changing environment.

- ▶ The Anglican church in Africa should review their theological training modalities to include mitigations for such circumstances.

Thank you for listening

The Rev. Canon Hilda K. Kabia
Principal of MTC.