



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

Department for Planning
and Operations

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Women on the move: Women of the month!

1. E. M. Marealle, first and sole woman speaker at Marangu Lutheran Conference, 1955



Caption: Mrs E. M. Marealle, between His Excellency Emmanuel Abraham (right), president of the ECCMY and chairman of the Marangu Conference who brought greetings on behalf of Emperor Haile Selassié and Dr Franklin Carl Fry (left), President of the United Lutheran Church in America, future LWF President in 1957, who brought greetings on behalf of the World Council of Churches.

Country of origin: Tanzania

Date of birth: xxx

Date of death: xxx

Church: Lutheran Church in Tanganyika

Period of mandate: Famous speaker at the Marangu conference, 1955

Short biography: For the 1955 LWF Marangu conference organised by the then Department of World Mission, Mrs E. M. Marealle is the one woman already listed on the schedule of events, called to deliver a presentation. She was the wife of Chief Thomas Marealle II, paramount chief of the WaChagga and a Lutheran himself, who

delivered the address of welcome (Marangu Report p. 15). *“I am pleased to attend this historic meeting, not only to extend a hearty welcome to you all but also to bring you a greeting from the people of this mountain. All over Africa the name of Jesus is being made welcome in thousands of new hearts and hundreds of new homes. The message of His love has drawn together men of many races and outlooks and bridged new gaps. The spread of Christianity on this mountain has been almost phenomenal. Thousands of people have embraced Christianity because it has offered them something new, something precious, namely spiritual security...our faith stand on old foundations yet it caters to both old and new generations. The Bible has not changed, yet living conditions and human outlook have changed.*

His wife addressed the Marangu Conference on 19 November 1955 (Marangu report p. 134). Her address was called **“The women in Tanganyika”** explaining that the Chagga woman have a definite place in the family:

“She is the family treasurer and you cannot deny that “treasurers the world over have a great deal of influence!” ...

“In all Chagga homes, the mother is still the educator and it is she who passes on to the younger generation the tribal stories and legends.”

“In Christian homes, the break up of the family is not a very common thing because there is much more to hold the members together but even there the time does come when the girls have to drift away into teaching or other jobs or get married far from home....”

“The only salvation is true education, education that will not exclude religion and character training.”

The Newsweek magazine reported on November 28, 1955: “One speaker was Thomas Marealle, who is Paramount Chief of the Wachagga tribe in Tanganyika and is a Lutheran himself, ruler of a domain embracing about 25,000 people, all but one of his subordinate chiefs are Lutherans. Another speaker was Mrs Marealle, **the first African woman in Tanganyika’s new legislature**. An idea of some of the church’s special problems there can be drawn from part of her report to the conference: *“These days we think the system of marrying many wives is a bad thing, but the towns are now full of young women who have no education, with which to help themselves by work, and not enough young men prepared to marry them. Many older people ask if this is a good thing because it is a choice between many wives or many prostitutes.*