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THE VOICE OF THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH CONCERNING THE PEACE AND UNITY OF ETHIOPIA

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is strongly voicing on various occasions concerning the peace and unity of Ethiopia so that:

1. *an end should be put to the fratricidal war in Ethiopia*
2. *the interference of foreign countries in the internal affairs of Ethiopia should be stopped.*
3. *a lasting solution should be sought to the problem by peaceful means.*

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church on the other hand is asking in prayer for God's help and mercy that these endeavours may truly bring stability to the country and peace to the people.

It is difficult to observe in silence the tragedy which has befallen the longstanding unity of the people of Ethiopia cemented by a long period of historical process and brotherly bond which now has given place to actions leading to the great loss of human life, famine and thirst, destruction of national property and challenge to the very existence of the country.

Ethiopia has a long history as a state based on the unity of its people.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church which has long served as the symbol of unity and independence of Ethiopia, the champion of peace, the source of the literature, history and culture of the country, follows with serious concern the attempt to dismember the Northern region of the country and the consequent lack of peace and stability in the area.

As attested by numerous historical facts, Eritrea has always been part of Ethiopia. The inseparability of Eritrea from Ethiopia is supported not only by the history of Ethiopia but also by the physical and human geographical setting, linguistic, religious and cultural affiliation and interaction. Hence, it is unrealistic to put demands outside this cultural and historical setting and the questions of separation runs contrary to this very context.

Therefore, the question of separation which goes against historical facts and reality and put opposing the facts of history is to a great extent of foreign origin. This has consequently led to bloodshed among brothers and such a development has grieved not only our church but also all the peace loving peoples and governments of the world.

The longstanding unity of the people and the country can be briefly established by the following facts:

1. *With Axum as a religious and political capital, a centralized state in close commercial contact with other ancient cities of the Red Sea area emerged and prospered for several centuries. The cradle and stronghold of this state and civilization was constituted by Northern Ethiopia. This civilization radiated throughout the Horn Region and provided the main historical and cultural foundation of contemporary Ethiopia.*

The seat of state authority throughout history in Ethiopia shifted according to the circumstances from north to south, from south to the west and again back to the north and south. In all these vicissitudes, there was no occasion when Eritrea was separated from Ethiopia. It is true that for a short span of time

during the colonial period in this century, Eritrea was forcefully dismembered from Ethiopia. Even in these adverse circumstances, the people of Eritrea maintained the physical and spiritual unity with their brothers in the rest of Ethiopia. They have also struggled with the rest of other regions of Ethiopia for the unity and independence of the country. Under the banner of "Death or mother country Ethiopia," the Eritreans have succeeded in their struggle against colonial domination and Eritrea was reunited with the mother country, over-coming all foreign pressure and interference and with the full consent of the Eritrean people expressed through a referendum.

2. *In spite of the fact of the existence of different languages in different regions of the country there is a genealogical concurrence and historical unity among the people. In like manner the genealogical and historical roots of Eritrea are inseparable from the rest of Ethiopia.*
3. *Although many languages are spoken in Ethiopia, each language has benefited from and developed in close association with the other languages.*

In ancient times the people in the Northern region of Ethiopia, where the present problem is located, spoke one common language, Geez, the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. It is from this ancient language that other languages now spoken in the Northern Region have emerged. This development simply proves a common origin where the people of Ethiopia living in unity have developed their languages and culture in harmony.

4. *All scholars, ancient and modern, native or foreign have always taken with adequate reasons the historical, physical and human geographical unity of the Ethiopian side of the Red Sea - Eritrea with the rest of Ethiopia. The sketches and maps left to us also testify to this truth.*

5. *In the north as well as in other regions of Ethiopia, the freedom of religion is respected. There has not been any serious conflict encountered in the exercise of this right or in the relations among different religious confessions. The people of Ethiopia in whichever region they are found, live in peace and harmony with mutual respect and reciprocal concern to one another.*

While the facts are as outlined in the preceding paragraphs, the attempt to dismember Eritrea from Ethiopia, the bloodshed and the destruction of national property and the loss of human lives is deeply felt by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

As the main duty of the church is to reconcile man with God and to pray continuously about world peace, for the independence and unity of peoples, the equality of the human race, for justice, for spiritual uprightness, it cannot keep silence in regard to the fratricidal war and bloodletting among brothers in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian people are a peace loving people who have lived in unity and peace for a very long time without any territorial ambition on others. Despite this tradition of peace, the present calamitous civil war among brothers imposed to a great extent a threat against the longstanding unity and independence of the country. This is the stand taken and the appeal constantly made by the Holy Synod and the faithful of the Church at local and national level.

Further more the church constantly is praying that the Lord of peace may render the country with total peace and unity.

REGULAR MEETING AND PEACE CALL OF THE HOLY SYNOD

The Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church on Thursday May 10, 1990 called on Ethiopians living both at home and abroad

north is now spreading to neighbouring regions. His Holiness Abuna Merkorios stated that, unless this alarming situation is contained in

rich's vigorous opposition to the dismemberment of Eritrea from the rest of the country.

The meeting, which review-



The Holy Synod of EOC on its Annual Session

to contribute to efforts under way towards the restoration of peace throughout the country and the preservation of its unity and sovereignty.

The urgent appeal was made at the opening of the second of the Holy Synod's twice-yearly regular meetings, opened by his Holiness Abuna Merkorios, Patriarch of Ethiopia.

His Holiness the Patriarch recalled that the church has felt concern over the deteriorating situation in the country and added that it would continue praying for peace. The church synod repeated its appeal with greater urgency at its current meeting. His Holiness said, adding that peace and security are as crucial to the church as they are to the nation as a whole.

Noting that the destructive war touched off in the

response to the peace call, the lives of innocent Ethiopians are on the line while countless children will be left homeless. He warned that this fratricidal war not only runs counter to the freedom, interest and dignity of the Ethiopian people but will also pave the way for foreign aggression and interference.

His Holiness went on to observe that churches and monasteries where ancient and irreplaceable religious relics and other highly cherished antiquities have been stored ever since the introduction of Christianity into the country are being exposed to wanton destruction and looting.

The biennial regular Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church closed on Saturday 12, May 1990, with a statement reaffirming the chu-

wed in depth the peace and security situation in the country, took note of foreign involvement in attempts being made towards the disintegration of the country and called for an immediate end to such a dangerous situation

The Holy Synod recalled the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's active and unremitting advocacy of an end to the fratricidal war in the northern regions of the country ever since the peace dialogue was set in motion in September 1989 and called for unstinted effort toward rehabilitating compatriots affected by the conflict.

The Holy Synod also disclosed its intention to hold another meeting on relief aid to the millions of people who have fallen victims of natural and man-made calamities.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS ABROAD

1989

"Jesus Christ the life and the light of the World"
Jn. 1:4-9

Your Holiness, Eminence

In the name of the Incarnate Lord of Glory who is the life and the light of the World, I extend my fraternal greetings and express my brotherly best wishes on the occasion of Christmas that the Incarnate Son of God may continue to bestow His abundant blessings upon the faithful of your church through your apostolic ministry.

Since we all preach the same Christ who instituted the church to which we all belong, it is His grace, His light and His life that we share in the world.

When the Gospel proclaims that Jesus Christ is the life and the light of the World, the church of the new covenant knows and understand well that this life is impregnated by true faith, hope, love, sacrifice, service, prayer, communion and un-failing duty to proclaim the good news to the poor in favour of peace, justice, freedom, equality and human dignity in this world.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is greatly happy to be able to live this life together with all member churches of the WCC and fulfil the

duty of this new life at local and ecumenical level.

Wishing once again to your Eminence a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.

"Glory to God in the highest Heaven and on earth peace."

May the Lord of Glory Bless the Unity of Churches.

EASTER MESSAGE

1989

To all the faithful of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church here and abroad.

"CHRIST IS RISEN"

LK 24:5

"By the vicarious death and Glorious Resurrection of Christ the last enemy has been destroyed and swallowed in victory"(1 Cor. 15: 25-58).

Dear brothers and sisters, sons and daughters in Christ! In the name of the resurrected Christ I prayerfully wish you all a "blessed Easter" that the grace and peace of God may be with you all.

Christ is risen from death as He spoke of Himself as the Resurrection and life, as declared that He has the power to lay down His life and take it up again and as foretold that He would rebuild in three days the temple of his body Jn 2:19.

"Christ presented himself among his followers with proclamation of peace (Jn 29: 19).

He also promised to leave his perfect peace with them (Jn 14:27).

On this ground, we proclaim peace and unity among men, celebrating this glorious day of resurrection at ecumenical level, praying together and thanking God the Father by whose great mercy we have been born a new to a living hope through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.

During this Easter service we all pray for the whole mankind suffering from hardship caused by draught, famine, war and the like.

"May the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless now and at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as He call us is faithful."

Amen

PEACE CONFERENCE IN ETHIOPIA

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church which has an important contribution to make to the national and international effort being made to bring about a speedy end to the fratricidal war in Ethiopia, held meeting at Africa Hall on Friday 29 June 1990.

Attending the two-days meeting on the theme, 'Peace and Reconciliation in Ethiopia,' were archbishops of all the autonomous and administrative regions, Church general managers, administrators of monasteries and churches, as well as representatives of the World Council of Churches, the All Africa Church Alliance and peace assemblies from around the globe.

Also participating in the peace dialogue were delegations representing Catholic Churches, the Islamic Affairs Superior Council, humanitarian and development organizations, and renowned individuals and elders.

Organized by the Church Peace Forum, the synod succeeded the role of the Church in helping enhance the peace dialogue, review problems related to war and hunger caused by fratricidal conflicts as well as the interrelationship between humanitarian work and peace.

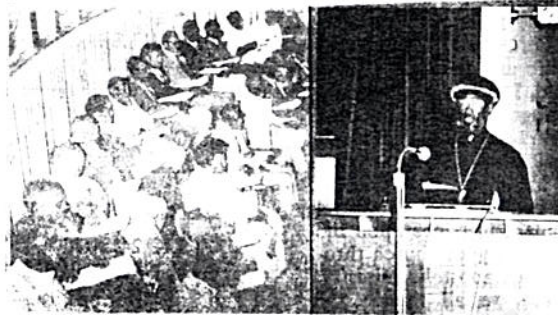
The meeting was opened with a prayer and benediction by His Holiness Abuna Merkorios, Patriarch of Ethiopia.

His Holiness said that for all over 3,000 years, Ethiopia has maintained its independence and that throughout

this period its people have enjoyed religious freedom. He pointed out moreover, that the country has successfully defended unity for ages and that enemies arrayed against it have always been repulsed, adding, at no time has Ethiopia launched expansionist wars against any country or people.

Recalling that the church has always been at the forefront of the struggle to restore peace and stability and bring a speedy end to massive social dislocation and economic collapse, His Holiness once again urged the immediate end of tragic war and the suffering of the people.

Efforts towards rebuilding



H.H. the Patriarch Delivering His Opening Address

The Patriarch went on to state that the northern regions of the country, which have always served as the fountain head of its civilization and the preserve of its rich cultural relics, are now scenes of tragic conflict resulting in horrific bloodshed and enormous material destruction.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has at no time in its long history failed in fulfilling its duty of teaching the people on the cataclysmic effects of war, leaving the aged without shelter and children without protection, His Holiness said.

the economy, protecting ancient relics, reaching out to drought and war victims and confronting the suffering population to the desired extent have thus been severely hampered, His Holiness said.

He stated that the synod is expected to indicate efficient ways of distributing relief aid to the war victims and of ensuring the country's peace and unity and the security of its people.

THE FULL OPENING ADDRESS OF H. H. THE PATRIARCH

"Blessed are the Peace makers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Mathew 5:9).

That Peace may reign in the world all those who love peace have exerted great efforts. They are still continuing to do so. To bring peace in the world many efforts have been done. Peace councils have been established. The people of the world have marched in different places and times crying Peace! Peace!

On the other hand there are those who disregarded the cries for peace and made preparations for war and were against peace. As much as there are those contributing to the building-up of armaments, the number of those working for peace is increasing.

The world has been comparatively through shorter period of peace than of war.

War activities and materials have spread in the ocean, land, sky, and in the space and there is no place which is secure. We should not despair at this as darkness leaves its place for light like wise so the time shall come when war shall be replaced by peace. Man led by evil forces advance war and like wise man led by the Holy Spirit pursue peace. Thus Heads of Churches and religious people through incessant prayers, by teaching the harmfulness of war and the virtues of peace should give unreserved support to the peace efforts of the men of peace.

The Assembly is expected to make a positive contribution for peace in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has for long safeguarded its independence in unity and its unity in independence. Upto now there has not been any serious disunity among its peoples. Her long history proves that there is no reason for its existence in future too. Ethiopia has been an independent state, the homeland of independent people and of an independent Church for more than 3000 years and her history has been the pride of the whole of Africa. The characteristic feature of the history of the country has been its faith in the Lord and the unity of its people.

Our country Ethiopia defended her unity and independence by struggling against all those who came from near and far to violate her territorial boundaries, to undermine her unity and to subjugate her. On her part Ethiopia never declared or undertook wars of expansion on other governments and people.

The prophet David has said that Ethiopia "Stretches her hands unto God" (psalms 58:31) and thus relying on the blessing of God and the unity of her peoples, Ethiopia has succeeded to maintain her independence.

Northern Ethiopia has been the gateway to Ethiopia through which our country received the Old and New Testament faiths. As Northern Ethiopia is a testimony of our civilization and the site of many of our historical relics, the unity of the people and region with the rest of

the people and region of Ethiopia and thus the safety of the people and region should be protected.

Many of the patriots born in the Northern part of the country are admired for their valour and exemplary works throughout the country, likewise many saints born in the Northern part of the country are venerated and respected in the rest of the country. In the same way the saints who arose in the central part of the country are revered with awe and respect in the northern part of the country.

Thus there is no time when the northern part of Ethiopia has been separated in faith, social life, culture from the eastern, western and southern parts of the country and there was no time when it was referred to separately independent of Ethiopia.

The recent bloodshed among brothers is to a great extent instigated by forces bent on breaking the historical and religious unity of Ethiopia and of negating its existence.

While it is necessary to work in unison for peace, in the battle against ignorance and for the spread of knowledge, it saddens all those peace forces which love Ethiopia when they observe these bloodshed among brothers.

War is synonymous with poverty, fall of one's country, sorrow, despair, loss of life and the sad situation of the aged and children without

anyone to take care of them.

In realization of this, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has never refrained from teaching about the damages emanating due to war and the virtues of peace and thereby proclaimed the advantages of unity instead of separation, love instead of hatred. The Church has conducted special prayers since the beginning of the peace talks in September, 1989. It has also made several peace calls. The Holy Synod of our Church giving serious attention to the peace and unity of the country has called upon the clergy to lead special prayers, has recommended the intensification of the relief efforts for dislocated Ethiopians to make the peace calls received by all sides so that the problem of the country could be resolved by peaceful means.

Notwithstanding the efforts of our Church and of many others, peace is not yet at hand. On the contrary the break of the peace talks has disheartened all those longing for peace.

Our Church which carried relief work within the framework of the Joint Relief Partnership was dismayed at the inability to mount relief work commensurate with the need. It was not thus possible to give adequate assistance for those dislocated by the war, to rebuild all that has been destroyed, to stop the ruin of historical relics, to console the widows and the children left without fathers. This is the tragedy of our people in the war affected

areas of Northern Ethiopia.

This Peace Assembly will be forced to take account of governments near and far and of religious establishments which deficient of all human sympathy continue to fan the conflict and supply arms and thus the Assembly should call up to them to make an end to such inhuman acts.

The Assembly is expected to show the way by which the relief assistance secured from various humanitarian organizations may safely reach our people and that ultimately the peace and unity of our country may be guaranteed.

May the Almighty God render Peace to Ethiopia and the World.

May He also bless the Assembly.

At the opening ceremony messages of support and good wishes sent by the world Council of Churches, and by the African and European Council of Churches were read out.

MESSAGES

sent to the participants

Archbishop Timotheos,
I am sending the following message to the assembly;

The WCC sends its cordial greetings and best wishes to the Peace Assembly. At this crucial time in the history of Ethiopia be assured of the support of the WCC for efforts for peace and Justice. We hope that the church in Ethiopia will be able to speak

and act together for peace making and join with other religious communities to find solutions to the problems Ethiopia faces. We commend your efforts to minister to the needs of the suffering people. We continue to uphold the people of Ethiopia and those in the region in our prayers.

Rev. Emilio Castro
General Secretary.

Archbishop Timotheos,
Thank you for informing me about your peace conference. I am praying for your country and church. I wish you God's help and blessing.

Fraternal greeting,
Bishop Dr. Karoly Thoth
President, Christian Peace Conference.

Dr. Abuna Timotheos
Your Grace,
It is with deep anguish that we hear about the sufferings of the peoples of Ethiopia. For many years civil wars have been raging in various parts of your country. The pace of the war is rapidly increasing, strife and war are causing bloodshed amongst brothers and sisters while the civilian population and many of your beloved children become victims.

I pray that your assembly will not feel paralyzed by the complexity of the task to stimulate a peace process.

Once a peace movement becomes a people's movement, a movement of the children of God, It can move mountains.



The Participants of the peace conference in enthusiastic Participation

May I quote from the Holy Scriptures, St. Paul's Letter to the Ethiopians - Ephesians, Chapter 2, verse 14-16: "For he is our peace, who made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility . . . (and he) . . . might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end."

May the Lord God Almighty

bless your assembly. Dr. Hans Bootsma
Chairman Roundtable conference, EOC-World Council of Churches General Secretary mission board Netherlands reformed church.

Archbishop Timotheos

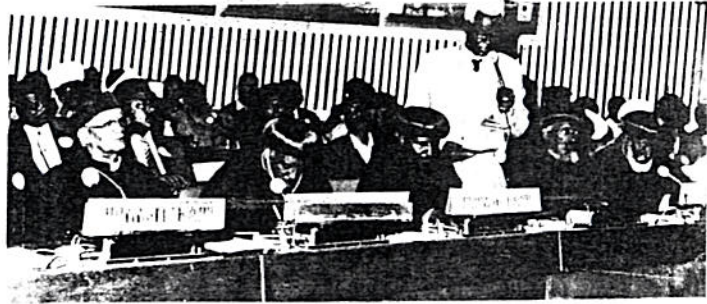
Thanks for your information about EOC'S Peace Conference. Be assured of my prayers for the Assembly and my continuous prayers for

the conflict in Ethiopia. God Bless you.
Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE CONFERENCE

1. Background

For some years Northern Ethiopia has been suffering from civil strife which is the cause for the death of many men, women and children and for the destruction of



The Participants of the peace conference in enthusiastic Participation

many churches, precious historical objects, schools, hospitals and a large amount of property, and thus this situation has consequently hampered the progress of development work in the country. Since a few years the war has spread in several directions and it now threatens the neighbouring areas of the country.

Since the outbreak of the conflict, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has offered special prayers in her services in all the monasteries, cathedrals, parish churches and homes for peace and reconciliation.

Moreover, the prophet David has said "Ethiopia stretches her hands unto God" and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church always prays for peace and the well-being of humanity at all times.

On several occasions and at various places, archbishops, clergy and laity have tried hopefully to mediate between the conflicting parties and bring about peace and reconciliation in the area. In October 1988 the regular meeting of the Holy Synod

issued a peace call in connection with the aggravation of the crisis in Northern Ethiopia. In this peace call the Holy Synod called for an end to the fratricidal war among brothers and for the restoration of peace in the region. Again on May 11, 1990 the Holy Synod called upon Ethiopians living at home and abroad to contribute to the efforts underway towards the restoration of peace throughout the country.

In January 1990, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and her ecumenical partners of the Round Table in the relief, rehabilitation and development field met in Addis Ababa to review the ongoing programs and to discuss the scope and directions of future plans of action. In the Round Table Meeting, the EOC called upon all ecumenical partners to support the endeavour to bring peace and reconciliation in Northern Ethiopia.

During the Epiphany celebration on 19th January 1990 the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church made an appeal to all ecumenical partners and to the Ethiopian

people to cooperate to bring peace in Ethiopia. At the Epiphany celebrations there were also other distinguished guests including His Grace parthenios patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church in Alexandria. His Eminence Dr. Runceie Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Emilio Castro, Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, the most Rev. Michael Peers, Archbishop and primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Rev. Harold Morris, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the Rev. Douglas Ross, Executive Secretary of the London Conference of the United Church of Canada, the Rev. Sandra MacDonald, Representative of the Canadian Council of Churches, the Rev. Donald Sjöberg, Bishop and President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and President of the Canadian Council of Churches. During this occasion these church leaders committed themselves to support the peace effort of the EOC.

Following the request of the EOC, the Round Table in its meeting of January

15-17, 1990 in Addis Ababa, agreed to form a Church Peace Team for Ethiopia consisting of (a) EOC. (b) WCC-AACC and (c) Ecumenical partners. It also established forthwith a special fund and indicated its decision in the final communique where it entreated the partners to make prayers for peace in Ethiopia.

In a meeting of the Peace Teams which was held in Geneva on March 27, 1990 the question of Peace in Northern Ethiopia was discussed. The Meeting decided to convene a major National EOC Peace Conference in Ethiopia on behalf of the CPT. In response to this call a Church Peace Conference was organized by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Interchurch Aid Department acting on behalf of the Church Peace Team for Ethiopia between June 29-30, 1990 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

a Objective of Church Peace Conference

The Church Peace Conference was organized to make deliberations on points that would help to contribute to the national and international effort to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ethiopia. To this effect the Church Peace Conference:

- a) reflected on the biblical and theological basis of peace.
- b) explored the ways and means in which the church can reinforce its efforts to bring peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia

- c) examined the link between war and famine, relief and peace and set the efforts of the relief work in conflict areas in the context of peace and reconciliation.
- d) brought to focus the urgency of finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ethiopia.

b) Conference Participants

1 Ethiopian Orthodox Church

A delegation of five persons led by the diocesan archbishop participated in the Conference or there were 150 persons from all the dioceses.

The delegation consisted of the diocesan archpriest, representatives of various nationalities, prominent persons and elders.

In addition there were 200 other participants from Addis Ababa region, which included prominent social and cultural personalities.

2 INVITED GUESTS

- Armenian Orthodox Church
- Greek Orthodox Church
- St. Mathews Anglican Church
- German Evangelical Church
- Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat
- Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
- Christian Relief and Development Association members
- Ethiopian Islamic Supreme Council.

The World Council of Churches and the Christian peace Conference were invited but they were unable to attend the

Conference. However, they have sent message of good wishes and support.

All in all 450 participants attended the conference.

c) Conference Sub Themes

The Conference deliberated on three sub themes:

- 1) The Biblical basis of Peace: A Theological Reflection.
2. Role of the Church in bringing peace and reconciliation
3. Relief Activities and Peace.

On the basis of the presentations, participants of the Church Peace Conference exchanged views on the conference themes and the Peace Conference concluded its deliberations by making the following resolutions.

COMMUNIQUE

The Church Peace Team for Ethiopia that held a Peace Conference in Africa Hall on 29th and 30th June 1990 has made the following resolution after examining and discussing the prevailing problems in the country in depth.

1. It is known that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has been praying constantly for peace and the wellbeing of the Ethiopian people as a whole. At this time, we see some of our people, living in certain places and towns including in last, luxury and rejoicing without any limit while many of our compatriots are dying because of famines and fratricidal war. The Peace

Conference Proclaims that prayers and fasting should continue all over the country until peace is secured and a better situation is attained.

1. The war that is prevailing in the country as is well known has taken and continue to take an innumerable number of human life. The peace conference requests for an agreement on an immediate cease fire.
3. The Conference strongly requests that the Peace Talk that was commenced between the government of Ethiopia and the opposing parties should be resumed and the reconciliation committee which would be established by the Peace Conference should be involved in the Peace Talk at whatever level needed.
4. A National Peace and Reconciliation committee, comprising leaders of religious organizations and well known elders in the country that have been Participants of this Peace Conference, be immediately established and avail itself in all the places where problems are prevailing, for accomplishing intermediary task.
5. The Conference believes that all Ethiopians residing abroad should cooperate and contribute their share in rendering their national task to implement the resolution of the Peace Conference conducted

by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Conference pointed out that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church following directives of the Peace Conference and of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee that will be established at different levels should make all the endeavour to teach about unity, love of one's country and history of the country at different places in times of holidays and at any place where people assemble for various occasions.

6. According to the culture and tradition in Ethiopia, respecting one another and parents was a common practice. At this time it seems that respect for others and love for one's country is dwelling. The conference requests that moral teaching based on unity and peace be taught in all schools and through the mass media as it used to be in the past.
7. The Church Peace Team for Ethiopia, established in January 1990, comprising the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, World Council of Churches and Ecumenical partners should carry the responsibility of making all the necessary endeavour to make a tour within and outside of Ethiopia so that the peace process bears fruit and that peace and reconciliation could be attained at last.

8. The Peace Conference applauds and demands the continuation and on a larger scale the relief food distribution that is launched with the joint efforts of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Ethiopian Catholic Secretariate and Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, in order to alleviate the suffering of the people who have become victims of war and drought.

9. The Conference recognizes the vital role of that the furtherance of aid by the Churches and donor agencies abroad and further more the Conference appreciates the World Council of Churches very much for the efforts made and collaboration shown for the attainment of peace in Ethiopia. The Conference hopes that this gesture will continue in future too.

10. Lack of justice being one of the problems of the society, the Conference believes that the Church should prepare herself to teach the basics of secular and spiritual justice to the society.

11. The Conference points out that the destruction of cultural and national heritage, the looting of precious relics to foreign countries and the burning of many Churches as problems caused by the prevailing war and earnestly demands that the government



the Church and the community cooperate to safeguard all the national and cultural heritage, so that they could be inherited by the coming generation.

12. To this effect, the (resolution) communiqué of the Peace Conference is to be transmitted to:

1. Super powers,
2. United Nations,
3. Current President of OAU,
4. World Council of Churches,
5. All Africa Conference of Churches,
6. Patriarchs of Eastern Orthodox Churches,
7. Patriarchs of Oriental Orthodox Churches,
8. Lutheran World Federation,
9. Pope of the Roman Catholic Church,
10. Leaders of European Churches,
11. World Peace Conference,
12. Amnesty International,
13. Leaders of South African Churches,
14. Islamic Supreme Council.

Praised be the Lord that enabled us to initiate this Peace Conference !

Amen.

The conference was closed with prayer and the following speech of his Holiness the Patriarch.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God Amen.

"Seek the Peace of the nation"

Jeremiah 29 :7

Participants of this assembly who have gathered here in the name of the Lord of Peace to discuss about the nation and Peace.

As there is nothing which can be realized without the will of God as testified by Him.

I hope and pray that this Peace Assembly which is conducted here and now will be of benefit to the Peace of the country.

Glory to the Lord who is the maker and feeder of the world, there was no time when He left the world without being its feeder and maker.

When man by his deeds brings destruction on himself the Lord does not leave the world for destruction. He seeks the congregation and excuse of His creature. It is no secret for the name of God that there was no time when the Lord left the world without a teacher.

The Holy Bible teaches us to "seek the Peace of the Country". Thus all churches continuously and daily pray for the Peace of the world. They teach that real peace is not achieved in war but through the blessing of God in the way of justice and rightness.

Leaving aside the history of the world predating the 1950's many new things are happening in the world today through the will of God.

The threat of nuclear war hovering on mankind has progressively decreased.

The system of colonialism which exercised the oppression of man by man is drawing to a close, and many people under oppressive regimes have altered their freedom. The arms race is being curtailed through a series of actions and proposals of disarmament. The various conflicts among peoples and nations around the world are finding solutions through discussions and negotiations.

The war threats and confrontations between the East and West are rapidly coming to an end. The walls separating people has by the mysterious acts of God been pulled down.

The epoch of injustice and oppression is receding, leaving its place to the epoch of justice. Nations separated by war are on the way towards peaceful reunification. Glimpses of the collapse of the unjust system of apartheid are on the horizon.

In general we find ourselves in a world passing through epoch of peace and reconciliation. There are those who think that this peace and reconciliation has been brought about by their wisdom. that they are leading it by their

authority. We believe now, however, that this is the work of God. We witness about this. Since we realize that this has been accomplished by the will of God we thank our Lord whose will it was that this peace effort shall bear fruit.

Jesus Christ, the God of Peace has explained in the Gospel that disunity is the path of destruction (Matt. 12.25).

The path of disunity which is visible in our country and which is not beneficial to the country deeply concerns and worries our Church. When such a concerning situation emerges it is not the task of the church to look at the situation with indifference.

It is a religious obligation to work for peace.

This was, the main reason why our Church set about to organize this conference. The Church believes that has been said by the prophet David "Ethiopia stretches out her hands to God" and that it is a thing which has to be fulfilled at all times.

If this is the case, it is the belief of our Church that the Lord of Peace may bring upon the country the spirit of peace, stability and unity.

God performs His work through reasons.

Our Church prays that the blessing of God be forth coming so that this Peace Assem-

bly may be a cause for the endowment of peace which our country is laying. As our Church has upto now been preoccupied with prayers and fasting, once again she stretches out her hands to God that the efforts for peace and unity shall bring forth results.

I call upon the people of Ethiopia to reject the path of disunity, to strengthen their faith on the Lord, that men, women and children may unite to safeguard the unity of the country. May God grant peace and unity to Ethiopia and to the whole World.

A COMMEN CALL FOR PEACE

THE PEACE CONFERENCE WAS FOLLOWED BY AN URGENT CALL FOR PEACE MADE BY THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN ETHIOPIA TO THE CONFLICTING PARTIES.

We, the religious leaders in Ethiopia,

1. Abba Merkorios, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church,
2. Hajji Umer Hussien Abdulwahid, Chairm-

an of the Ethiopian Islamic Supreme Council,
3. Abba Paulos Tzadwa, Cardinal Archbishop of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia,

4. Rev. Francis Stephanos, President of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus,

In deep concern for the devastation caused by the

The Four Leading Forces of the Peace Call



continued war among brothers in the Northern part of our country, which has resulted in multifold destruction ranging from the loss of irreplaceable human life to invaluable cultural heritage and properties.

In thorough observations of the day by day aggravating war, contrary to our hopes; today on our own initiative and without any outside interference, considering the feeling and wish of the Ethiopian people, and understanding this to be in accordance with the will of the Creator, have decided to put our so for single efforts together and act in unison for regaining peace in this country.

We strongly call upon you, the conflicting parties, to stop fighting immediately, open doors of tranquility that allow war and famine victims to get emergency assistance and through our intermediary presence bring your respective concerns to roundtable negotiations so that

we all together search for a common solution.

We look forward to your immediate positive response for the sake of the country and people.

To this effect, we in the name of the Creator send this peace call to all concerned and beseech you to accept the call.

We call upon the entire people of Ethiopia to be with us in prayers.

May the Creator be with us all.

Addis Ababa, July 4, 1990.

Hereon, the following request for support towards the implementation of the call for peace was made by the same Religious Leaders to the super powers and others in the world

Dear Friends:

Today, peace is being attained every where through Your help, whereas in our country, things are doing different.

We the Religious Leaders in Ethiopia, together with the entire people, have been and still are praying that

war which devastates a country and people may be halted and that peace and stability be established instead.

We specially are deeply concerned about the war that is being waged in the Northern part of our country - a war that so many tries to stop, were made and remained in vain.

What is worrying us most is : the loss of several thousands of lives, particularly, innocent children, the destruction of immense property and that of development infrastructures; as well as the tension that is threatening the people.

In view of this, we the Religious Leaders in the Country, kindly send to you a copy of our call for peace which we have issued on July 4, 1990; and cordially ask you in the name of our Creator, to do all your best in supporting us implement our noble and holy objective.

May the Almighty Creator be with us all.

AACC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The executive committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) has made its regular meeting at Ghion Hotel in Addis from Oct. 27-29, 1989.

Presided over by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President of the AACC, the two-days meeting has deliberated on performance reports presented by the president and Secretary General of the Council AACC, Rev. Jose Chিপenda. A plan for the comi-

ng fiscal year has also been adopted during the meeting.

Financial and manpower issues were raised during the discussion and the venue and time for the next meeting have been decided.

The executive committee meeting also discussed the conditions favourable in Nairobi, which was discontinued due to financial difficulties.

The All Africa Conference of Churches embraces 138

member churches and 20 national councils.

Before the end of the meeting an ecumenical worship service, with representatives of diverse Church denominations attending, was conducted at the Trinity Cathedral.

Jointly organized by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church, the prayer service was attended by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President of the All Africa

FRIENDLY VISITS, ECUMENICAL AND HISTORICAL

Conference of Churches, members of the conference's executive committee as well as leaders of various religious denominations.

Ecumenical peace message were transmitted by His Grace Archbishop Desmond Tutu on the occasion and the faithful were called upon to pray for the prevalence of peace in this country, Africa as a whole and the world at large.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu observed that governments, religious orders and all other organizations which stand for freedom are presently striving hard for peace and stability in Africa and the rest of the world. He strongly urged the faithful to pray constantly for the fulfilment of this noble mission.

with own dirtn.

He stressed the pivotal of the unity of struggle of the international community in freeing this people from the stranglehold of apartheid.

The Anglican Nobel Peace Prize winner also said the Executive Committee of the AACC will continue contributing its share towards the containment of conflicts in the continent, the prevalence of peace, the mobilization of efforts to wards socio-economic advancement and the success of peace initiatives taken by individual governments.

Mean while, His Holiness Abune Merkorios, Patriarch of Ethiopia received in his office Archbishop Desmond Tutu with whom he discussed world peace and relations

one God, I greet you and welcome you cordially.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church which is a founding member of AACC rejoices over your coming to our land for holding this meeting and over your presence among us and our people as well.

The AACC is a Christian Organization which came into being in this continent to witness for Christ who is the Saviour of the World. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world not to be served but to serve until the salvation of this world has been achieved through His spiritual and social ministry.

This glorious ministry should be continued by churches in Africa to day and forever.

Thus I pray that the wisdom and the spirit of God be



Archbishop Desmond Tutu took the Chair at the Conference

Archbishop Tutu pointed out that large populations are today suffering from the vicissitudes of nature and man-made disasters and made particular note of the plight of the black people in South Africa caught in the web of racism, unlawful imprisonment and other forms of social degradation in the land of

and cooperations between and among church orders in Africa.

At the opening ceremony His Holiness Abuna Merkorios Patriarch of Ethiopia sent the following message to the participants.

Dear Brothers and Sisters
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit

with you, the participants of this meeting, that you may discuss and decide upon what is helpful for the fulfilment of this ministry and that the seeds of your deliberations may fall onto good ground and bring forth abundant fruit in the work of the churches in Africa.

May God bless the work of AACC and this Meeting.



H.H. the Patriarch in His Patriarchal robes in honour of the guests

ers, H.H Partenios Patriarch of Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria and all Africa, His Grace Dr. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, His Excellency Dr. Emilio Castro, and a high Canadian Ecumenical delegation.

The visit took place in January when the colourful Feast of Epiphany is celebrated every year. The high Church Officials were received by His Holiness Abuna

Merkorios, Patriarch of Ethiopia.

1, The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has a long standing relationship with the Greek Orthodox Church.

talks with him on further strengthening relation between the two Churches and



H.H. Patriarch Partenios

From this point of view, His Holiness gave great consideration to the visit of His Holiness Partenios, Greek Orthodox Church Patriarch of Alexandria and held



H. Grace Dr. Runcie



Dr. Emilio Castro

The high level delegates from Canada



at the same time urged religious leaders to exert every effort towards promoting world peace and the prevalence of unity and love among the human race as a whole. His Holiness Patriarch Partenios said on His part that



The Archbishop of Canterbury was welcomed by

H.H. the Patriarch and His Excellency Dr. Dibe Kulu Zewelle, Minister for Religious Affairs

ipia as he was welcomed by His Holiness the Patriarch with the following speech:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit one God - Amen.

Your Grace the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Dr. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England,

We thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in this very moment for this tremendous opportunity to be able to welcome, with a profound spiritual joy, your Grace who is one of the most distinguished leaders of the christian world of today and who came in the name of the Lord to pay this historical visit to our historical land and church.

Since we recognize well the most significant role that your church is playing today in the on-going ecumenical moment for the unity of churches, we are indeed delighted by your memorial visit to our church and graced by your presence among us.

We are also happy that the relationship of the two

churches is on the way of growth through your Grace's great concern and new effort made since your enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury.

To highlight some of these points of concern:

- it is with Your Grace's kind permission and gracious cooperation that our church's faithful in London have been provided with a church building to worship God in their Christian Faith according to their church tradition,

- it is with your Grace's initiative that the Anglican church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches have come today to experience constructive discussions which helped them make more progress in deepening their relations,

- it is your Grace who Offered to express through a friendly visit how the Anglican Church is interested in our church which is ancient and historical,

- being invited by your Grace, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was represented in the Lambeth Conference held in 1982.

- Besides this all the Anglican Church has devoted much attention to be one of the leading members of the WCC which provides scholarship grants for our church students and which make great contributions towards our churches priority development and relief programmes for which we are all deeply grateful.

moreover, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is fully aware of the fact that how the Anglican Church is concerned to realize her good will to deepen her relationship with the Oriental Orthodox Churches in the spirit of ecumenism through your leadership.

Due to these characteristic points and the like we give great considerations to your visit and your presence among us, and believe that the visit of yours to our country and church will open upon a new era of cordial relations between the Anglican Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

As you have come to Ethiopia at a time when we are about to celebrate the Feast of Epiphany which, for us in Ethiopia, is one of the great national holy days, we invite your Grace to take part in this celebration. We strongly understand that your taking part in this Feast of our Lord's Baptism, will make our celebration more filicitous and pleasant.

Furthermore, your friendly visit enables the Christian world to have more evidence for the effectiveness of the ecumenical movement based on the unity of churches and ecumenical brotherhood.

I prayerfully wish that your visit and your stay here with us may be joyous and fruitful.

Once again, a most warm and cordial welcome to Ethiopia and to our church.

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace."

Amen.

In response, His Grace the most Reverend Dr. Robert Runcie Archbishop of Canterbury expressed his deep gratitude for the warm reception given to him by His Holiness the Patriarch and the church as a whole, and his great joy to visit Ethiopia as the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

He also said that when the invitation of His Holiness Came to celebrate The Feast of the Epiphany in Ethiopia, he was most Anxious to accept, not simply as the Archbishop of the Church of England, but as one who in a sense represents a family of sister churches here in Africa as Anglicans and Ethiopian Orthodox exist side by side in this continent.



When His Excellency the President received in audience the Archbishop of Canterbury

In the course of his visit, the two Church leaders held talks and Exchanged views on ways of strengthening the existing relations and cooperation between the two Churches and on the role the two Churches could play in contributing to wards peace and preservation of national

disasters as well in enhancing humanitarian activities.

During his stay, the Archbishop attended the Timqet (Epiphany) celebrations and visited Asmara and Baher-Der enclosing historical monasteries.

On the final day of his visit, the Archtishop, of Canterbury had a long meeting with his Excellency Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam, President of the people's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Prior to this, he also met other high officials of the government.

Upon leaving Ethiopia His grace the most Reverend Archbishop of Canterbury said that he appreciated greatly the warm welcome he received from the Ethiopian people whose courage and faith in

adversity have quickly won his affection. He expressed his hope that his visit would strengthen the warm friendship and growing links between the Ethiopian orthodox Church, and the Anglican Communion.

Since 1949, Ethiopia has been a member of the



H.H. the Patriarch welcomed Dr. Castro at the Patriarchate

At the invitation of the General Secretary, Dr. Emilo Castro, His Holiness paid historical visit to the WCC in 1989, and had a warm welcome as EOC is one of the founding member Churches.

Due to all these reasons, the General Secretary was believed to be worthy of the Churches warm reception followed by the welcome speech made by His Holiness the Patriarch:

Your Excellency, Dr. Emilo Castro,

We feel very much delighted to have gained this opportunity of welcoming your excellency and your highly respected colleagues who are

members of your staff, to our ancient, historical and national church and country in this joyful and ceremonious Christmas and Epiphany seasons.

Dear Dr. Emilio Castro, we would specially like to express our heartfelt happiness to welcome you here in the name of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and wish you full pleasure and happiness during your short stay in Ethiopia. We would also like to express our profound happiness for you are here among your Ethiopian brothers and sisters in Christ at this special Epiphany commemoration time which is highly celebrated in Ethiopian Christian tradition when the faithful rejoice very much.

Later on, the current development department was formed to take in the development programme of the country.

Dear Brother Dr. Emilio, we would not like to pass without mentioning the impression we have on your wonderful quality of leadership and profound resourcefulness as the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and the fundamental and life saving responsibilities WCC has to carry out in order to sustain the life of millions of needy and helpless people of the world.

To come to our intimate relations, it is obvious that it has been developing since the establishment of WCC in 1948. It is also known that our priority programmes: Clergy Training Centers, parish Council Organization, Sunday School and Mini Projects that initially began in 1972, when our relations were strengthened were gaining generous donation and still are enjoying your support and coming to fruition.

What we would like to point out as a fact of utmost importance, however, is the magnanimous, effective and productive involvement WCC is showing in extending material and financial support in the Relief, Rehabilitation and development programmes that are being implemented under our church with a marked recognition within the country and abroad.

We feel very pleased to express to your excellency that WCC under your able leadership has registered an

impressive historical chapter in our Church, because, our Relief Rehabilitation and development programmes have markedly improved not only the life of our clergy but also the life of a large number of the society as well, through your unreserved support.

As is well known by your excellency, it was in 1984-86 that the EOC-DICAD embarked on a wide scale of Relief operation. The world Council of Churches under your leadership has sensed the devastating nature of the problem that the people of Ethiopia had faced and that it was beyond the church's capacity to be confronted. Despite its magnitude, however, it was possible to alleviate the situation of the people. But, had it not been for the WCC on our side, the EOC could have not done much to mitigate that testing and critical situation. Nevertheless, with WCC's cooperation and through your excellency's farsightedness, the EOC was provided with substantial material and financial aid and was successful in serving 200,000 needy people. Despite all these involvement EOC-DICAD's development activity was going on parallel to this without having to face financial or material restriction. Drought has affected the life of our people recurrently and in subsequent years. But, due to the unreserved extension of your donations and untiring endeavours, our church has been running rehabilitative and development



H.H. the Patriarch received the Canadian guests at the Patriarchate

tal programmes of various type parallel to the relief operation, even when the magnitude of drought in 1988 was again as heart-breaking as that of 1984-86. Thus, our Church was able to carry out food commodities distribution to over 300,000 people for 10 months in 1988.

Moreover, though the yield in 1989 was satisfactory, it has come to our knowledge that food shortage this year (1990) is also sever and over 2 million people would need assistance. But, we have the great hope that this catastrophe could also be confronted when Christian brothers and sisters move hand-in-hand as in the previous years to act according to the words of the Almighty God.

Thus We have the trust that God's words "At the present time your plenty will supply that they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need" (2 Corinthians 8:14), would be applicable at this crucial situation under which our people are found and we would

at last be able to break the shackles of object poverty. May the Lord Bless our World.

May the Lord give us peace. Amen.

In response the general Secretary Said that Ethiopia is a country that has a long history and praise worthy historical relics. Dr. Emilo Castro went on to say that the world Council of Churches was privileged to have EOC in its membership which was one of the first Orthodox Churches to join the WCC. On this ground, he said the Council's relationship with the people of Ethiopia goes a long way back.

The general Secretary who came to Ethiopia, accompanied by a three-member delegation for the Headquarter of the WCC, at the invitation of His Holiness the Patriarch. He expressed his joy for his visit to Ethiopia and his sincere gratitude for the enthusiastic welcome given to him by the Church.

He stated that his visit was an expression of profou-

nd and Sincere concern of the Churches around the world for the suffering of the people who are victims of the famine and also his desire to assure the Ethiopian people that the world council of Churches would redouble its efforts to support the humanitarian programmes of the Churches in this Country.

His Holiness, on the occasion, awarded to Dr. Castro a mantle with a golden collar selected from the ancient relics Museum of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The general Secretary was received in audience by His Excellency Comrade President Mengistu Haile Mariam.



When His Excellency the President received in audience Dr. Emilio Castro

At a ceremony conducted at the Council of State, Dr. Castro said that in the course of his visit to Ethiopia, he was able to be better acquainted with a country with an ancient Christian tradition and to have a correct understanding of the obj-

ective situation in the Country.

During his visit to Ethiopia the general Secretary stayed here also as a guest of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and attended the Colourful Celebration of Epiphany.

Upon departure, Dr. Emilio Castro expressed Satisfaction with the talks he held with Ethiopian religious leaders and high-ranking government officials and noted that he was impressed by the various activities he observed and the festival of Ethiopian Epiphany which he witnessed.

As a result of the ongoing ecumenical move-

ment, churches all over the world are making more and more progress in the improvement of their relations at ecumenical level.

The exchange of ecumenical visits which have taken place between the Ethiopian and the Canadian churches is a

clear evidence of this reality.

In the spirit of this ecumenism, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was exceedingly happy to receive:

The most Rev. Michael Peers, Archbishop and the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Rev. Dr. Harrold Morris the Moderator of the presbyterian Church of Canada, Rev. Dr. Douglas Ross, Executive Secretary of the London Conference of the United Church of Canada, Rev. Sandra MacDonald, representative of the Canadian Council of churches and other, who came to Ethiopia to make a friendly visit at the invitation of our church.

Last year, our church's ecumenical delegation visited Canada having been invited by the Canadian Council of churches.

Further more the Canadian people and churches, are highlighting at large their great concern for the well being of our people and the church through their unreserved assistance in the priority development and relief programmes of the country.

When all the high level delegates took part in the colourful Epiphany celebration the Orthodox faithful expressed their great joy over their presence.

On the occasion, His Holiness made the following address.



His Holiness the Patriarch addressed the crowd and offered prayer of benedictions at the end

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit one God

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Christians and people of the new covenant, we praise and glorify God for this happy occasion on which we get together every year and reflect our faithfulness to God through our thanksgiving prayer.

On this day our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed to us the mystery of Baptism through which we receive new birth and new life from God. Christ was born for our salvation and was baptized to fulfill all righteousness as

written in the Scripture Matt. 3 : 15)

Therefore, Epiphany is one of the most glorious and highly celebrated Feast of our church which could be observed in such a colourful celebration.

Furthermore, this day is a blessed day when the mystery of the unity and trinity of God was evidenced.

In this very moment when He was baptized and came out of the water a voice was

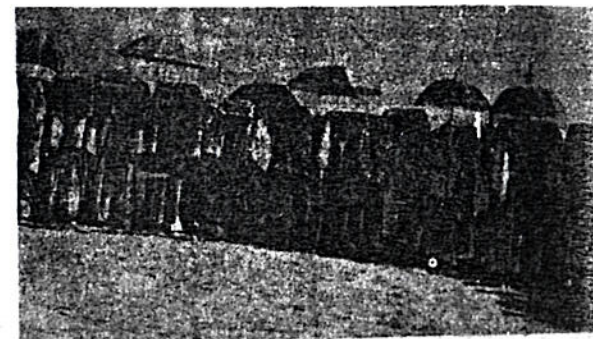
heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, and the Holy Spirit could be seen, descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him (Matt. 3.16-17).

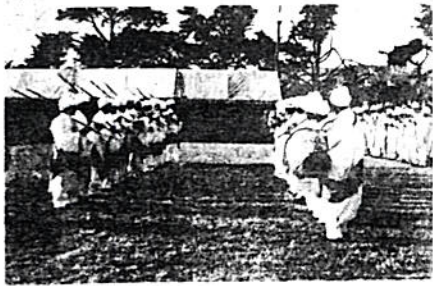
Our knowledge of the mystery of the unity and trinity of God is the basic element of our Christian Faith as we are all baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28).

Thus, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church rejoices over the celebration of this day through this knowledge of faith.

This kind of celebration offers a great opportunity to know more about the Ethiopian Orthodox Church as well. Despite of her long time of isolation from the rest of the world, in times past Ethiopia has developed her own wisely created tradition and culture. In this time of isolation the church of Ethiopia has made great contributions towards the existence and development of this tradition and culture. It was in reference to this isolation and glorious Chris-

A Procession of Tabots (the ark of covenant) on the Feast of the Epiphany





The choir group celebrating the Feast of Epiphany in performance of ritual dance in the Front of the ark of the Covenant

tian tradition therefore that the country was called an "Island of Christianity".

We thank God for the richness of this christian heritage and new life given to us all .

Dear brothers and sisters

We have another occasion to day to be more delighted during our celebration of this Feast of Epiphany, because we have been honoured and graced by the presence of the most distinguished church leadres from the christian world.

To our great joy:

His Holiness Parthenios,

Greek Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of all Africa, His Grace the Most Reverend and right Honourable Dr. Robert Rancie, Archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England,

His Excellency Dr. Emilio Castro, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches.

A delegation of high church officials from Canada and other honourable guests are here with us to participate in our celebration of Epiphany, coming from different parts of the



Ceremonial blessing of the water

world to visit our country and church in the spirit of Ecumenism.

It gives us great joy to say to them once again "welcome" to our country for this friendly visit which can create good friendship and promote close ties between our churches now and in the future.

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Author of peace render His peace to the world, bless the unity of churches and enrich us all with the heavenly blessings on this day when we celebrate this Feast of Epiphany Day.

AFRICA REFUGEE DAY

Africa Refugee Day was celebrated for the 4th time here in Ethiopia, on June 29, 1990.

His Holiness Abune Merkorios, Patriarch of Ethiopia pointed out on the occasion that one of the saddening and tragic international problems of the huamn race at the present time, is life in exile,

the cause of which is lack of peace.

His Holiness recalled that governments and churches have always extended assistance in support of people suffering from fratricidal conflicts and drought affection. He said that this problem could only be solved when misund-

erstanding and war are avoided and peace prevail in the world.

He said that Ethiopia has always been hosting refugees from time immemorial and added that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church does always pray so that refugees may have moral strength and pati-



H.H. the Patriarch presented Himself at the Celebration of the Refugee Day and gave comfort to the refugee brothers and sisters in Ethiopia

ence and may return to their respective homes to lead peaceful and normal life.

Mrs. W. Karaggo, Deputy Regional Liaison, Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for Africa, said recent statistics indicates that 28 member countries of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) host about five million refugees. She said that although some of these countries are confronted with drought and civil war, they have welcomed these refugees on humanitarian grounds and in adherence to OAU convention and other international instruments governing refugee matters.

She said that Ethiopia presently hosts more than 770,000 from Somalia and the Sudan adding that the figure constitutes 16 percent of the total refugee case load in Africa.

His Holiness Abune Merkorios later presented 6860 birr contributed by churches

in Addis Ababa in aid of refugees.

Full address of His Holiness the Patriarch delivered on the Occasion.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit, one God, Amen.

"Do not illtreat foreigners who are living in your land - - - and love them as you love yourself" Lev. 19:33

It is clear that one of the international problems facing humanity is the problem of refugees. It is possible to with stand problems in ones own country and among ones own people. To be separated from one's own family and country and to be a refugee in a foreign country is indeed a great problem. Whatever the international and national assistance given to refugees, the assistance cannot by any means substitute the love and comfort derived from being among ones own family and country. It may be tolerable and may

even be beneficial to leave one's own family and country and to travel to a foreign country on account of a visit, education or temporary sojourn. The problem encountered by being a refugee in another country is felt not only by refugees but it is also recognized by those who are engaged in assisting refugees as they are the ones with the closest contact with them and who feel and sense their every day problem.

The reasons which lead to being a refugee are many. Of all the reasons, the lack of peace is the most prominent. Peace is disturbed when conflict arises in a country due to interethnic and religious conflicts.

In such situations those who have the strength prefer to flee. The aged and the children who do not have the strength are consumed in the conflict. The blood of many innocent people flows. National development is hampered. Famine follows and this very same famine becomes a cause for being a refugee.

The lack of peace is not only accompanied by the influx of refugees but it also means the loss of ones own culture, language, religion and history. Those who leave their own country as refugees must adjust to new cultures and new languages. In due course they intermarry and intermingle and are dislocated from their historical and national roots. This

is not a strange thing in the world.

Peace has been lacking in many parts of the world and this has exasperated the problem of refugees and the possibilities of providing sufficient and reasonable assistance to refugees is limited.

Thus the underlying reasons and instruments of war must be abolished and eliminated and pave the way for a world of peace and harmony. The lack of peace means being a refugee, the eruption of famine and loss of national rights. If there is peace, there is no need to be a refugee. Those who are refugees can return to their home country. They can make benefit of their national rights. If there is peace, there are wider possibilities to work and live in peace. If there is peace, there is health and smile on the face of everyone. If there is peace mutual trust and the absence of suspicion prevails. There will not be ground for fear of one another. It is true that peace in a few countries cannot change the situation of a world afflicted with conflict and refugees. That there may be peace in the whole world in the air, land and ocean, people should pray to God and they should be instrument of peace. Peace should not be sought only in collective efforts but one should make oneself the enthronement of peace.

There are not many people in the world who do not sympathize with people who were forced to leave their home countries. We Ethio-

pians too, following the word of God which says that the stranger who dwells with you should be considered as your countryman and be liked as such, we should sincerely try to understand the problem of refugees and attempt to assist them. We should love them. Ethiopia has a longstanding tradition of welcoming strangers and this tradition should be maintained.

The various conflicts which make of people refugees as much as they are disliked by others, we too totally disapprove them. We wish for unity, prosperity, development in place of hatred, disunity, poverty and backwardness. Everyone has a share of his contribution to make in this field.

One of the good teachings of the church is to help refugees, to assist the needy and to console the disenfranchised. Thus our church prays constantly that the Almighty may give consolation, patience to refugees and that they may return in peace to their country.

May the Lord render consolation to refugees that

they may return in peace to their country. Prior to this, the following speech was made.

MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP ABUNA TEMOTEOS

Your Holiness, Invited Guests
Refugee brothers and sisters
"I was a stranger and you invited me" Matt. 25: 25,
This word of the Lord has a number of messages.

If a person flees his abode, he at once becomes a stranger to his new surroundings. Irrespective of his religious orientation and sex, and whether he is rich or poor, a person who leaves his sweet and warm abode and as a guest, enters into a house or joins a family to which he is unfamiliar still remains to be a stranger.

I think the true interpretation of "I was a stranger and you invited me" is the conversation between the Apostle Paul and our Lord found in Acts. This goes thus, "Saul- Why are you persecuting me? Who is speaking Lord?" Paul asked. And the voice replied. "I am Jesus the one you are persecuting" Acts

His Beatitude Archbishop Timotheos, Executive secretary of EOC DICAD, made Speech on the occasion of the Refugee Day



9 : 45. This means that the Lord is with any refugee.

Basically there are various causes for exilement. However, the refugee and those who host refugees should commit and devote themselves to one and the same name. This name is that of the lord.

The nature of banishment is varied. People may take to exile due to political reasons, to escape persecution for murder and to rescue themselves from the pangs of hunger.

Those who are displaced from their comfortable home and country and are forced into exile need, upon their arrival in another country as guests, legitimate hospitality and proper care. Most of them are children, old men and women, families of the deceased and others who have become jobless.

Man's life consists in his freedom. The fount of his freedom is his country which gives him security and protection. He can speak freely in his own country. He can also move freely in his own land. In this world there seems to be nothing more excruciating than exilement which status denies rights.

In our country, there were times when some people in one drought stricken region moved to more fertile areas where they stayed and returned during the farming season to rehabilitate themselves.

As indicated above, according to the verse "I was a stranger and you invited me," there had been no time

when Ethiopia had not played host to outsiders. Perhaps others may receive guests. However, the fact that Ethiopia receives guests in various spheres makes Ethiopian hospitality unique.

These refugees are being quite well taken care of despite the fact that they had led their respective countries. They are attending schools. They are entitled to free medical treatment, stipends, housing, allowances and in general, are leading comfortable lives.

By and large, there is nothing more horrifying than banishment. It is our fervent hope that peace will reign supreme in the world and that all refugees will be repatriated.

Aba Temoteos
Chief secretary of the EOC
Development and Christian
Aid Department.

MESSAGE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Your Holiness, Invited guests,
Refugee brothers and sisters,

The Church, established in any part of the world, is the embodiment of faith and acts of righteousness. To fulfil humanitarian and Christian obligation in accord-

ance with the teachings of the Holy Bible which says, "For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me water. I was a stranger and you invited me into your homes", it is the apostolic mission of the church to help the needy ones who, for various reasons have fled their countries and, within the limits of her means, satisfy their human needs.

Under the circumstances, governments of different countries, churches and other religious Organizations have come together and, by integrating their activities, are extending their humanitarian assistance to the almost ten million refugees all over the world 5 million of which are in the African continent.

At the same time, the organizations and governments just mentioned are making ceaseless efforts to bring about lasting solutions to refugee problems and repatriating refugees where they can live in peace and harmony. It is the hope and desire of all mankind that these sacred engagements will eventually materialise so that refugees all over the world will return to their respective lands and resume peaceful lives.

Dr. Markos W. Eyesus, General Secretary of EOC, making speech on the Same Occasion



Presently there are over one million refugees in Ethiopia who have come from Southern Sudan, Somalia and from other countries. The Ethiopian government has been receiving and taking care of these refugees. Along this line of endeavour, the EOC is, in cooperation with the All Africa Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, has received about 1000 refugees and is taking care of them within the limits of her means. The EOC will, in future, do her utmost in the efforts which are directed for bringing about lasting solutions

to the problems of refugees and repatriating them.

All of us are of the hope that each individual refugee will return to his country and resume a normal, peaceful life. However it is necessary to satisfy all the needs of the refugees until such time comes. In accordance with the directives given by His Holiness the Patriarch of the EOC the financial contributions made by the churches in Addis Ababa which help subsidize the budget of the EOC Refugees Service is quite an exemplary gesture which deserves appreciation.

On behalf of the EOC

and on my behalf, I would like to thank the workers of the EOC Refugees Service, for the sacred task which they accomplish by way of receiving and playing host to the refugees with great patience and a sense of humanitarian concern. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the organizations for their sacred services and for their fruitful collaboration in this noble venture.

"Ethiopia Tikdem"

Dr Markos Wolde Iyesus
General Secretary of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE CHURCH OF ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia followed the Old Testament traditions long before the introduction of christianity into the country. There are several places in the Holy Bible where the name of Ethiopia is mentioned.

For example,

"The name of the second river is Ghion. This is the one which encircles all the land of Ethiopia" (Genesis 2 : 13).

"Ethiopia stretches out her hands to God" (Ps. 57 : 31).

Christianity was introduced into Ethiopia in the apostolic era during the first centuries A.D. (Acts 8:26-40). Frumentius or otherwise known as Aba Selama or Kesate Berhan was consecrated as the first bishop of the Ethiopian Church in the 4th century A.D.

He translated the Bible and other religious books from Greek into Geez, the ancient language of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is one of the five Oriental Orthodox Churches, namely, Coptic Church of Egypt, Syrian Orthodox Church, Armenian Apostolic Church and the Indian (Malabar)



Orthodox Church, which rejected the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.).

In the 5th century nine monks from the Byzantine Empire who opposed the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) sought refuge in Ethiopia.

They translated the Bible and other religious books from Greek and Latin into Geez.

In the 5th century St. Yared, a scholar of our Church inspired by the Holy Spirit, composed the Church hymn which is still in use by our Church.

Structure and Administration of EOC

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has at present over 30 million followers. The Church is led by a Holy Synod composed of the Patriarch as its chair man. The Holy Synod has 30 archbishops and bishops as members. There are nearly 3000,000 Clergy and 25,000 Parish Churches and one thousand monasteries. There are 30 dioceses inside the country.

There are also dioceses in Jerusalem, Sudan, Kenya, Djibouti and in the Western Hemisphere. Churches have been recently established in West Germany, Greece and Sweden. There are also plans to establish Churches in Switzerland and other countries in Europe and Africa.

3. Ecumenism

The ecumenical movement aims to bring closer all Christians to discuss and work together for common objectives. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has always put great importance to this goal since the historical past. This philosophy had been observed in Jerusalem in the earliest Pentecostal Celebrations.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is a founding member of the World Council of Churches. It firmly supports its aims. Through the World Council of Churches,

it has contacts with different churches and international Christian humanitarian organizations.



Dr. Markos W. Eyesus,
General Secretary of EOC

As it maintains a doctrinal unity with the other oriental Orthodox Churches, it pays special attention to its relationship with them.

The EOC is a founding member of the all Africa Conference of Churches and a member of the General Committee of this continental organization. Furthermore, the EOC participates in the programmes of the Christian Peace Council.

4. Diakonia

Since its establishment, our Church has carried its spiritual and social diakonia with the available means and with persistent efforts.

It has united the people of Ethiopia by faith, ethical values and by a common historical tie. It has acted

as the symbol of unity and independence of Ethiopia.

In recent times it has enlarged the scope of its social diakonia which includes:

- Parish Community development Programme
- Family and Community development schemes
- Relief and rehabilitation in drought emergency situations and in localities facing food shortage
- Health programme
- installation and development of rural infrastructures such as water supply and rural road construction
- Afforestation
- Fishery
- Refugee Counseling
- Childcare programme.

The EOC has also embarked on a renewal of its administration to meet the demands of the new Ethiopian society. In this sphere, a large scale Clergy Training programme is underway to enable the clergy to meet their communities with a capacity for organizing and leading development schemes. A parish council organization programme along new lines has been launched since ten years ago and unto now about 19 million of the 30 million followers of our Church have been registered in

parish councils and mobilized to participate in the life and activity of their Church. Women participate at all levels and in the various activities of parish Council. A process of activating the Christian youth much more than previously has started to show good results.

EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH TODAY

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was and is still a prominent centre of learning in the country. The church was not only a religious institution but also a repository of the cultural, political and social life of the people, based on religious knowledge and wisdom.

Standardizing and specializing this success achieved through Judaism, Christianity could institute and develop a new school of advanced thoughts and learning for which the church has been worthy of praise.

Until recent time, the only institutions of education in the country were the traditional schools created by the church. These schools still provide the same service for the society though modern schools have appeared in the country to propagate the new idea from the modern world.

TRADITIONAL SCHOOL

Many local churches have their own schools located in or near their compound. The schools serve as a recruiting and screening a ground

for priesthood training and religious instructions. The subjects were selected in order to fit the needs of the church.

Education in these schools is offered at several levels ranging from the most elementary to highly specialized studies. The education system in these church schools, however, has been still profoundly moved by the past. These schools are highly regarded as a living means to provide continuation of traditional educations in the country.

In the present time there are:

- 7,162 traditional schools,
- 12,080 teachers and,
- 72,944 students throughout the country.

As a response to the challenge of the time, the church is fully aware that it is her duty to train her future leaders, teachers and priests in a way that they will fulfill their role in modern society and that now it is mandatory to adopt a new method of learning and training which combine traditional studies with broader curriculum in the twentieth century.

Fortunately a number of theological students have also progressed to further advanced studies here and abroad. In general, the church is bringing the transition from strictly traditional scholarship to a new dynamic era where traditional learning and modern education will blend together to ensure the continuity of the Ethiopian Christian heritage in the setting of modern world.

NEW EFFORT MADE BY THE CHURCH TO SET UP NEW TRAINING CENTRES

To achieve the required goal mentioned above, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has done its best to open a number of new training centres to retrain her large number of clergy for the required ministry of the church of today and of tomorrow.

A new success has been achieved until now to open eight clergy training centres in eight dioceses.

Being included in the priority development programme assisted by the WCC's donor agencies, the implementation of the clergy training programme is going on well now.

A decision has recently been made by the EOC's National Parish Councils' annual assembly to let each parish church contribute annual subsidy for the future implementation of the clergy training programme as a progress in the sphere of self-reliance.

All those who have been made to be retrained in those clergy training centres until now are playing a very significant role in the work of the church relating to both spiritual and social ministry.

EOC'S NEW THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

To nurture always means to experience formative power over the development of the life of the church, a set up of institution for higher education would be of vital importance.

As a progressive move undertaken by the Holy Synod, a new theological seminary, completely run by the church, has been found in 1982 in the city of Addis.

PRINCIPLES

The principles for which this theological seminary (called St. Paul's Theological Seminary,) could be founded, are in general for the teaching and maintenance of the doctrine and worship of the church of Ethiopia as set forth by the Apostolic and patristic teachings.

To uphold the supreme authority and sufficiency of the Holy scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments as the revelation of the will of God to man, is a starting point of this teaching.

The task of this Seminary in general is to educate and train for EOC's ministry and leadership which involve service, enablement, inspiration and self-sacrifice.

The Seminary's syllabus of teaching also provides preparation for the award of EOC's Diploma in theology. This award is open to graduate only.

DURATION OF TIME

Students who come with rich backgrounds in theological and biblical knowledge are able to accomplish their studies within a four year span of time.

GRADUATION

Since its establishment of the Seminary, 50 students have been graduated from it and awarded Diploma. The graduates have been entitled to serve in every spiritual and social ministry of the Church and are playing a significant role in this sphere

M. T. Teshoma Zerihun