

THE IMPERIAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE OF LALIBELA



Come let us "walk as children of light"
Ephesians 5:8



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For further details on The Crown Council of Ethiopia, visit www.ethiopiancrown.org



HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Copley, Mr. Philip Eagleton, and Major General Oliver Peacock for their unfailing support and valuable input in initiating the establishment of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela. The encouragement and support received from His Excellency Ambassador Weston Adams, General Oliver Peacock, SCMD, and Lieutenant-Colonel Stanley Meuser, SCMD, to organize the launching ceremony was most appreciated, and for this, the Society is deeply indebted to them. I also thank the leadership and the members of the American College of Heraldry for their interest in Ethiopia and for their continued encouragement and support throughout the years. My sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude are extended to Mr. Michael Murphy and to Mr. David Wooten, who were the moving force that helped to organize, coordinate, and manage the launching ceremony, as well as the follow-up activity. I also thank all those who assisted them.

The photographs taken by Mr. Jim Webb and Mr. Damon R. Smith have been extensively used in this booklet to record the launching ceremony and to introduce the Society to the worldwide public. I thank them both most sincerely for their contribution.

It was, indeed, divine providence that brought Melake Selam Haddis Woldeyesus to the USA when we needed his input most to enlighten us about the current situation in Ethiopia. The Honorable Mussie Hailu, who is always ready to answer the call to help the Crown Council be of service to the people of Ethiopia, made an excellent presentation on the case of Ethiopia. We are proud of our two compatriots and thank them both most sincerely. A special thanks go to all those who attended the launching ceremony whose presence made the event a major success.

I would like to put on record my pleasure, and gratitude, for the work done by two brothers, Ermias and Endrias Hailu Zewede, who depicted my dream in the graphic design of the cover of this book. Their wish to portray Ethiopia in good light has, indeed, begun to bear fruit. My very warm appreciation is extended to those who helped to write, compile and edit this booklet, so that it can be used to help achieve the objective of the Society. Mr. David Wooten, who worked tirelessly to format the document, is sent my very special thanks. My most sincere thanks also go to Dr. Helen Mousa, Dr. Debela Olana, and Mr. Gregory Copley, whose suggestions enhanced the final product. I appreciate very much Mr. Phillip Eagleton, Mr. David Wooten, and Mr. Meseretu Wonde's input into the design of our beautiful membership medal that truly represents Ethiopia. My sincere gratitude goes to Mr. David Garrison who most generously provided the funds to publish this booklet.

Finally, on behalf of all Ethiopians past and present, as well as of future generations, I most gratefully acknowledge and extend my heartfelt thanks, to all those who had saved both written and photographic record of Ethiopia's ancient heritage. What they have preserved have inspired us and will continue to help succeeding generations of Ethiopians maintain their national pride and dignity, assured in the knowledge that their culture has contributed to the beautiful mosaic of world heritage. All Ethiopians are, indeed, most indebted to each and every one of them.

*Prince Ermias Sable Selassie
Co-Patron of the Imperial Society*



Prince Ermias Sable Selassie

FOREWORD

Ethiopia is a beautiful mosaic of cultures, faiths, and many lifestyles. It is the home of Christians, Muslims, and Jews, as well as those of various traditional beliefs. Ethiopia is also a land of amazing beauty. Our mountains, valleys, and rivers are a wonder to behold. God and nature have richly endowed our country, that even visitors feel an inexplicable spirituality while there.

Ethiopian civilization represents the longest unbroken chain of cultural continuity in the history of the world. The rift valley is the home of Denkinesh – who is known to the world as Lucy – the earliest humanoid, and thus, the cradle from where human society first emerged. Ethiopia is also a country that is the custodian of the Ark of the Covenant. The worldwide Christian community considers Ethiopia as an illustrious realm mentioned in the Bible more than 40 times. Furthermore, our country is world renown as the land where the Solomonic Dynasty of the Ethiopian Crown had served at the helm of Ethiopian society for centuries. The Prophet Mohammad called Ethiopia “the land of righteousness” and ordered his followers never to provoke Ethiopia. Thus, as there is a direct link between Ethiopia and the biblical world of Jews and Christians, so is there a direct link between Ethiopian society and the very foundation of Islam. Ethiopian civilization is, therefore, a world treasure of great importance, as it is the root of Judeo-Christian civilization as well as the fabric of Muslim society.

Ethiopia is a country that has withstood the ravages of periodic war, famine and revolution. Our people fought gallantly the Italians at Adewa and Machew, to uphold the dignity of people of African heritage which

made Ethiopia the source of African identity and the beacon of African Independence. At the inauguration ceremony of the Organization of African Unity, H. E. President Julius Nyerere stated that Africans who had previously accepted European domination as a given, learned from Ethiopia that it is possible to fight, and even to win the fight!

Ethiopian culture is a relic of ancient times and at the same time alive and vibrant. It has been, and continues to be enriched by its diverse heritage, which has made it full of promise, and great potential. Ethiopians in the Diaspora have transplanted our rich cultural heritage to help us maintain our identity, and to sustain us in our new home of refuge. In return, we have all learned, and gained tremendous experience living in all corners of the world – from London to Sydney. If encouraged and accepted, we can utilize our human and material resources to help modernize our country.

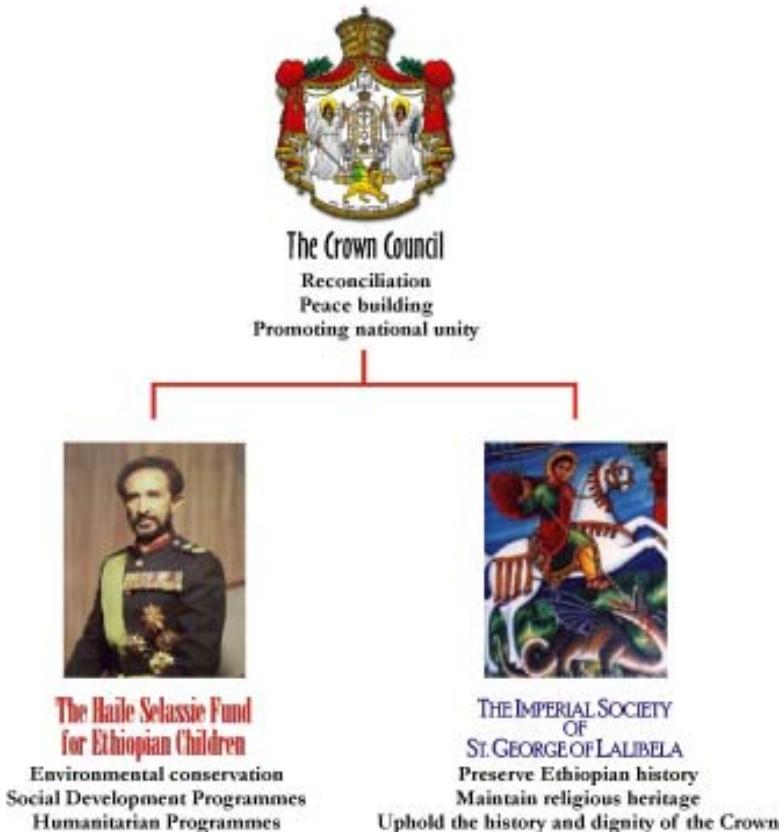
The preservation of Ethiopia's cultural heritage and the transmission of its oral history and customs, were threatened with annihilation by the violent tidal wave of the 1974 coup d'état and the Dergue's subsequent purges and genocidal acts. After this wave receded, and the global Cold War had ended, another wave – this time of globalization – began to wash over the world, including Ethiopia, before our country could regain its sense of identity and restore its damaged treasures. Thus, I believe that the church and the Crown Council, together with other concerned groups, have the responsibility to put back the pieces in the mosaic of history, so that Ethiopia can continue to play its intrinsic role in the world community.

Dear readers, I have narrated facts which are well known to most of you, to express the immense pride and love that I have for my country. These facts are also reiterated as a backdrop to show what has inspired me and members of the Crown Council to change our focus from the realm of politics to cultural preservation, environmental conservation, social development and humanitarian programmes, which are the overriding needs of our society. It is, indeed, my deep concern for my country, and my sincere belief that the Solomonic dynasty has the historic responsibility and moral obligation to be of continued service to the Ethiopian people, that has helped me to translate my dream into viable programmes. In this way, the Crown will continue to be of service to the Ethiopian people.

The plan to establish the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela was first conceived in 1994, a year after HIM Ameha Selassie reconstituted the Crown Council in Exile, and appointed me as its Chairman. The work of the Society was, however, launched on July 24th, 2004. The delay in initiating the work was due to many factors. Those of us who were appointed to serve on the Crown Council needed time to familiarize ourselves with the tremendous responsibilities that were entrusted to us. Since we assumed our posts without any financial backing, and we had to at the same time earn our living, volunteers had to be found to help us initiate some projects that are relatively self contained and did not require most of

our time, such as the Scholarship Programme granted to 24 Ethiopian Students by the Pacem In Terris Programme, of La Roche College, Pennsylvania. Priority was also given to first support development programmes.

The success of the Scholarship and other Programmes implemented by the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children, the warm reception that I received during my brief return to Ethiopia in the year 2003, had convinced me that the Ethiopian Imperial family still has an important nonpolitical role to play in Ethiopian affairs. With this in mind, we registered a branch of the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in May 2004.



The Cultural Role of the Crown Council of Ethiopia

As shown above, the overriding Cultural Role of the Crown Council is to promote reconciliation, peace building, and national unity. While the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children will support environmental conservation, social development, and humanitarian programmes, the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela will give support to preserve

Ethiopian History, uphold Ethiopia's religious heritage, and maintain the history and dignity of the Crown. These programmes were formulated to be complementary, so that they may jointly carry forward the legacy of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I, who was in the frontline in preserving Ethiopia's ancient heritage, and at the same time, in modernizing his country.

The launching ceremony of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela, and the commemoration of the 112th Birth date of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I was organized together with the Annual Meeting of the American College of Heraldry, on July 23-24, 2004, at Charleston, South Carolina. This booklet records the events that took place before and during the launching ceremony. It also shows some samples of Ethiopian heritage that need to be preserved. The samples presented were used because they are conveniently available for publication. The aim of the Society is, however, to promote that every cultural heritage in Ethiopia be given equal recognition and that they also be well recorded to help maintain the dignity of all the people in the country.

One of the objectives of this booklet is to explain in full the purpose and goals, as well as the structure, of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela, to help introduce the Society to the worldwide public. It will also serve as a guideline for the members of the Society who wish to establish Chapters in other States in the US, and in other countries around the world. As membership in any viable Society should be a dynamic one, the content of the booklet is only a foundation on which the members can build. The members should expand the objectives of the Society, if and when needed, so as to ensure the achievement of its goals at all times.

The cultural heritage of different linguistic groups in Ethiopia will be presented at each annual meeting of the Imperial Society in the US. We hope that this will promote further understanding and appreciation of each other's cultural heritage, and there by strengthen national unity. Furthermore, the members of the Society will be encouraged to find support for preserving indigenous cultures which have hitherto been neglected, and/or not sufficiently recorded. The use of modern technology to record and preserve oral history, ancient poetry, and songs will thus be supported.

The major *raison d'être* of the booklet is to show that the true history of a nation includes the history of all the people in the country; the major contributors to the well-being and dignity of the nation; all religions practiced in the country; as well as that of all Monarchs of different lineages, and of other leaders who have served at the helm of Ethiopian society. Thus it embraces the entire population of Ethiopia and promotes an inclusive sense of national unity. This has been, and will continue to be, the role of the Ethiopian Crown.

Furthermore, it is intended that the booklet should serve as an educational tool to teach all Ethiopians – particularly the younger generation –

that Ethiopia has an ancient heritage in which all its people should continue to take pride. The people also need to be made aware that it is the nation's dignity and honor, derived from our ancient heritage, that had enabled succeeding generation of Ethiopians to weather the storms of frequent war and famine.

In addition, the booklet is used to transmit important messages of deep concern related to upholding the nation's ancient heritage. It alerts our people to alarming erosion of our country's long-established culture of tolerance, and coexistence of many linguistic and religious groups. It emphasizes the moral obligation of the educated groups to share their knowledge with their fellow countrymen, and to provide effective leadership at all levels of society. The need to involve the beneficiaries in planning and implementation of projects designed to alleviate their problem, is also emphasized. Furthermore, by outlining the value of Ethiopia's historical heritage, we hoped that the booklet will encourage Ethiopians to be more involved in cultural preservation.

One serious matter that I am deeply concerned about, and that should concern all the people of Ethiopia, is the ongoing pillaging of historic documents and artifacts. The archives of various national institutions are being emptied, and invaluable documents and artifacts are sold in the streets of Addis Ababa and other towns, leading to erosion of Ethiopian history. Thus, I call on educators at all levels, including members of the press and radio, to join hands with us to inform the public regarding the danger of such practice.

The design of the front cover of this book was prepared by two brothers, Ermias and Endrias Hailu Zewede, who received their University education in the US through the Scholarship Programme granted by the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children. It depicts the dream which I actually had in which I saw the border of the Church in Lalibela illuminated by three rows of candles. In preparing the design for the booklet, it was, however, decided to use only one candle for aesthetic purposes.

May we all "Walk as the Children of Light."

Prince Ermias Sable Selassie
Co-Patron of the Imperial Society



I. THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Given by HHH Prince Ermias Sable Selassie, Chairman of the Crown Council of Ethiopia, at the Launching of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela in Charleston, South Carolina, on July 24th, 2004

Your Imperial Highness Prince Bekere, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Welcome to the first Annual Meeting of the Imperial Society of St George of Lalibela. Your presence here today, to officially launch the Society and to commemorate the 112th Anniversary of the Birth of my late grandfather, HIM Haile Selassie I, is a testimony of your high esteem for Ethiopia's heritage and for its former Monarch. For this, I thank you most sincerely.

The Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela and the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children are the two vehicles of the Ethiopian Crown Council to direct charitable donations and aid to Ethiopia from the world. Whereas the Foundation has been relatively active, The Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela is holding its first meeting today.

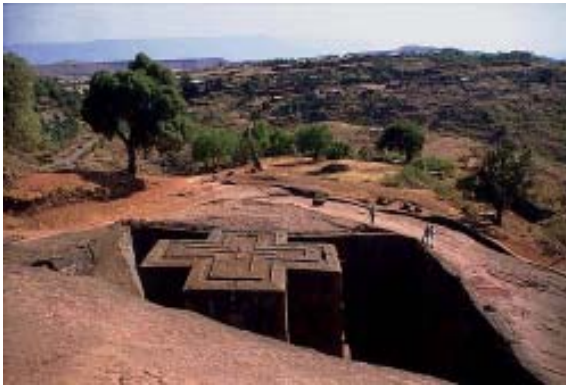


HIM Empress Zewditu



HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I

The Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela is named after the patron saint of Ethiopia. The Society is dedicated to the preservation of the 3000 year old history of the country, to maintain the ancient Orthodox Christian Church, and to uphold the history and the dignity of the Solomonic



Lalibela Church Built in 12th Century

Crown of Ethiopia. The Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela's support for Ethiopian unity, however, is not just an Orthodox Christian goal, but includes Ethiopian Muslims, Jews, and all Ethiopians of other faiths and cultures. Thus, membership in the Imperial So-

ciety is open to all people of other faiths.

The members are expected to support the Charities of the Society through annual membership dues and donations. The feast days of the Society include: St George's Day, April 23, Ethiopian Orthodox Easter, and the Birthday of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I, on July 23. The Society's current base of operation is in the Washington, DC area where the Ethiopian Crown Council is based in exile. It is planned, however, to open chapters in Addis Ababa and other cities around the world.

Your Imperial Highness, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, HIM Haile Selassie I, whom we are gathered here to commemorate, was a great pioneer who had moved Ethiopia from the feudal age to the 20th Century, by granting a modern Constitution by which his people are to be governed; by promoting education, and modern health care so that they may benefit from advancements in the world; by establishing a central judicial system that is removed from political interference; by instituting a modern banking system and centralized taxation to bring them up to world standard; and by establishing the Ethiopian Telecommunication Authority and Ethiopian Airlines to give his people exposure to the modern world.

Above all, we are proud to honor him for abolishing slavery in Ethiopia; for the role that he played in defending and securing Ethiopia's independence;



*HIM Emperor Haile Selassie
Addressing The League of Nations*



*The Mosque in Harar built
in the 16th century*

for his magnanimity in giving immediate amnesty to the remnant of the Fascist Army; for his distinguished advocacy in standing up for collective security at the League of Nations; for his steadfastness in giving support and encouragement to Leaders of African Liberation Movements, such as Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, and Nelson Mandela; for his leadership in establishing the Organization of African Unity, which even today remains as the African Union with its Headquarters still in Addis Ababa; and also for his remarkable contribution as a mediator in conflict resolution in Africa.

Despite the 1974 Marxist Leninist Communist Government's attempt to humiliate the Emperor, and the unjustified echo of their slander by the international press, history has proved that Emperor Haile Selassie was, indeed, a great man who had left his undeniable mark on his country, as well as on Africa, the Caribbean, and on the rest of the world. Thus, we are gathered here today to celebrate his achievements and to find ways and means by which to carry forward his legacy.

The last Emperor of Ethiopia, my late uncle HIM Ameha Selassie I, was recovering from a stroke when the Imperial mantle was passed on to him while he was in exile. Even so, he spear-headed the effort to coordinate Ethiopians inside and outside the country, to restore a Constitutional Monarchy, and to bring peace and stability to his country. His Majesty reestablished the Crown Council of Ethiopia, in exile, to advise him in his work. One of the outcomes of this was the appointment of young members of the Imperial Family to key posts in 1993. While his grandson - my cousin Prince Bekere Fikre Selassie, who is here with us today - was appointed as His Majesty's Enderase (Viceroy), I was assigned the post of the Chairman of the Crown Council.



*HIM Haile Selassie I and President
Nkrumah*

Other members of the family were also appointed to key posts.

Since my appointment in 1993, the Crown Council has kept on the International Agenda, the current problems of the Ethiopian people, the history and culture of our ancient country, as well as that of our heritage as one of the oldest Monarchies in the world. This was done by establishing a website to keep in touch with the public at large; by presenting papers at various forums; by participating in numerous Conferences; by testifying at



HIM Emperor Ameha Selassie

the United States Congress and Senate regarding the deteriorating situation in Ethiopia; by briefing numerous world leaders during their visits to the USA; by broadcasting on the BBC, Washington National Public Radio and on a number of radios stations in the Caribbean; and by responding to TV, newspaper and magazine interviews in the USA, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean.

Thus, we have contributed to the rehabilitation of the name of my distinguished grandfather Emperor Haile Selassie I, and we have also kept the Imperial Family engaged in Ethiopian affairs, even in the diaspora.

As a result, we had secured 24 scholarships for Ethiopian students from the Pacem In Terris Institute of La Roche College, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Fourteen of the students have now obtained their BA Degrees and a number of them have secured scholarships for graduate studies. The other sizable assistance obtained through the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children is from a Royal Family in Europe, which has, as a first step, donated funds for expansion of a Hospital in Sodo, Wolayta, in southern Ethiopia. The project is now completed.

In addition, a number of organizations have expressed interest in giving support to selected programmes in Ethiopia through our Foundation. For example, some of my old school friends and military officials in the UK have expressed interest to support the Old Ethiopian Patriots Association. The Prester John Luso-Ethiopian Friendship Association of Por-



HIM Emperor Haile Selassie and His Court Celebrate Ethiopian New Year at the Grand Palace

tugal, which was formed in August 2003, the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary and one Royal Family in Europe have all expressed interest in supporting development programmes in Ethiopia through us.

At the same time, numerous organizations in Ethiopia have asked me to find support for their respective programmes. Some of the requests that relate to the objectives of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela are:



The Holy Trinity Cathedral in Addis Ababa

- First, support for the repair of Holy Trinity Cathedral in Addis Ababa, which is the burial place for the Imperial family, high ranking Church leaders, and prominent patriots; for constructing and equipping a Museum attached to the Cathedral to house church relics; and for equipping the Clinic for the poor that is operated by the Cathedral.
- Second, repair of two churches of historical importance, in Showa and Wello Provinces, that were originally built by my respective great grandfathers King Sahle Selassie of Shewa and King Michael of Wello.
- Third, for construction and equipment of a Museum on the former Imperial Jubilee Place grounds to preserve the Imperial Heritage, and also to support a few regional museums.
- Fourth, the Society of Friends of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, chaired by the world renowned Professor Richard Pankhurst,

has requested me to raise funds to help expand the facilities of the Center of Ethiopian Studies at the University of Addis Ababa, so that it may collect and preserve new material scattered throughout the world.



A beautiful example of Ethiopian Orthodox art that needs to be preserved

The other requests are more in line with the objectives of the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children. During my discussions in Addis Ababa in April 2003, I was made aware of the Government's initiative to revive youth and women related

Non-Governmental Organizations, such as the Boys Scout, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association - associations that had been formerly replicated in Ethiopia by members of my family, to promote character building and to provide vocational training for Ethiopian youth. Thus, these organizations would need support. Assistance has also been requested to ensure the continuation of the work of Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa, which provides medical treatment for women who have been injured as the result of medically unattended child delivery.

Regrettably, both the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela and the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children do not have the human and financial resources to follow up on assistance with ongoing projects, let alone coordinate the submission of additional requests to Donors. Therefore, due to lack of a well established office and administrative machinery, we are regrettably losing a great deal of opportunity to assist our country.

The achievements to date have been attained with the help of volunteers. However, as security considerations had limited what could be shared with each volunteer, it has not been possible to maximize the benefit of their experience. If the Foundation is to realize its full potential, it is clear that it needs to have a well established office and full time staff that are accountable. The fact that we have been operating from the USA without having an established office in Ethiopia had, no doubt, limited our credibility before donors. I am now glad to report to you that the Foundation was registered in Addis Ababa on May 12th, 2004.

The registration of the Foundation in Addis Ababa is the first step of my plan to return home to participate in the development of my country. This is an outcome of the major decision that was made by the Crown Council, after extensive consultation during the period 2003 and 2004, to shift the role of the Crown from the realm of politics to that which will support development and humanitarian programmes. I have further been encouraged by the fact that the Government of Ethiopia has now realized that the input of all Ethiopians, including that of the Imperial Family, is needed if the development of Ethiopia is to forge ahead.

Furthermore, the warm reception that I had received from the Ethiopian public when I visited Addis Ababa in April to June 2003, and the cordial diplomatic reception extended to me by all foreign Ambassadors that I had met there, convinced me that the Ethiopian Imperial Family still has an important non-political role to play in Ethiopian affairs. As many qualified Ethiopian professionals with extensive experience in the international arena, have also begun to return home, it is my strong belief that we can all pull together our human resources to make a remarkable difference in the development of our country. In addition, through my work with the Ethiopian community in the diaspora, I will encourage young well qualified Ethiopians to participate in the improvement of the social and economic situation of our country.

Your Imperial Highness, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As stated earlier, the role foreseen for the Society of St George of Lalibela is that of a group who will help to preserve Ethiopia's ancient heritage. In this day and age of religious intolerance, it is intended that the Society will also provide a platform to advocate the preservation of Ethiopia's long established tradition of coexistence of people of various religious and ethnic backgrounds, while at the same time being at the forefront to safeguard and preserve one of the oldest Christian cultures in the world. The Foundation's role will be that of a Funding Agency for Development and Humanitarian Projects. It will utilize the expertise of existing organizations to implement the projects that it supports. The Foundation will also need to have its own expertise to enable it to monitor and evaluate the projects.



An Ancient Icon of St. Mary and the Savior that needs restoration

As you all know, the problems faced by Ethiopia are overwhelming. Population explosion, desertification, periodic famine, HIV/AIDS and high level of unemployment are taking their toll. However, aware of our lim-

ited capacity, we will have to be very selective in the Projects we support. This also requires the employment of well qualified and experienced social development professionals to help both the Society and the Foundation.

Finally, I would like you to note that redirecting the Crown Council's area of focus from political to development and humanitarian programmes has proved to be a more realistic decision, as it has already resulted in opening new opportunities for cooperation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and with the Ethiopian refugee community in the USA. It is clear that, in galvanizing our community's support for development and humanitarian programmes, we will gain more ground in improving the social and economic situation of our country. However, much, much more than what the Ethiopian community in the Diaspora can provide is needed to make even a dent on Ethiopia's problems.

Therefore, the projects for which we are seeking assistance through the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela are for the preservation of Ethiopia's ancient history, culture, and religion, which we trust are also of



Great Britain returned Ethiopian church treasures

great interest to the rest of the world. The specific projects to be supported have been mentioned before. In addition, as we plan to seek the support of all leaders of the Christian Faith to jointly launch a

worldwide appeal to request the return of Ethiopia's religious and cultural artifacts that had been taken out of the country during the Communist regime, we would also appreciate most sincerely the support of each member of the Society in this major endeavor.

Through the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children we are seeking support for social sector development projects, such as Health Care, Water Supply, Education, and Vocational Training. Your support to obtain more scholarships for Ethiopian students or better still, to strengthen the Universities in Ethiopia to reach thousands more students will be most beneficial.

Since the work of both the Society and the Foundation cannot be achieved without a well staffed and a well equipped office, your assistance to help us establish an office in Addis Ababa will be invaluable. Furthermore, as Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world and yet receives the least development aid, I kindly request you all to use whatever

leverage you have to influence the US Government to provide more funds for development projects in Ethiopia, in addition to what is most generously being provided for emergency humanitarian projects.

In closing, I would like to extend my heart-felt thanks and most sincere gratitude to all friends of Ethiopia who have stood by us in our time of need. Thank you all very much, indeed, for your concern for Ethiopia that has brought you here today. My sincere appreciation and deep gratitude also go to all those who have facilitated and organized this meeting to give the Crown Council of Ethiopia the platform to put the case of our country before you.

Your Imperial Highness, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I call upon you all to join hands with us to help preserve one of the most fascinating and oldest cultures in the world. May God help us all to accomplish this noble task.

Thank you very much for your attention.



The Lalibela Cross that was stolen in 1997 has been returned to Bet Medhane Alem Church in Lalibela

II. THE PURPOSE AND GOALS

The Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela is a worldwide non-profit membership Society which works under the co-patronage of His Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle Selassie the grandson of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I, and the Emperor's great grandson HHH Prince Bekere Fikre Selassie. The Imperial Society is registered in the USA and nonprofit organization status has been requested.



St. George, the Patron Saint of Ethiopia

The overall goal of the Imperial Society is to preserve the history of all the people of Ethiopia, to maintain the country's ancient Orthodox Christian Church, and to uphold the history and dignity of the Crown.

Successive Monarchs of different lineage had been at the helm of Ethiopia for many centuries. Of these, the Solomonic dynasty, which descends from the union of King Solomon and Queen

Sheba (Makeda) of Sabez some 3,000 years ago, and as such, one of the oldest institutions in the world, has been the longest in line. The Solomonic Crown is also the oldest pillar of Judeo-Christian culture and ethics, and therefore a world treasure.



The visit of Queen of Sheba to King Solomon

Furthermore, since it represents the only non-colonized civilization in Africa, it is a source of inspiration to all pan-Africanists.

Ethiopia's history, its ancient Orthodox Christian Church, and its Monarchy have been closely interlinked for centuries. Thus, they are the heritage of all the people of Ethiopia. However, the support of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela for Ethiopian unity is not just an Orthodox Christian goal, but includes Ethiopian Muslim, Jews, and all Ethiopians of other faiths and cultures. Thus, membership in the Society is open to all Ethiopians and people of other faiths and culture throughout the world.

The short term objective of the Imperial Society is to raise funds to assist with the restoration of the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Addis Ababa, which is the burial place for the Imperial family, high ranking Orthodox Church Leaders, and prominent Patriots. The more long-term objective is to help the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and The Society of Friends of Ethiopia to collect, preserve, and display ancient historical and religious relics.



"THE NEGUS, THEODORE II"

The Imperial Society will also assist the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to continue to provide basic education, particularly in remote rural areas where there is no formal system of education.

III. THE STRUCTURE ~ MEMBERSHIP

The Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela has been incorporated in the United States as a non-profit organization and has applied for Tax Exempt status. The Society has a central Governing Council under the joint patronage of HHH Prince Ermias Sahle Selassie and Prince Bekere Fikre Selassie.

As the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela is a new Society that is still growing, one of the primary responsibilities of Members is to help explain the goals and objectives of the Society to other like-minded individuals. They are also encouraged to establish local Chapters of the Society and to recruit additional Members.

All the branches of the Society in the USA and in other countries will work under the guidance of the central organization. They will, however, be registered separately in their home state and/or country for tax-exempt charitable status. HHH Prince Ermias Sahle Selassie and HHH Prince Bekere Fikre Selassie will be the Co-Patrons of all Local Chapters of the Association worldwide. However, Local Chapters may appoint Vice-Patrons, with the approval of the two Co-Patrons of the Society.

In order to promote interest in Ethiopian culture and to strengthen and expand support for the Society's work, all members and Local Chapters are encouraged to meet on a regular basis to review how the cultural preservation work of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela is progressing and to suggest how best these could be improved. The Members are also expected to provide support for the administration of the Society and for identifying new projects to be supported.

In addition, the Members will provide assistance to establish a physical base of operation and to help employ staff to administer the office, to facilitate both the Cultural Preservation work of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela and the Development and Humanitarian Projects of the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children. The above are the two vehicles used by the Crown Council of Ethiopia to transmit aid from the world to Ethiopia. Furthermore, the Members will also provide support to promote public relations and to help the Chairman of the Crown Council to make and sustain important contacts throughout the world.

The Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela will hold annual black tie dinners which will be chaired by one of the two Patrons of the Society. The Members from all Local Chapters will be invited to these events, and are expected to wear their formal attire, decorations, and Imperial Orders.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY



From left to right, Melake Selam Haddis Woldeyesus, Colonel Michael Donnelly, QGM, HHH Prince Bekere Fikere Selassie, H.E Ambassador Weston Adams, Hon. Mussie Hailu, HHH Prince Ermias Sable Selassie and Mr. Michael Murphy

IV. LAUNCHING OF THE IMPERIAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE OF LALIBELA: A MAJOR SUCCESS

One hundred distinguished guests participated in the Launching Ceremony of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela and the Commemoration of the 112th Birth of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I, which was held at Charleston, South Carolina, on July 24th 2004.



L-r: HHH Prince Bekere, The Hon. Amb. Weston Adams, Dr. Elizabeth Adams, HHH Prince Ermias

Former Ambassadors, retired US Army and Air Force Generals, Church leaders, industrialists, university professors, medical doctors, and renowned artists, some of whom came from as far away as California, attended the ceremony. Ethiopian professionals participated with their families dressed

in Ethiopian traditional dress, which added meaning and festivity to the occasion.

Messages of welcome were received from the Mayor of Charleston

Joseph P. Riley, Jr., and from Governor Mark Sanford of South Carolina. Furthermore, His Holiness Pope John II; King Juan Carlos of Spain; The Duke of Braganza of Portugal; H.E Dr. Asfa Wossen Asrate Kassa, Chairman of the Executive Board of Orbis Aethiopicus in Germany; and Mr. Joseph Brumit, former Manager of Ethiopian Airlines during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, all sent messages of “Congratulations.” Prince Ermias announced that H.E. Lij Estifanos Mengesha Seyoum, the great grandson of Emperor Haile Selassie, who had planned to attend the ceremony but was unable to do, so, had expressed his regret to him over the telephone. He added that Lij Estifanos said that he is supportive of the Mission of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela.

In his Welcoming Address, Prince Bekere Fikre Selassie expressed his heartfelt thanks to all those who had helped the Crown Council to come this far and also give it hope to be worthy to meet the challenge of the responsibility entrusted to it. Prince Bekere said “As each of us is called upon to give back what he has received from his country, the educated man possesses precious assets of infinite value both to himself and to his nation, which he must also share with humanity.”

The morning presentation on “The Current Situation of Ethiopia” by Melake Selam Haddis Woldeyesus and the afternoon session on “The Case of Ethiopia” by The Honorable Mussie Hailu were both well attended. The Video Presentations and the Question and Answer Sessions made the meeting more participatory. Many of the participants expressed interest to join the Imperial Society and also promised to recruit other members. Some participants said that they will, in the future, visit Ethiopia to see the historical and religious sites.

The major message of Melake Selam Haddis’s presentation was that “During the time of Emperor Haile Selassie, religion was accepted



*L-r: The Hon. Carl Norton,
Mrs. Catherine Peacock, Maj. Gen. Oliver L. Peacock*

to be a private matter and the whole territory of the country was believed to belong to all Ethiopians. It is a great pity that our country is now regressing to separatism when the whole world is increasingly becoming one.” He added “I most sincerely believe that if the Ethiopian people are widely made aware of the efforts made to dismantle their traditional form of peaceful coexistence, they will not choose turmoil over peace.” Furthermore, he said “major collective action needs to be taken soon by all Ethio-



l-r: HHH Prince Bekere, Lt. Col. Stanley Meuser, SCMD, Mrs. Meuser, HHH Prince Ermias

Ethiopian way of life. He said that “History is the base from which we learn our previous mistakes, and on which we build our future plans. Our religion is the root and the core of our being and enables us to remain steadfast against all diversity, as well as propels us to achieve the highest goals in life. The system of Government under the Monarchy is Ethiopia’s heritage that can still be applied to serve the people, even without being part of the Government of the day.”

The major message of the Hon. Mussie Hailu’s presentation was the importance of national unity and effective leadership at all levels. He said that Ethiopia “Throughout its history, has remained the focus of outside invaders. Particularly since the 16th century, it has repulsed time and time again the aspirations of expansionists and colonial powers. Its various nations, nationalities, and people have linked together for centuries, intermingling and interacting with each other. For the last century they have stood together during peace and adversity as one country. Through this unity, heroism, and sacrifice, Ethiopia has remained the only non-colonized state in Africa, becoming the beacon of independence and freedom for Africa and colonized peoples around the world.”



l-r: HHH Prince Bekere, Dr. & Mrs. Kassamo Dayemo and family, HHH Prince Ermias

Speaking about leadership, Hon Mussie Hailu said that “to alleviate poverty requires committed leadership at all levels of society, from the village to district, state to national and international communities.” With reference to the need to eradicate poverty he added that “we should bear in mind that people in poverty must be empowered through organization and participation in planning and in implementation of the issues

pians, as none of us whether Christian, Muslim, and Jewish or other, will be able to escape the adverse impact that will result if things fall apart.”

In concluding Melake Selam Haddis added that Ethiopian history, its ancient Orthodox Church and the Monarchy still have relevance to the

that affect them, thus ensuring they become partners in the overall development process.”

In his Keynote Address which was the major highlight of the event, Prince Ermias stated that the objective of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela is to preserve the ancient history of Ethiopia, its peoples deep rooted Orthodox Christian faith and also the country’s heritage of its administration under the Monarchy.” He said that “history has proved that HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I was, indeed, a great man who has left his undeniable mark on his country, Africa, the Caribbean and on the whole world.” He added that since his appointment as President of the Crown Council in 1993, “we have contributed to rehabilitate the name of my distinguished grandfather Emperor Haile Selassie I, and we have also kept the Imperial Family engaged in Ethiopian affairs, even in the diaspora.”

Furthermore, Prince Ermias pointed out that “due to lack of a well established office and administrative machinery, we are regrettably losing a great deal of opportunity to assist our country.” Thus, he emphasized the need to establish a well staffed office in Addis Ababa to help the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela and the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children to direct aid from the world for the Cultural Preservation, Development and Humanitarian Projects in Ethiopia. The Prince also announced his plan to request all Heads of all Christian Churches to launch a Joint Worldwide Appeal for the return of all religious and cultural artifacts that had been taken out of Ethiopia during the Communist regime. He kindly requested all the participants to assist in this major undertaking.



l-r: HHH Prince Bekere, Dr. and Mrs. Daniel K. Gamé, HHH Prince Ermias



l-r: HHH Prince Bekere, Dr. and Mrs. Solomon Tadesse & family, HHH Prince Ermias

The Meeting of the Society will be an annual event that will be held on HIM Haile Selassie’s birth date on July 23rd of each year. The Annual Meeting in July 2005 will be held in Washington, DC. The Members of the Society are requested to organize subsequent meetings in their respective regions.

V. MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CEREMONY

CROWN COUNCIL CHANGES DIRECTION

In his Keynote Address, HH Prince Ermias Sahle Selassie, President of the Crown Council, made the first public announcement that the Crown Council has decided to change its direction from the realm of politics to focus on Cultural Preservation, Development and Humanitarian Programmes.

Prince Ermias said that the decision was reached by the Crown Council after extensive discussion during 2003 and 2004. He added that it had proved to be a wise decision, as it has already opened the door for closer cooperation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Community in the USA. Furthermore, it will enable the Crown Council to promote that additional assistance be given for Cultural Preservation, and Development Programmes in Ethiopia.



HH Prince Ermias Sahle Selassie



The Gonder Castle, built in the 17th Century

THE MEMBERS OF THE LUSO-ETHIOPIAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION, BECOME MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE OF LALIBELA

Both Prince Bekere and Prince Ermias were delighted to receive the request from the Luso-Ethiopian Friendship Association in Portugal for all 100 members of the Association to also become members of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela.

The Portuguese Association was formed during the visit of HH Prince Ermias Sahle Selassie to Portugal, in August 2003. Since then, close ties have been established with the Duke of Braganza and members of the Luso Ethiopian Friendship Association.

Prince Ermias said that “This major step by members of the Portuguese Association to become the first members of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela bears witness to the long existing friendship between the peoples of Portugal and Ethiopia. It also establishes the new Luso Ethiopian Friendship Association on solid grounds.”

CONTRIBUTIONS OF MELAKE SELAM HADDIS WOLDEYESUS & HONORABLE MUSSIE HAILU RECOGNIZED

The Crown Council of Ethiopia awarded Melake Selam Haddis Woldeyesus the Medal of The Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela.

Melake Selam Haddis was recognized for his contribution to uphold and promote the importance of Ethiopia's ancient history, the people's deep rooted Orthodox Christian faith, and the country's historic heritage under the



l-r: HIH Prince Ermias, Honorable Mussie Hailu, Melake Selam Haddis Woldeyesus, HIH Prince Bekere

Monarchy, all of which have been closely interlinked for many centuries.

The Honorable Mussie Hailu was given both the Medal of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela and the first Annual Award for his outstanding contribution to support Development and Humanitarian Programmes, as well as for his tireless effort to promote peaceful coexistence at the national, regional and international levels.

All Ethiopians should be proud of individuals of such integrity and dedication.



Humanitarian of the Year Award for 2004 given to Hon. Mussie Hailu

VI. MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATION RECEIVED

Messages of Congratulation were received from:

- The Honorable Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Mayor of Charleston
- The Honorable Mark Sanford, Governor of South Carolina
- His Holiness Pope John Paul II
- His Majesty King Juan Carlos of Spain
- His Royal Highness Dom Duarte, Duke of Braganza, Head of the Royal House of Portugal
- HE Dr. Asfa Wossen Asrate Kassa, Chairman of the Executive Board of Orbis Aethiopicus in Germany
- HE Mr. Joseph Brumit, former Manager of Ethiopian Airlines during the reign of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I
- HE Lij Estifanos Mengesha Seyoum, great grandson of Emperor Haile Selassie, sent a message of regret for his inability to attend and said that he is supportive of the Mission of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela.

VII. THE OPENING ADDRESS

By HHH Prince Bekere Fikere Selassie

Your Imperial Highness Prince Ermias, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure, honor and pride that I welcome you all here today to the Launching Ceremony of The Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela and the Commemoration of the Birth of my great grandfather, HIM Haile Selassie I.

Since the re-organization of the Ethiopian Crown Council in 1993, and the appointment of young members of the family to serve on the Council, we have struggled, as much as each of our personal life will allow, to meet our obligation to our countrymen and also to keep the torch of the Imperial family burning, so as to ensure our continued service to the Ethiopian people. In our effort to measure up to the task entrusted to us, the constraints we faced have been many, but some undeniable achievements have been made, and of these, you will hear more fully during the course of the day.



Virgin Mary with the Savior

At this point, it is my great honor to express our most sincere thanks to each and everyone of you who have helped us to come this far and who continue to give us hope to be worthy to meet the challenge of the responsibilities entrusted to us. We most sincerely appreciate your support.

Today, we have a full schedule ahead of us. Melake Selam Haddis Woldeyesus, who is the first speaker of the day, is a member of the Haile Selassie I Memorial Foundation – the group that successfully organized the funeral of HIM Haile Selassie I in November, 2000. Since the Emperor’s funeral, The Memorial Foundation has given 100 Scholarships to needy Ethiopian students, who could not have otherwise been able

to study at Ethiopian Universities.

Melake Selam Haddis also has very close personal ties with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In this capacity, he has served as Church Administrator and assisted with the reconstruction of ancient churches. He has also given support to the Clergy so that they may continue to provide valuable religious service and education to the community. Today, however, Melake Selam Haddis will be speaking in his personal capacity.

The topic of his presentation is “The Situation of Ethiopia”, a subject



*The Inside View of the Church Dome of the Monastery,
St. M of St. Mary Covenant of Mercy, Jerusalem*

with which he is very familiar. Melake Selam Haddis lives in Ethiopia and is fully engaged in the effort to preserve Ethiopian history, culture and religion. As one of the officials that had served under HIM Emperor Haile Selassie, Melake Selam Haddis also continues to bear witness to the contribution made by Emperor Haile Selassie for the devel-

opment of Ethiopia. His lecture will be followed by a video presentation of Ethiopia and a question and answer session.

The speaker at the afternoon meeting will be The Honorable Mussie Hailu, a dynamic young man who had obtained both his BA and Master Degree from American Universities. He has been deeply involved in development and humanitarian work both at the national and international levels. He is an ardent supporter of the efforts of the Haile Selassie Fund for Ethiopian Children, the Foundation which is the other vehicle of the Ethiopian Crown Council, to transmit assistance from the world to individuals, associations and organizations in Ethiopia.

The topic of The Hon. Mussie Hailu's presentation is "The Case of Ethiopia." As the Hon. Mussie also lives and works in Ethiopia in the development and humanitarian fields, he is very familiar with the topic of his presentation. We are, indeed, very fortunate to have both Melake Selam Haddis Woldeyesus and the Hon. Mussie Hailu with us today. I have no doubt that their presentations will leave with you some truths about Ethiopia that you will remember for a long time to come.

HHH Prince Ermias Sahle Selassie, the Chairman of the Crown Council of Ethiopia who will give the Keynote Address at the dinner tonight, needs no introduction, as he is well known to most of you. Prince Ermias has been the moving force that has carried forward the responsibilities entrusted to him by my late grandfather, his uncle, HIM Ameha Selassie Haile Selassie. Credits for



*The Monastery of St. Mary Covenant of
Mercy, Jerusalem*

the achievements of the Crown Council to date are due to Prince Ermias's leadership of the Council and to the efforts and tenacity of all members of the Council, who have carried out their responsibilities even at the expense of their personal and professional life.

Your Imperial Highness, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us all take pride and joy in performing the tasks and duties that had been assigned to us. The reward for the job well done is not the recognition of others nor public praise. Neither is it to be measured solely by the monetary return earned in the performance of our duty. The satisfaction comes in the knowledge that we have accomplished our work to the best of our ability. As each of us is called upon to give back what he has received from his country, the educated man possesses precious assets of infinite value both to himself and his nation which he must also share with humanity.

Therefore, let us all partake in the noble goals and objectives of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela which we are here to launch today. Let us also remember with appreciation the contribution of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I. Furthermore, we must be reassured in the knowledge that the paths that we pave today will be the stepping-stones that will guide future generations to cement the friendship between Ethiopia and the United States for a long time to come.

May God help us all in our endeavor.

Thank you for your attention.

VIII. THE CURRENT SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA

Presented by Melake Selam Haddis Woldeyesus

Your Imperial Highnesses, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, I would like to thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to share with you my personal concerns about the plight of my beloved country.

Ethiopia, the land of ancient history, the cradle of Christianity, the beacon of African independence, the model of coexistence of all major faiths and numerous ethnic groups, has now become one of the poorest and least developed nations on earth.



Melake Selam Haddis Woldeyesus (in traditional outfit) giving his address shown with Hon. Mussie Hailu

Our people's effort to safeguard and preserve the country's independence had for centuries isolated Ethiopia from the rest of the world. The periodic struggles to establish national unity had taken their toll. Seventeen years under the Marxist Leninist Communist regime had further set the country's development back at least fifty years.

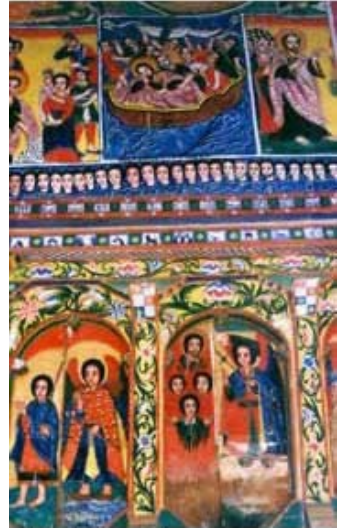
The lack of major internationally marketable resources such as oil, uranium, and precious stones had also limited our ability to accelerate the country's development, so that we may catch-up with the rest of the world. In addition, internal ideological and ethnic struggles have further led to massive brain-drain, which has resulted in less productivity, economic stagnation, and more poverty.

Thus, the current problems of Ethiopia are many, vast, and deep rooted. Therefore a presentation of the problems in one hour will not do it justice. Besides, the focus of our attention, at the launching of the Imperial Society of St. George of Lalibela, should be on how the factors mentioned earlier, have affected the areas that are of deep concern to the Society. These are: the status of Ethiopia's historic and cultural heritage, the current situation of its ancient Orthodox Christian Church, and the plight of its traditional form of Government under the Monarchy, which have all been closely interlinked for many centuries. Therefore, I will focus on these.

Your Imperial Highnesses, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although the development of Ethiopia was far behind that of the western world, our recognition of our historical stature, our pride in having maintained our independence, our deep religious faith and our people's unity under the Monarchy had enabled social development in Ethiopia to forge ahead, during the first seventy years of the 20th Century. However, it began to stagnate when the Communists took over the Government in 1974.

The Marxist Leninist Government that came to power in 1974 underrated Ethiopia's historic heritage, it discarded the long established Christian Faith, and disbanded the Monarchy, all of which it labeled as the major source of the country's problems. This led the Ethiopian youth to abandon our nation's well-established norms and traditional family values of coexistence, without replacing them with viable new ones. Thus, even now, thirteen years after the end of Communist rule, our youth are perplexed as they have been left with no measuring rod by which to gauge acceptable



A beautifully painted wall mural



*The Statue of His Grace
Abune Petros the Martyr*

standards of behavior. They also find it difficult to distinguish the historical and cultural factors in which we should all continue to take pride.

I am, however, glad to say that, despite Marxist Leninist indoctrination and suppression for seventeen years, the heart of the Ethiopian people had remained steadfast in our Christian faith, and this had given us solace to weather the storm created by the Communist regime. However, as the land from which the Orthodox Churches obtained its financial resources to enable it to propagate its religious teaching was nationalized, the work of the Church was considerably undermined.

Prior to the Communist take over in 1974, it was estimated that there were more Christians in Ethiopia than Muslims. In recent years, however, some extremist religious groups have poured in funds for expansion of the Muslim faith in Ethiopia. Now, everywhere in the country where there is even no Muslim, a Mosque is built near each Church, and the first thing that one sees upon entering each major regional town, is a Mosque.

People of Muslim faith everywhere still profess that they will continue to honor Prophet Mohammed's order, never to harm Ethiopia - a country whose King had given Mohammed's followers a place of refuge when they were stranded. However, according to the Muslim tradition, each man marries four wives, while the Christian only marries one. Thus, each year, more Muslim than Christian children are born in Ethiopia as was the case in prior years.

Furthermore, due to the high rate of unemployment in the country, Christian youth are accepting any invitation to go to Arab countries where low-level domestic work is readily available. Thus, it is clear that the unfavorable economic situation and the high rate of unemployment have made religion a bargaining chip by which to provide food on the table of many poor households.

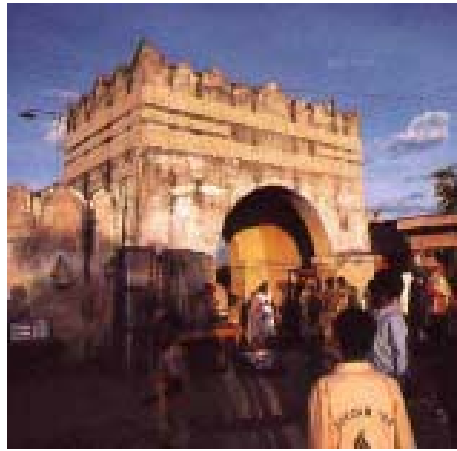
My fear is that, unless something is done urgently, there may be a serious problem between those of Christian and Muslim faith who have



*His Holiness Abune Basilius, First
Patriarch of Ethiopia*

been living together in harmony for centuries. I will give you one example of the reality on the ground that has led me to have major concern.

In the year 2000, the Muslim population who had lived peacefully with the Christians within the walls of Harar town attacked the Church of The Savior, which is located within the walls. Stones were thrown and bullets were exchanged. This resulted in the death of some Christians, Muslims, and also



The Harar wall and City Gate built in the 16th century

some government military personnel. At this time, Christians who belonged to other denominations, such as Protestant and Catholic Churches, stood by their brethren of Orthodox Christian faith, and they all spent the night outside the Church to protect it.

Incidents of this nature are of recent development in Ethiopia, where peaceful coexistence had been the norm for many centuries. If both the Christian and Muslim Ethiopians do not wake up to what is happening around them to dismantle their age old norm of peaceful coexistence, these divisive incidents will continue to increase and lead to a major danger that will result in dividing the



Emperor Yohannes's Palace in Mekele

people on religious lines.

Furthermore, a growing problem is being experienced since the establishment of Federal States on ethnic boundaries. As the uneducated rural population feels that other

ethnic groups should not live and work in their region, this is also eroding national unity. During the time of Emperor Haile Selassie, religion was accepted to be a private matter and the whole territory of the country was believed to belong to all Ethiopians. It is a great pity that our country is now regressing to separatism when the whole world is increasingly becoming one.



Ancient Painting of St. Mary and Christ

Wherever the ethnic identity of the people is the same but their religious beliefs are different, there are further subdivisions within each ethnic group which may, if not checked on time, turn the country into turmoil. I most sincerely believe that if the Ethiopian people are widely made aware of the efforts made to dismantle their traditional form of peaceful coexistence, they will not choose turmoil over peace.

During the period of the Communist rule and thereafter, over 300,000 Ethiopians of Jewish faith had immigrated to Israel. Muslims, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, Pentecostals, etc. all receive financial and technical assistance from people that belong to their respective religion outside the country. However, those of the Orthodox Christian faith, have had very limited

support. This also has more dangerous implication.

When international donors select projects to support, they usually choose those that are in the most accessible area and those that have the technical capacity to plan and implement the projects. Therefore, the areas and the projects that continue to be selected are those that had previously benefited from financial and technical support from outside the country. Thus, those of Orthodox Christian faith, who had been intentionally neglected under the Communist regime, and who still receive very limited assistance from outside Ethiopia, continue to be further neglected. There is, therefore, an urgent need to break this cycle of neglect.

All this is happening at a time when the Government under the Monarchy, which was one of the major uniting factors of the people of Ethiopia, had been discarded as irrelevant. Therefore, one dreads to speculate how long Ethiopia's strong culture of tolerance and coexistence will carry on the people before the country disintegrates. Thus, major collective action need to be taken soon by all Ethiopians, as none of us, whether Christian, Muslim, Jewish or other; will be able to escape the adverse impact that will result if things begin to fall apart.

Until 1974, Ethiopia had been ruled by successive Monarchs of different lineage, of which the Solomonic line had been a major one. The system of Government under the Monarchy was one that was accepted and respected by the people. Thus the Monarchy had for centuries united Ethiopia, preserved its history, upheld its Christian religion, and became the symbol of the people's dignity and honor that had spearheaded the modernization of the country.

Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, who was deposed by the Communist Government in 1974, was a wise and benevolent ruler. He ex-

panded education throughout the country and even gave his own palace to serve as the University of Addis Ababa. Social and Economic Development Programmes were accelerated during his reign. The Emperor's stature as a wise and experienced world leader, as well as the ancient Ethiopian history of peaceful coexistence, had given all Ethiopians recognition as dignified warriors, who will at anytime defend their nation, but not attack others.

As we commemorate HIM Emperor Haile Selassie's birthday today, The Haile Selassie Memorial Foundation in Addis Ababa, of which I am a member, will also be celebrating this occasion. This is one of the important functions of the Memorial Foundation each year. It gives us the opportunity to remind our nation as a whole, and to teach our youth in particular, about the contributions that were made by HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I, to develop our country.

Therefore, I am overjoyed to witness here today that his grandchildren are also instituting the commemoration of His Imperial Majesty's Birthday in the USA, on annual basis. We are all most indebted to those who are encouraging and facilitating this commemoration.

Your Imperial Highnesses,
Honorable Guests,

Even though the respect of our youth for our ancient history has been undermined, our Christian Orthodox faith has faced years of neglect, and our traditional form of Government under the Monarchy



HIM Emperor Yohannes and his heir Araya



HIM Emperor Menelik II



HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I

has been dismantled, I strongly believe that all these still have major relevance to our way of life.

History is the base from which we learn from our previous mistakes, and on which we build our future plans. Our religion is the root of our core being that maintains us steadfast to overcome all adversity and also helps to propel us to achieve higher goals. The system of Government under the Monarchy is Ethiopia's heritage that can still be used to serve the people, even without being part of the Government of the day.

Thus we need to encourage and support historical and cultural preservation, and to teach religious tolerance that does not undermine Ethiopia's own long established Christian Orthodox faith. Furthermore, the Crown Council's wise decision to focus on the country's development and well being should be strongly supported. This will open the door wide for the Crown Council to use its national and international prestige and to bring more financial contribution and technical expertise for the development of Ethiopia.

Your Imperial Highnesses and Honorable Guests,

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to share my deep personal concerns about my country with you and to leave some suggestions for your consideration.

May God bless our effort to promote peaceful coexistence in Ethiopia and worldwide. Thank you for your attention.

IX. THE CASE OF ETHIOPIA

Presented by the Honorable Mussie Hailu, Chairman of Haile Selassie Aid Ethiopia

Your Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie, Your Imperial Highness Prince Bekere Fikre-Selassie, distinguished guests, members of the Imperial Society of St George of Lalibela and friends of Ethiopia.



The Honorable Mussie Hailu Giving His Address

First of all, I would like to convey my greetings and best wishes on behalf of all Ethiopians in the name of our good Lord. It is indeed an honor, a pleasure and privilege for me to be here today with you on this historic assembly of the 1st annual meeting of the Imperial Society of St George of Lalibela, and the commemoration of the 112th anniversary of the birth of our beloved Emperor, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I.

No words can aptly describe what his Imperial Majesty did for his country, and

Africa as a whole. He is, and will remain, an icon in the hearts and minds of all Africans. One can learn from His Imperial Majesty, the spirit of tolerance, peace, love, wisdom, good leader-



A Prayer Book in Ge'ez

ship, and concern for his fellow man, and for nature. He is among those people whom we call the salt of the earth.

Homer, in his book *The Iliad*, wrote that Ethiopians are a blameless race with whom the gods have dined. The Italian historian Count Rossini in his book mentioned that Ethiopians are “people of never-failing goodwill, kindness, and exceedingly polite.” The English historian Dr. Richard Greenfield once said: “Ethiopians are a people of great patience that wait in the hope that betterment will come from day to day.”

I am here today with you to talk about a country which is one of the most ancient nation states, with a rich history and tradition that dates back 3000 years. A country that is mentioned more than 41 times in the Holy Bible, and with the exception of Israel, no other country is mentioned so much. “Ethiopia shall stretch her hands to God,” Psalm 68:31, is among the numerous references made about Ethiopia in the Bible. These quotations vividly portray the ancient origin of the country and the deep and abiding faith of the people in God.

Ethiopia is also one of the cradles of humankind. “Dunknesh” or “Lucy” is one of the earliest and most complete Hominid skeletons discovered through archaeological excavations and dates back 3.5 million years. So, you can imagine how challenging it will be for me to talk about such a country in a few minutes.



The Axum Obelisk built in 12th Century

Your Imperial Highnesses, honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen.

For the sake of our friends who don't know much about the country, allow me to give you some background on Ethiopian history. Ethiopia is located in the northeastern part of Africa, popularly known as the Horn. Ethiopia is bounded on the east by Djibouti and Somalia, on the north and northeast by Eritrea, on the south by Kenya, and on the west by the Sudan. Ethiopia is a country of great geographical diversity. High and rugged mountains, flat-topped plateaus called *ambas*, deep gorges, encased river valleys, and vast rolling plains. Its altitude ranges from the highest

peak of Ras Dashen which is 4,620 meters above sea level, to the Dalol Depression, which is about 150 meters below sea level.

A large part of the country comprises high plateaus and mountain ranges with precipitous edges, dissected by rushing streams that are the tributaries of the famous rivers like the Blue Nile, Tekeze, and Omo. As the country is located within the tropics, its physical conditions and variations in altitude have resulted in great diversity of terrain, climate, soil, flora, and fauna.

There are 3 principal climate groups in Ethiopia – a tropical rainy climate, a dry climate, and a temperate rainy climate. Ethiopia is a country endowed with a vast array of resources. It is a land of great rivers, some of which flow beyond its boundaries, to the arid and semi-arid regions of neighboring countries, with billions of cubic meters of water and rich soil. Its immense and untapped waters could be used for irrigation and to generate hydroelectric power. Ethiopia also possesses a vast potential for geothermal energy. Moreover Ethiopia has an agriculture-friendly climate and fertile soil.



Emperor Fasiladas' Palace in Gondar, built in the 17th Century

Agriculture, which was first practiced thousands of years ago, is the primary and most important occupation for over 80% of the population. Though the production is largely subsistence in character, agriculture remains the backbone of the national economy. It provides 45% of the gross domestic product, and about 90% of exports. Ethiopia also has the largest number of head of cattle in Africa.

Geological studies have proven that Ethiopia has a significant amount of base, rare, and precious metals. Gold is being explored from many sources and surveys have also proven the existence of a vein of gold deposits in several parts of the country. In addition, the country possesses vast deposits of construction materials, such as marble, limestone, and granite.

Ethiopia's geographical and historical factors have had a great influence on the distribution of its people and languages. The country is situated on the crossroads between the Middle East and Africa. Through its long history, Ethiopia has become a melting pot of diverse customs and cultures, most of which are extremely ancient. Ethiopia embraces a complex variety of nations, nationalities and people, as well as linguistic groups. Its peoples speak over 80 different languages, constituting 12 Semitic, 22 Kushden, 18 Omotuz, and 18 Nilo-Sarahan. Some of the principal monuments and historic sites of the country have already been registered by UNESCO as cultural heritage sites of humanity.

The 4th Century sacred historic building and obelisks of Axum, the 12th century rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, the 17th century houses of Gonder, and the 16th century Harrar wall, reflect periods of great influence, growth and prosperity. The ancient churches and monasteries on the islands of Lake Tana, as well as the ancient mosques of Harrar in the east, testify to the ingenuity and great civilization of Ethiopia.

The contributions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to the Ethiopian civilization are profound and numerous. In many ways, the Ethiopian church can be described as the fount and origin of Ethiopian civilization. It has given Ethiopia its alphabet, literature, language, art, and architecture. Apart from serving as a center of education, it has also imparted to the nation the art and mode of administration.

Ethiopia is known for her hospitalities. She has received the 9 saints who emigrated from the Middle East in the year 457 AD after the Council of Chaledon. She has also received, and treated well, those people of the early Islamic faith who, during the wars of the Harba, were exiled out of Arabia. Mohammed, in The Koran, has said: "Ethiopia is a country of peace. The Ethiopians are peaceful. Do not provoke Ethiopia."

Apart from spiritual services, the Ethiopian church is engaged in social affairs. From the beginning, the church has been used as an asylum for orphans and the poor. In every parish and monastery, there is a hall called the Gate of Peace. This is used as a dining hall for the priests and the needy. It is the tradition of the Ethiopian church faithful to give their offerings in



The entrance to the Holiest of Holies (Qidiste Qidusan) of a Church in Lake Tana

kind, especially as food and drink. Therefore anybody who is hungry can go to the Gate of Peace to receive a free meal. I think it is with this long history and tradition in mind that The Crown Council formed the Imperial Society of St George of Lalibela to compliment its other missions engaged in humanitarian service.

When we read the history of Ethiopia, it is also a country that cherishes its uninterrupted national integrity and independence. Throughout its history, it has remained the focus of outside invaders, lured by its attractive geopolitical position and natural resources. Particularly since the 16th century, it has repulsed time and time again the aspirations of expansionists and colonial powers.

Its various nations, nationalities, and people, have linked together for centuries, intermingling and interacting with each other. For the last century they have stood together during peace and adversity as one country. Through this unity, heroism, and sacrifice, Ethiopia has remained the only non-colonized state in Africa, becoming the beacon of independence and freedom for Africa, and colonized peoples around the world. Ethiopia has been playing an active role in Africa's efforts. It should be recalled that Ethiopia played the pioneering role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity, now known as the African Union.

In the sub-regional sphere, Ethiopia is playing an important role in the affairs of the common market for east and southern Africa. The capital city Addis Ababa has earned a reputation as the major diplomatic hub on the continent of Africa.

This decision made by African leaders, that Addis Ababa should continue to be the seat of the African Union, is both an honor and responsibility for all Ethiopian citizens. Ethiopia was one of the founding members of The United Nations, and continues to have a longstanding relationship with that entity.

The country's relationship with the United States and other countries is currently gaining momentum, and contributing substantially to the overall development endeavors of the country.

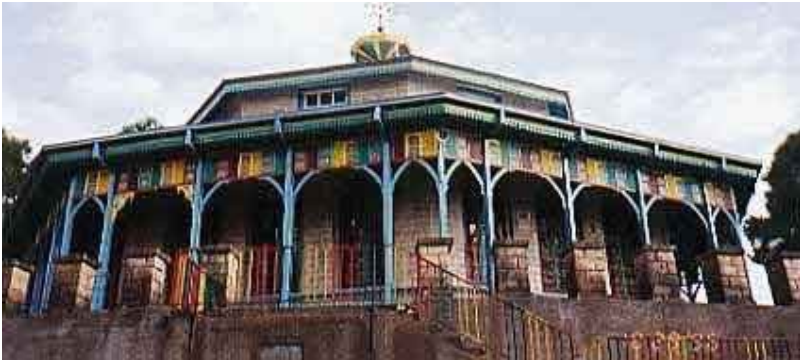
Your Imperial Highnesses, honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Now comes a question which puzzles many people – why can such a country so rich in cultural history, people, and natural resources, remain one of the poorest countries in the world? There are many answers to this question.

In the interest of time, I'll answer shortly. There are two main reasons: the first is man-made, that being the civil war, which the country has been suffering from for many years; the second is lack of good governance, lack of democracy, external involvement, and a high rate of unemployment.

The second question would be – what is the solution? To alleviate poverty, and bring about good development, requires a number of hu-

man issues to be addressed. These issues include leadership, political climate, status of women, illiteracy, skilled labor, appropriate technology, education, water access, land reform, transport, food production opportunities, etc.



St. Mary's Church at Entoto where HIM Emperor Menelik II was crowned

As leadership is crucial to every human achievement to alleviate poverty requires committed leadership at all levels of society, from village to district, state to national, and international communities. Our world needs leadership that can call for vision and commitment to influence people to take effective action.

When talking about the eradication of poverty, we should bear in mind that people in poverty must be empowered through organization and participation in the planning and implementation of the issues that affect them, thus ensuring they become partners in the overall development process.

We need to have a good look at the impact of globalization on poverty. Globalization and advances in technology create significant opportunities for people to connect, share and learn from each other. At the same time, corporate-driven globalization increases the inequity between and within countries, undermining local traditions and cultures, and escalates the disparity between rich and poor.

If we are about to build a better world for all, we need to make globalization work for the benefit of everyone. This can happen only if global corporations, international financial and trade institutions, and governments are subject to effective democratic control of the people. The role of nongovernmental organizations is paramount in the fight against poverty.

I think, with this in mind, Prince Ermias is focusing on his humanitarian work. Let me pause to thank very much HHH Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie, on behalf of all Ethiopians and people of good wishes, for his outstanding contribution to the humanitarian services, restoring the history

of his country, peace, international cooperation, and friendship.

His service rises above national boundaries. He is not only the Prince of Ethiopia, but the Prince of Africa. He consistently talks on behalf of Africa to different international meetings and forums.



Prince Ermias has played a pivotal role to bring the peoples of Africa closer to the peoples of the world. He has also campaigned tirelessly to make sure those resolutions and declarations passed by international meetings are in the interest of ordinary Africans. He strongly believes that resolutions and declarations should be supported by concrete action.

His extensive travels in different parts of the world, addressing issues on these matters, have made a tremendous difference. Prince Ermias strongly believes that attention should be given to children, youth, and the elderly, and as a philanthropist, he has done much on the humanitarian front.

Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income, productive resources insufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger and malnutrition, limited or lack of access to education, increased mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, and unsafe environments. Thus, education and health, in every sense, are the foundation for development in Ethiopia, and they are needed to provide a foundation for the groundwork on which much of our social and economic well-being is to be built. In view that in Ethiopia a vast majority of the population of 67 million are under the age of 25, it is unfortunate that the aspirations of most of these young people are crushed at an early age by a combination of poverty and lack of higher educational opportunities. The failure to provide young men and women with opportunities to find meaningful work and higher education, not only is a waste of human potential, but leads to social alienation, drugs, crime, and violence. With these facts in mind, Prince Ermias has registered a branch of his Foundation in Ethiopia in order to help to alleviate these problems.



We also thank him for maintaining the historic dignity of the country, and the continuation of the Crown in service to the Ethiopian people. When Prince Ermias addressed Florida International University, he said: “We need to declare war against the unholy trinity of poverty, disease, and illiteracy.” It is quite clear to me that he is bringing to our attention and to

the attention of world leaders, that nations need to invest their vast wealth, which is used to buy weapons, to be diverted to the war against poverty. He was telling us that we must beat swords into plowshares, following the right direction of life, one which leads us from darkness to light, from despair to hope, from killing to coexistence, from hate to love, from war to peace, and from competition to cooperation.

As it is stated in the preamble of UNESCO: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defenses must be constructed.” Both peace and violence are the products of the human mind, and it is from the human mind that a sense of responsibility to act and think in a peaceful manner will develop.



Ethiopian Orthodox Priest with an Ancient Bible and Crown of Ethiopian Kings at St. Mary of Zion, Axum

Your Imperial Highnesses, honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen.

We all need to plant a seed of peace and harmony in our minds. We need to focus and give due attention to the younger generation. We need to teach them at the grade school level character and peace-building education. Let's unleash the spirit of our younger generation in the right direction, for they are our future.

People expect schools not only to teach children to become smart, but also to teach them to become good citizens and leaders. Each of us has a special role to play throughout our daily lives. Differences of color and place of birth should be irrelevant in our relationships in society. What is important is that we recognize ourselves as one in the image of God.

I think it is high time to ask ourselves that when we live in an age in which we have made tremendous progress in the areas of science and

technology, when we have sent spacecrafts to other planets, why is it then so difficult for us to live in harmony and peace with each other and nature, and provide opportunities for those who can't have the same privileges as us?

I appeal to each and every one of you to keep on working with us, so that we may together make this world a better place for all.

Once again, thank you so much for your willingness and partnership.

Finally, I would like to thank Michael Murphy, David Wooten, Col. Michael Donnelly, The American College of Heraldry, and The Harbor Club, and all those involved in the preparation of this event. I thank you all. May peace prevail on Earth!



Deacons of the Orthodox Church dressed for Celebration

X. UNIQUE ETHIOPIA

SAMPLES OF GE'EZ ALPHABET



ETHIOPIAN NUMBERS



ETHIOPIIC SCRIPT

Origins

The Ethiopic script developed from the script of Ethiopia's classical language, Ge'ez, which was derived from the Sabaeen/Minean script. The script used to write Ge'ez has been in use since at least the 4th century AD. At first the script represented only consonants. Vowel indication was added in around 350 AD when Christianity arrived in Ethiopia. Whether there is any connection between these two events is not known.

Notable Features

- Written horizontally from left to right.
- Each symbol represents a syllable consisting of a consonant plus a vowel.
- The basic signs are modified in a number of different ways to indicate the various vowels.

Languages

- **Amharic**, the national language of Ethiopia with about 14 million speakers.
- **Ge'ez**, the classical language of Ethiopia. still used as a liturgical language by Ethiopian Christians and the Beta Israel Jewish community of Ethiopia.
- **Afaan Oromo**, a Cushitic language spoken by some 17 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Egypt. Since 1991 Oromo has been written with the Latin alphabet.
- **Tigrinya**, a Semitic language with perhaps 5.1 million speakers in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

ETHIOPIAN CALENDAR

Ethiopia uses the Julian Calendar, which is divided into 12 months of 30 days each, and a 13th month of five or six days at the end of the year. The Ethiopian calendar is seven years and eight months behind that of the Gregorian calendar.



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