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(62) CHRISTIANITY IN ETHIOPIA

Bruk Ayele Asale

Religion	Pop 2010	Pct 2010	Pop 2025	Pct 2025	Gr Pct 1970 2025
Christians	52,153,000	59.6%	75,209,000	60.1%	2.5%
Independents	2,175,000	2.5%	2,990,000	2.4%	2.1%
African initiated	2,157,000	2.5%			
Orthodox	34,951,000	39.9%	51,400,000	41.1%	2.6%
Oriental Orthodox	34,950,000	39.9%			
Protestants	14,541,000	16.6%	19,301,000	15.4%	1.9%
Baptist	7,744,000	8.8%			
Lutheran/Reformed	5,576,000	6.4%			
Pentecostal	551,000	0.6%			
Roman Catholics	857,000	1.0%	1,458,000	1.2%	3.6%
Evangelicals	12,394,000	14.2%	19,017,000	15.2%	2.9%
Pentecostals/Charismatics	9,556,000	10.9%	14,500,000	11.6%	2.8%
Muslims	29,529,000	33.7%	43,678,000	34.9%	2.6%
adherents of traditional African religions	5,734,000	6.5%	6,007,000	4.8%	0.3%
Baha'is	23,900	0.0%	28,000	0.0%	1.1%
Jews	16,600	0.0%	17,000	0.0%	0.2%
Hindus	6,500	0.0%	8,500	0.0%	1.8%
Buddhists	1,400	0.0%	2,000	0.0%	2.4%
people professing no religion	96,900	0.1%	95,000	0.1%	-0.1%
Total population	**87,562,000**	**100.0%**	**125,044,000**	**100.0%**	**2.4%**

Source: Centre for the Study of World Christianity (CSGC), Boston, Gordon-Conwell TS

There are three major groups of denominations in Ethiopia, namely, the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church (EOTC), Protestants and Roman Catholics. This brief article surveys the historical background of each of them proportionally, their current status, and the actual and potential relationships across the denominations.

The Introduction of Christianity and the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church (EOTC)

There are three traditions describing the reception of Christianity in Ethiopia that historians argue about. These include: (1) the pre-Christian connection of Ethiopia with Jerusalem and the immediate introduction of Christianity through the Ethiopian eunuch (Act 8:27-40);[1] (2) the apostolic introduction by St Matthew

[1]Even if it is far from convincing, some scholars such as Edwin M. Yamauchi (*Africa and the Bible* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004], 161-181) argue that "the Ethiopian Eunuch was not from Ethiopia."

(and some other apostles), who came to preach the good news in Ethiopia, and who died and were buried there; and (3) the introduction of Christianity in the fourth century by two brothers, which happened by accident.[2]

Based on oral tradition and significant literary evidence, the EOTC and Ethiopian historians make strong claims for a long-standing historical relationship and religious ties between Ethiopia and Jerusalem, dating back to the time of King Solomon.[3] It is in this context that the visit of the Ethiopian eunuch to Jerusalem and his baptism by Philip, as told in Acts 8, is seen as the firstfruit of Ethiopian Christianity.[4] The EOTC believes that, even if Christianity was introduced at a very early period, both priestly ministry and sacramental services were introduced only in the fourth century with the arrival and ministry of St Frumentius.[5]

The apostolic ministry of St Matthew to Ethiopia, for which the EOTC makes no strong claims, has been mentioned by a number of writings dating to as early as Origen.[6] Pankhurst rightly notes the claim of the EOTC that Christianity first reached Ethiopia in the early apostolic period, and 'that "many" at that time "believed". The faith did not, however, become the state religion until the early fourth century'.[7] Scholars like Taddesse Tamrat[8] and John Baur[9] also agree with an early introduction of Christianity, not

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[2] John Baur (*2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, 2nd ed. [Nairobi: Paulines Pub, 2009], 35) however, adds up another one by taking out the second one here. He writes, "Ethiopian tradition knows three steps in the advent of Christianity: Philip's eunuch brought the faith, Frumentius the priesthood, and the Nine Saints monastic life."

[3] For detailed discussion see the *Kebre Negest,* an Ethiopian Epic from the fourteenth century AD. For an English translation of the text of this document, see E.A. Willis Budge, *The Kebra Nagast*, 1932, www.sacred-texts.com/chr/kn/.

[4] Eusebius of Caesarea, for instance, wrote, "But as the preaching of the Saviour's Gospel was daily advancing, a certain providence led from the land of the Ethiopians an officer of the queen of that country, for Ethiopia even to the present day is ruled, according to ancestral custom, by a woman. He, first among the Gentiles, received of the mysteries of the divine word from Philip in consequence of a revelation, and having become the first-fruits of believers throughout the world, he is said to have been the first on returning to his country to proclaim the knowledge of the God of the universe and the life-giving sojourn of our Saviour among men; so that through him in truth the prophecy obtained its fulfilment, which declares that 'Ethiopia stretcheth out her hand unto God' [Ps 67.11]" (Eusebius Pamphilius, *Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, Series II, vol. 1 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. by Philip Schaff, Book 2, ch.1, 1890, www.ccel.org/schaff/npnf201.iii.vii.ii.html).

[5] [EOTC], *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith, Order of Worship and Ecumenical Relations*, 2nd ed. (Addis Ababa: Tinsae Publishing House, 1996), 7. However, this argument may raise some questions such as whether there was church structure before this time or whether there were just a few individual Christians. But even so, individual Christians would surely read the Scriptures and celebrate baptism and eucharist. As these are important issues to understand the status of the church in the first couple of centuries, until the commencement of the official priestly ministry by St Frumentius, such questions need further study.

[6] For detailed discussion see, Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Orthodox Mission, 1970), 1. Here I must also highlight that Ethiopians do not have surnames and they are known by their given names, in this article Ethiopians are referred to by their given names.

[7] Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, The Peoples of Africa series (Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 1998), 34. There are some scholars who insist that the introduction of Christianity into Ethiopia occurred only in the fourth century, among whom Paul P. Henze (*Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia* [London: Hurst & Co., 2000], 32-34) and de Lacy O'Leary (*The Ethiopian Church: Historical Notes on the Church of Abyssinia*, [London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936], 19) are included. However, the discovery of Ge'ez manuscripts from as early as the fourth to sixth centuries AD reveals that Christianity had been well established before the translation of at least the discovered manuscripts ("Discovery of earliest Illuminated Gospel Manuscripts Found in Ethiopian Monastery", www.ninesaintsethiopianorthodoxmonastery.org/Sacred_Archaeological_of_Ethiopia.html/).

[8] Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia: 1270-1527* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972), 22.

[9] Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa*, 35.

through the eunuch or the apostles, but rather through merchants and travellers since Axum[10], at that early stage, had developed strong communications with the Greco-Roman world.

But the Ethiopian state, which was known as the Axumite Kingdom, in the mid-fourth century AD officially declared Orthodox Christianity as its official religion, where the last sixteen centuries were uniquely identified with its strong relationship of church and state as the 'Christian island of Ethiopia'.[11] Except for three external and one internal attempt to break the bond and threaten the relationship between state and Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Christian Empire monopolized the history of the country from its official emergence in the fourth century until its demise in 1974.

One of the ways to see the shifts in the history of the Ethiopian Christian Empire would be to divide its history into periods of major moves, where five major eras can be traced: (1) the Axumite Empire, from the first half of the fourth century to about the eighth to tenth centuries, where Christianity was declared as a state religion; (2) the Zague Dynasty, eleventh to thirteenth century, a period of expansion of Christianity form the Semitic to the Cushitic group of people, where landmark cathedrals were built in a new centre, Lasta, Lalibela; (3) the Restored Solomonic Dynasty, from the second half of the thirteenth century to the early sixteenth century, where major church reform took place under the leadership of a famous king, Zere'a Yacob, and others; (4) the Gondorine Period, from the late sixteenth century to the eighteenth century, with significant fragmentation within Orthodox Christianity and repeated western missionary attempts; and (5) the emergence of modern Ethiopia since the mid-nineteenth century until the rise and fall of the last constitutional imperial monarch, Haile Selassie I, in the mid-twentieth century, when Orthodox Christianity finally became only one of the many religious groups in Ethiopia. In the midst of all these major eras, other considerable, though short, events took place as ferments and turning-points to the next era. Among those intrusions were: (1) the mysterious Queen Judith of the ninth century, who is believed to have come from a 'Falasha' origin and spread Judaism by severely damaging Christianity; (2) the powerful Adal conqueror Ahmed Gragn of the sixteenth century, who played a significant role in the expansion of Islam in Ethiopia with very lasting effects; and (3) an interlude of a failed attempt by Portuguese Jesuits to Catholicize Ethiopia in the early seventeenth century are notable with major consequences in shifting the gears of both the nation's religious and political future. Finally, (4) the short-lived *Lij* Eyasus' Islam-oriented reign on the threshold of the twentieth century is also noteworthy; a challenge from within.

Based on this central outline and the interludes, there have been shifts of centre and periphery, shifts of territorial boundaries, with the inclusion and exclusion of various ethnic and religious groups at various times, which fermented and shaped different dynamics in the current religio-political landscape of Ethiopia. In connection with the church-state relationship, three major shifts have been evident in Ethiopia in the fast-changing twentieth century, as compared with its history of three millennia. (1) The monarchy

[10] Axum or Aksum is an Amharic name for the city in the northern part of Ethiopia which was originally the capital of the Kingdom of Aksum and remains one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in Africa.

[11] This expression was repeatedly used by the last Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie I, at his introductory message of Amharic Bibles printed during his reign and elsewhere. Eskil Forslund (*The Word of God in Ethiopian Tongues: Rhetorical Features in the Preaching of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus*, Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia LVIII [Uppsala: International Tryck AB, 1993], 29-30), for instance, quotes one of his speeches in noting the significance of the metaphor in using religion for political interest, as the expression illustrates that Ethiopia has been surrounded by an ocean of Islam, remaining a strong Christian Empire. Asefa Sori (*Profile of Religious Experience in Ethiopia*, 2009, www.religion.ucsb.edu/projects/summerinstitute/Reference%20files/religion%20in%20home%20countries/Ethiopia--Assefa.htm) defines the expression as an "old propaganda that was effectively used by various warlords to oppress those Ethiopians who did not subscribe to that faith [i.e. EOTC's faith]". He also noted that in recent years, the expression was revived among some Orthodox circles and they "directly relate it to the publication of the 2007 National Census result which by showing the Christian majority data (62.8%), strengthened the old notion 'Ethiopia an Island of Christianity', and [it is printed on] t-shirts, caps and banners [which are] used during [some public] celebration[s] meant to unequivocally tell the Muslims that you do not belong here."

was increasingly spiritualized, in a more legal way than ever before, by declaring it as eternally perpetual, which however – and ironically – led to its termination. (2) The outburst of the 1974 Ethiopian 'socialist/ communist' Revolution, another extreme marked as pursuing a non-religious 'socialist/ communist' nation, in essence drove church and state in Ethiopia apart. (3) By overthrowing the *Derg* regime, a new constitutional democracy was declared, with a secular state and religious freedom guaranteed by the 1995 constitution under The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)-led government.

In the recent religio-political history of Ethiopia, the period of severe persecution of all religious groups by the brutal regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam from 1974 till 1991 is noteworthy.[12] A simple expression of the brutality can be seen from the murder of two church leaders by the military dictator, namely, the EOTC Patriarch, Abuna Theophilus, who was murdered in July 1979, and the Rev. Gudina Tumsa, the General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical (Lutheran) Church Mekane Yesus.[13]

In fact, this was an unprecedented period in the separation of church and state, where the EOTC lost its dominance as a state religion and its ability to impose its power over the other emerging religious groups at various periods of the country's history.[14] Some major effects can be observed from such a huge shift between church and state in this period: (1) A kind of empathy arose among various denominations and sense of unity between all churches in Ethiopia for the first time, as they all were persecuted by the communist regime.[15] (2) The government was criticized since, in order to keep itself in power, it assigned puppet leaders at various levels of the church,[16] where some churches became merely the servants of the brutal regime.[17] (3) Despite severe persecution by the government, the sense of equality encouraged religious groups, other than the Orthodox,[18] to expand to some degree and claim their national identity.[19]

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[12] For a summary of action against Christian Churches in general by the Derg, and for more description on the degree and extent of the persecution on each individual denomination, see Mikael Doulos, "Christians in Marxist Ethiopia," *Religion in Communist Lands* 14 (1986): 140-145.

[13] Øyvind M. Eide, *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia: The Growth and Persecution of the Mekane Yesus Church 1974-85*, East African Studies (Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press; Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2000), 33, 178.

[14] Two main problems for such an assertion are (1) the unpredictability or inconsistency of the religious policy of the Derg regime and (2) the EOTC's persistence in persecuting other religious groups, though it was persecuted by the regime to a lesser degree.

[15] For a discussion on an attempt to create an ecumenical forum to react to the common threat of atheism, a result of the new Marxist-Leninist ideology, see Eide, *Revolution and Religion*, 127-128.

[16] The tension within the ETOC, until 1981, between those who felt that they must accept the *status quo* "in order to preserve the Church," and those who boldly rejected submission to the government, is clearly described by John Brown ("Religion and Revolution in Ethiopia," *Religion in Communist Lands*, 9 [1981]: 54-55). Brown ("Religion and Revolution," 55) further noted how the government bribed the church, to silence its voice: "The government has given the Church a large budget…. The Church is tolerated by the government provided that it does not criticize the revolution and supports the government's social policies."

[17] Two major incidents are noteworthy to show how the strategy of the Derg regime used religious institutions for its political purpose. First, after detaining and killing the Patriarch and killing, arresting, or retiring most of the bishops of the EOTC, a puppet Patriarch and new bishops, who could follow the government's instruction, were appointed on 1979, which resulted in "[f]rom now on the EOC was a vehicle of the regime" (Eide, *Revolution and Religion*, 166). Secondly, the government prepared an interreligious seminar in 1977 where "the political aim of the organizers was to mobilize the religious communities in a kind of united religious front behind the government" (Eide, *Revolution and Religion*, 165).

[18] In fact, this tendency of growth of other churches made the EOTC to view them "as threat, and communists have used this fear to provoke riots against evangelical Churches" (Brown, "Religion and Revolution," 52).

[19] For instance, it is argued that Islam evidently spread throughout Ethiopia during the Derg regime's religious policy (Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* [Berkley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1994], xii) where EOTC and Islam enjoyed relative freedom, as they willingly submitted to the government's political agenda by purportedly supporting state-assigned puppet leaders (Eide, *Revolution and Religion*, 164-65; Mulatu Wubneh and

Paradoxically, however, this was a period where religious groups were under tight control by the state at best (EOTC and Islam), or under extraordinary persecution at worst (especially Protestants), yet many denominations and religious groups were able to grow significantly in reaction to the persecution. Even the EOTC, despite the significant reduction of its political power along with such other benefits as access to resources, could see the significance of its relative separation from the state, especially in revitalizing its prophetic identity as a church.[20]

One of the major challenges the EOTC is facing currently is the paradox of keeping a balance between its precious traditions and the quest for internal reformation. EOTC is a very prestigious and unique church in keeping long-standing traditions in its distinctive liturgy, colourful ceremonial practices, ancient literature, an educational system and theological stands. In the meantime, it is called to respond to the contextual and contemporary questions and demands a new generation is posing. If the church is aware and alert enough to build itself on the younger generation, its legacy will be preserved for those that follow. As the biggest and the mother church of all Christian denominations in Ethiopia, the EOTC is wise to deliberately take the initiative in forming ecumenical relationships, so that its influence may extend from the churches to the entire nation. As the firstborn church of the nation, her leadership is still enormously needed.

Protestantism in Ethiopia

Protestant missionaries were introduced to Ethiopia from the seventeenth century by Peter Heyling in the north, the nineteenth century by Johann Krapf in central and western Ethiopia, and the twentieth century by Thomas Lambie in the south. In many cases, their arrival and their welcome were associated with 'the political and material aid which the Ethiopians now began to expect from Europe'.[21] As a result, most of the attempts by western missionaries either to reform the EOTC from within or to establish any kind of Protestant church were not successful in 'Ethiopia proper' (the Northern Amhara/Tigray-dominated Orthodox areas), until Menelik's expansion (reigned 1889-1913) to other ethnic groups since the end of the nineteenth century.

With a desire to modernize his empire, Emperor Tewodros (1855-1868) welcomed western missionaries, though the deal did not succeed. During the time of Menelik II, missionaries based themselves in some remote parts of the new territories. The modernist Emperor Haile Selassie decreed in 1944 that the country was 'divided into what was termed "Ethiopian Church Areas" and "Open Areas",'[22] where the 'Open Areas', predominantly non-Christian, referred to areas in which missionaries might preach and teach their own denominational faith. The focus of the missionaries was mainly evangelizing adherents in the areas where traditional religion was practised. Based on missionary backgrounds, various denominations were founded and expanded significantly during the reign of the last Emperor as indigenous churches.

It was largely because of their recent introduction and attachment to the West that Protestant churches were severely persecuted during the Derg regime, which ironically gave them the unique momentum to

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Yohannis Abate, *Ethiopia: Transition and Development in the Horn of Africa*. Profiles: Nations of Contemporary Africa [Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press; London: Avebury, 1988], 126-128). For a well-researched and systematically articulated religious policy of the Derg regime, see Eide, *Revolution and Religion*, 162-174.

[20] Eide (*Revolution and Religion*, 167-168) argues that the persecution and the relative separation from the state helped the EOTC to revitalize itself in a number of ways, which included strengthening of internal organization, more emphasis on theological education, introduction of Sunday schools, renewed attitude to attend Church services in mass, and so on.

[21] Sergew Hable Selassie, "The Expansion and Consolidation of Christianity: c. 350 to 650 A.D," in *The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spiritual Life*, ed. Sergew Hable Selassie (Addis Ababa: B.S.P.E., 1970), 7.

[22] Forslund, *The Word of God in Ethiopian Tongues*, 37.

firmly establish their foundations and to expand beyond imagination. The extreme persecution and repression of this period prepared them to explode and spread like wildfire during the new democracy and freedom. With the rapid growth of recent decades, they have proved to be the third largest religious group, with increasing recognition as Ethiopians, coupled with the dropping of the term *mete,* a derogative name given to them during the Derg regime, meaning '(new) comers (from outside)', 'foreigners/outsiders', or those who did not belong here.

Even if the vast majority of Protestants in Ethiopia have come into a relative unity under the umbrella of the Evangelical Churches' Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), the ever-growing fragmentation of churches remains one of the major challenges. It is surprising to see a lot of internal strife and division among many Protestant churches in Ethiopia, immediately after the end of the persecution era. A paradox which persisted in recent decades was an unceasingly high growth rate, on the one hand, and many serious quarrels within denominations, between leading denominational figures, and division based on non-confessional matters, in a more secular manner, on the other. The ethical and moral reputation the Protestant community built up during those hard days until the time of religious freedom is now at risk. Had the Protestants set aside their internal problems and focused on the broader agenda of the good news of Jesus Christ, they would have done much to influence this country where they are entrusted to lead the whole nation, even while they remain a relative minority. Doors are wide open for them not only to contribute the maximum they can but also to take the lead in directing the present and envisioning the future of this great country.

Roman Catholics in Ethiopia

Attempts by Jesuit missionaries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to catholicize the Ethiopian Christian nation mark the explicit roots of Catholics in Ethiopia. However, these failed attempts instead developed animosity with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.[23] After the expulsion of the Jesuits in the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church again attempted missionary work in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and with some difficulty gave birth to the current Catholic Church in Ethiopia. Even if their stay was very short-lived, the teachings of the Jesuits had immense consequences in fomenting a centuries-long bloody dispute in the history of the EOTC. Furthermore, the five-year Fascist Italian invasion (1935-1941) persecuted the church and massacred its clergy,[24] developing more hatred against the Roman Catholic Church. During this period, the EOTC played a significant patriotic role in taking sides in the struggle for liberation against the Fascist regime.

In their present stance, except for a major difference in 'their understanding of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, the Ethiopian Catholic and Orthodox Churches have basically the same sacraments, the same prayers, the same devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the angels and the saints, and the same traditions – in short, the same faith.'[25] As a result, the Catholics do not consider the EOTC as a mission field; rather, they strive for a genuine relationship and promote ecumenism.[26]

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[23] On the failure of these attempts, the Catholics blame the strong nationalistic attachment between the EOTC and the Ethiopian states. As stated by the Ethiopian Catholic Church, "these missions eventually failed due to the national-religious attachment of the Ethiopians, in particular, the Coptic party, to their Monophysite doctrine, and the strict link between religious and political struggles" ("Ethiopian Catholic Church, The" www.ecs.org.et/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=175&Itemid=87#History).

[24] Sergew Hable Selassie, "The Period of Reorganization," in *The Church of Ethiopia: A Panorama of History and Spiritual Life*, ed. Sergew Hable Selassie (Addis Ababa: B.S.P.E., 1970), 35.

[25] "Ethiopian Catholic Church."

[26] Owen Lambert, "Ecumenism in Ethiopia," *African Ecclesiastical Review* 21 (1979): 172-179.

The Roman Catholic Church in Ethiopia is probably now known mainly for its shared liturgical and practical links with the EOTC[27] and its global dominance rather than its minimal demographic presence in the country, which is currently only about 0.7% of the national population.[28] However, its sizeable involvement and contribution in changing the lives of many Ethiopians through education, health, infrastructure and other development and relief activities made the presence of the Catholic Church influential and constructive in many parts of the country.[29]

Relationships among Denominations in Ethiopia

The relative openness of Emperor Haile Selassie I towards the Evangelicals after the Italian invasion (especially since 1941), the inclusive attack of the communist regime on all religions since 1974, and the current government's inclusion of religious equality in the constitution since 1991, has improved the relationship little by little, even if it has been very slow. From its inception, the Bible Society of Ethiopia (BSE) has, for example, been one of the ventures through which the relationships among all Ethiopian churches have been facilitated.[30] In other words, irrespective of their historic differences, Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants have become not only more and more tolerant towards each other, but also open to promoting relationships and ecumenism.

It is important to note that with all their unique identity, reflecting their respective missionary origins, Ethiopian Protestants and Catholics have largely been influenced by and adopted a number of EOTC traditions and practices, and have developed an Ethiopian identity.[31] One such prominent element is the Ethiopian calendar, where both Protestants and Catholics follow the EOTC calendar year, which is 'Ethiopian', and not the calendar of the West. All Ethiopian Christians, therefore, celebrate New Year, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and other church festivals on different dates from the other global denominations, in unity with the EOTC, and adopting local tradition. Furthermore, unlike other Evangelicals, the Finding of the True Cross is also celebrated by many Ethiopian Evangelicals and Catholics with the EOTC.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the dynamics of the country in the last quarter of the twentieth century and the early decades of the 21st century finally marked Ethiopia as becoming a secular state where religious freedom of all religious groups was constitutionally guaranteed. After an era of religious persecution for about one and a half decades, a new period has dawned where all religious groups in Ethiopia can be seen as equals. This new era, however, does not merely invite but also strongly demands that all religious groups and their

[27] There are two liturgical rites practiced in the Ethiopian Catholic Church where from Addis Ababa to northward they follow the Ge'ez Rite, which is very close to that of the EOTC, whereas from Addis Ababa to southward, they celebrate the Latin Rite, adopted into various local languages.
[28] FDRE-PCC, *Summary and Statistical Report*, 143.
[29] For instance, the first university-college in Ethiopia had been founded by the Catholic Jesuits priests with an invitation by Emperor Haile Selassie I and named after him.
[30] Currently BSE has opened an office devoted to promoting ecumenism and maintaining strong cooperation both at higher and grass-root levels. The results from the efforts in the last couple of years have been highly appreciated as immensely fruitful and encouraging (Seleshi Kebede, Personal communication, 21 December, 2011).
[31] For a discussion on more common elements shared across all denominations and the major influences of the EOTC on other churches in Ethiopia, see Bruk A. Asale, "*1 Enoch* in *Jude* and in the EOTC 'Canon': Developing an Adequate Insight in Second Temple Literature (STL) in the Various Ethiopian Churches for a Better Understanding of Each Other and for the Promotion of Ecumenism and Mutual Cooperation," PhD Diss., University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2015, 257-260.

adherents, who are citizens of the nation, respond to the new developments and its challenges actively and responsibly in nation-building, to make a better place for all. This can be achieved if the current spirit of ecumenism and mutual respect among the various denominations in Ethiopia is nurtured by overcoming a history of conflict and animosity.

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