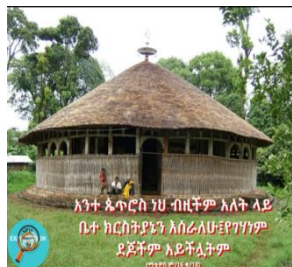


## Ethiopian Christianity Is as Old as Christianity Itself, not 400 Years Younger!

By Belayneh Abate

It is regrettable to hear historians and journalists stating that Christianity in Ethiopia started in 400 A.D. They are chopping the age of the oldest Church by 400 years, many out of ignorance and some with ill-intent.

It is visible on the surface and no need of digging archaeological evidence to learn that Ethiopia has been practicing the Old



Testament for thousands of years before it transitioned to Christianity about two thousand years ago. The transition from the Old Testament to Christianity was through the prophecies of the Old Testament, and not through evangelical conversion.

In Ethiopia, it has been a religious ritual to read and carry the books of Isaiah and the Psalms of David since Ethiopians started practicing the Old Testament. Through this habitual thorough reading and understanding of the prophecies, Ethiopians were well aware that Christos was coming. Ethiopians used to cite prophecies such as Isaiah 9:6 which teaches the following about the coming of Christos:

*“For unto use a child is born, Unto us a son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called wonderful, counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of peace.”*

In addition to strictly practicing the Old Testament, Ethiopians used to have a religious pilgrimage ritual to Jerusalem. One of these pilgrims was the Ethiopian Eunuch as New Testament at Act 8:26-39 teaches as follows:

*“Now the angel of the lord spoke to Philip, saying Arise and go towards south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is desert. So, he arose and went. And before a man of Ethiopia a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of Ethiopia who has charge of all the treasury and had come to Jerusalem to worship was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was residing Isaiah the prophet. Then the spirit said to Philip go near and overtake this chariot. So, Philip ran to him and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah and said do you understand what you are reading?”*

After further conversation, Philip baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch and the Eunuch rejoiced and shared his joy to Ethiopians. Like the Eunuch, other Ethiopians were also reading the prophecies in the book of Isaiah and other books, and it did not take them long to rejoice the coming of Christos and worship him. Therefore, the Ethiopian Christianity is as old as Christianity itself, not 400 years younger as many wrongly preach.

Since Christos said in Math 5:17 “ Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill”, Ethiopians established the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church and continued to practice the bible from A to Z. Tewahido literally means unified, but its real meaning is too deep and it is not the topic of this article. The Tewahido Church has contributed tremendous religious manuscripts, literature spiritual wealth to the monasteries and libraries of the world beyond Ethiopia.

It appears many are confusing the birth of Ethiopian Christianity with the arrival of Frumentius (the Syrian Christian) who was greatly welcomed to Ethiopia. However, Christianity was well practiced in Ethiopia centuries before the arrival of Frumentius. Frumentius did not start Christianity in Ethiopia, but he connected the Ethiopian Church with the Church of Alexandria since he was familiar with the culture and language of that area. This connection with the Church of Alexandria continued until late 1950's.

**Strong Appeal to Ethiopians:** As we have been witnessing for more than thirty years, and obviously for the last 5 years, ill-spirited individuals, who suffer from deep inferiority complexes are exerting full effort to destroy the unique historical church, which was built with the guidance of apostles such as Saint Matheos. Psychology teaches that individuals with inferiority complexes and low self-esteem hate whatever is theirs but adapt the physical or spiritual assets of others without hesitations.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of all Ethiopians with self-esteem (regardless of religious affiliation) to understand the history, dogma, and canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, and protect her just like our forefathers did for the last two thousand years. Thank you.

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