

Abune Zenamarkos: His Apostolic Mission Preparing Ethiopians For the Challenges in the New World

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Introduction:

Abune Zenamarkos had an ordinary beginning as a young deacon in the highlands of Ethiopia, but the rest of his journey was extraordinary. Ethiopians have witnessed God's plan for His children as the last chapter of Abune Zenamarkos' life revealed. Ethiopians had entered an unknown period. The long seasons of peace and freedom were suddenly interrupted. The smiles and laughter of its citizens had vanished from their faces. The forces in control have used systems hitherto unknown to man to disperse and reduce the population in order to fulfill their mission, which if not prevented will bring the existence of the ancient nation to an end. However, Ethiopians know very well that the World without Ethiopia is like the moon without the Earth.



The vast period in which the ***Priest-Kings*** of Ethiopian descents ruled the World is long forgotten. The modern man has come a long way since, and he has forgotten his origin and beginning. He has forgotten his ancestors, the ***Priest-Kings*** that shaped his World and gave him peace and order. We see today vivid images of despair and disparities on the faces of citizens of big and small nations. These are the result of wide spread injustices, lawlessness and disorder. Ethiopians who introduced the idea of ***Republic*** to the World must reinvent it now for the sake of the World and for their own existence and continuity. If the unspoiled traditional people can stand together, they will be able to create a dogma befitting their history, traditions and social systems and save their nation from disintegration. They can enter the age of modernization with dignity. The wave of exodus and outward migration may be stopped. However, most if not all Ethiopians in the Diaspora may have permanently settled in many parts of the World. We should regard this as God's grand plan for the good of the World and for the good of Ethiopians. Abune Zenamarkos is not the ***Priest-King*** dispatched to another land by Ethiopia to rule and bring law and order. He did not come to teach the inhabitants about law, medicine, astronomy, etc and or to give guidance to the rulers of a strange land as his ancestors did. He was the apostle who prepared Ethiopians, first, to maintain their heritages, cultures and the practices of their faith; second, to be good citizens and serve societies that opened their doors and accepted them.

The Old Conflicts

The victories that Ethiopia gained against the formidable European force in two great wars had left unforgettable scars no one would need to scratch and open old wounds. However, it was Ethiopian leaders' own adventures to advance the liberation of people in foreign lands that entailed

immeasurable consequences. The Ethiopians during the last monarch had accelerated progress surpassing the developments of many nations in colonized Africa. Those were taken as direct challenges to the neo-colonials still policing Africa, but they were not deeds that Ethiopians could hardly hide. The progresses that the *Last Free Nation* achieved by the ingenuities of its own people, which were challenge to the old colonials, compounded by the latest political blunder of the leaders had provoked the Police Forces of Africa enough to cause them to march with full forces against the poor nation. The leaders were unable to correct the unwise political adventures or to avert the impending pandemonium. Even though they knew about the ominous danger facing the nation, very sadly, they did not see the extent of the destructions in the making. Even if they knew about the calamity in progress, they were already incapacitated politically to do any thing about it. Thus, the citizens unaware of their sins have found themselves in the mist of turmoil that continued one after another. Hence, the prophesized period for Ethiopia to stretch her hand unto God.

Divine Interventions

The people did not protect and defend those who saved Ethiopia and its people from utter destructions in the hands of the invaders at Adwa and Maychew. No one was capable to save the future generation from the carnage in the hands of those less ordinary than the ordinary human beings and who never achieved a simple commendation in their lives be it for improving one's life or serving the nation honorably. Many innocent citizens perished and disappeared without traces. Some lucky ones were lifted out of the country, other were also fortunate enough to reach their destinations in Africa, Middle East, Australia, Europe and America. It seems all these took place by design and divine intervention. The infusions of the wonderful cultures of Ethiopians must be considered blessings to societies around the World. Ethiopians brought family values, community oriented lives, exotic foods and colorful costumes, etc., all desirable and refreshing to the culturally decaying societies in many cities and towns around the World. What God did for Ethiopians, He also intended to do good to all His children.

Modernizing the Traditional Nation

The history of the modern societies such as that of Americans was started from scratch by immigrants from all over the World guided and led by their wise leaders. Other modern societies such as France, German, Great Britain, Japan, etc had founded their modernity based on their long history and experiences. Traditional societies such as Ethiopians have come through ages guided by ordinances derived from Judaism, Christianity, Islam (Torah, Bible and Quran) and others. Ethiopians need not borrow or adopt alien cultures or experiment with new social systems to modernize. Ethiopians can fulfill their aspirations by inventing the systems and methods for achieving social well being and economic progresses without destroying or devaluing their traditions and heritages. Ethiopians are not stranger to justice and social dogmas. They invented them, and their communal lives have always been essentially democratic by nature. Historians tell us that the ancient Ethiopians who introduced civilization to the World had infinite patience and perseverance, which were the essential qualities required for creating and developing art, language and literature, and to domesticate fruits and plants. Unable to engage in such laborious time consuming ventures and creativities, the rest of the human race around them remained nomadic. Ethiopians of present display exactly the same infinite patience and perseverance. The World has seen Ethiopians mystical strength at Adwa to preserve their independence and Korea to preserve the collective peace and order of the World. They have seen the strength and amazing feat of every

Ethiopian. Abebe Bekila, the bare foot Olympian and Mamo Wolde have mesmerized the World by their uncommon strength and will power. It did not stop or end there. The mystic power of Ethiopians continued to shine as Miruts followed the foot prints of the giant Olympians, then, Hailegebreselassie, then, Kenenisa, then, Derartu, etc. Ethiopians are inventors, and with their new inventions, they shall recreate the World in which we will live in the future quiet unlike the past or the present.

The Ethiopians in the Diaspora

The Ethiopians in the Diaspora and the Ethiopians in the homeland cannot exist without each other. The well being of Ethiopians in the homeland is detrimental to the well beings of Ethiopians in the Diaspora. Ethiopians' human dignities were grossly violated in their own country and so, people in the outside World have acted the same way towards Ethiopians. Their dignity and civil rights have been violated quiet frequently in many places where they have become subjects and citizens of nations. The blood bank donated by Ethiopians was shamefully damped. Ethiopians have been denied to ride in public buses, and young women have been systematically sterilized. The gross human rights abuses of young Ethiopians girls in many Arab countries are deplorable and shameful dark spots that lower so low the moral standards of modern societies. The problems have become international crises and invocation of the International HR laws to stop and end them is in order. The World must coerce the regime in Ethiopia that is engaged in formal business of exporting domestic workers in exchange for financial gains knowing well that sending young women to places and societies whose cultures and practices are taboo to the beliefs and values of Ethiopians particularly to the dignity and respect to women. There is only one World and the doctrines and principles that guide each nation and modern societies to preserve the human dignity are the same and one. The regime in Ethiopia is out of the realm of these doctrines and principles in its practices.

The Churches, Ethiopians' Umbrellas

The Ethiopians in Seattle are same like the Ethiopians in Melbourne, Australia. The Ethiopian established a Church in Seattle, and so did the Ethiopians in Melbourne and in every city around the World. There is hardly any city in the World where Ethiopians reside without an Ethiopian Church. The Churches are providing multiple services beside Sunday services, baptism, marrying, and funeral services. They also provide counseling and essential education. The Churches have reduced the burden on public resources by providing services to the communities in arrays of social issues. They resolve conflicts and assist individuals in combating bad habits and personal problems. Once a disturbing trend peculiar among the youth and families, we see today spectacular positive developments. The youths are transformed and or cultivated to become responsible and good citizens. Today, many kids are achieving academic distinctions still against all odds. One may also see the decrease in cultural pollutions by the increases of disciplined and gentle images of the youth. Families that proudly talk about the achievements of their children of all ages and levels are every where. Every summer, graduation parties have become tiresome to parents and the communities. A few years ago, their worries were about the unusual behaviors and bad influences inflicting the youth. The Churches have changed the lives of many dramatically.

The conditions of Ethiopians in Seattle were positively changed as described above after Abune Zenamarkos moved to Seattle. How he transformed our community may be told for years and decades to come. The first ever service he conducted was unforgettable to Ethiopians present at that time. No wedding or funeral did attract such number of the Ethiopians in and around Seattle

as his presence did. A fellow writer by name Abel Admasu has done a wonderful report published on ethiopiazare.com and no need to repeat the story here. Abune Zenamarkos did not take any time to reveal his grand plan to build a Church, which at the time was considered a bit too much for the new immigrants. However, nothing was impossible to him, and he commanded his children to build the Church, and they did. Ethiopians had to work a second shift to pay the huge cost of the Church, which was why it was built without incurring any debt.

The Final Chapter of Abune Zenamarkos

The Ethiopian Gebriel Tewahdo Church will remain an integral part of Ethiopians' daily life. It is not only a teaching place of Christianity, but a center for teaching of invaluable cultural and social codes and common heritages of Ethiopians. The Church participates in the developments and all around well beings of Ethiopians. That was the vision of Abune Zenamarkos when he started the Church. The relation between the Ethiopian people and Americans has been established and will remain so for ever. The Ethiopian-Americans are permanent bridges that cannot be broken or destroyed. The Ethiopian-Americans will play vital roles in the social, cultural, economic and scientific exchanges and relationship between the two nations. The Ethiopian-Americans will increasingly become active in the local social life, and their outstanding activities and accomplishments will make them very visible in the national scenes. All these could not be achieved by Ethiopians here in America or else where unless Ethiopians in the Homeland are living peacefully. Ethiopian-Americans must not forget the sources of their pride and the fountain of their wonderful cultures - Ethiopia. Without Ethiopia, the progresses of every Ethiopian in the Diaspora may be limited. What is good for Ethiopia will be beneficial to America, and what harms America may be harmful to Ethiopia as well. Their symbiotic relationships are large and too many. The relationship established between the two nations must be considered a work of the Almighty, and we must recognize it as such.

Abune Zenamarkos passed having established and accomplished God's grand plan. Ethiopians have put their marks all over America and their presences are felt in every city. The presence and visibility of Ethiopians was no where grandeur than seen at the funeral of Abune Zenamarkos. This writer who lived in the city for decades never saw such a splendor of grace and colorful ceremony.

Conclusion

Many Ethiopians might have felt that their Church without Abune Zenamarkos would not feel the same. We should see what Abune Zenamarkos did to avoid such feelings. Abune Zenamarkos had made sure that would not happen or be the case. Seeing Abune Lukas is seeing Abune Zenamarkos. Listening to Abune Yohannes and Aba Gebreselassie is listening to the same voice of Abune Zenamarkos. The name Deacon Tadesse has been synonymous with the name of Abune Zenamarkos and St. Gebriel Church. Ethiopians in Seattle must feel immensely blessed.

Finally, this writer recognizes the fact that he was overwhelmed by the amount of information he had when he began to write this article, which he hoped to be short. Even ten pages would have not covered the fascinating stories being told by every person in regard to Abune Zenamarkos and St. Gebriel Church and the spectacular funeral. It is with regret that many had to be left out from this report for brevity. More over, most have been adequately covered by other writers in the past and many more untold stories shall be told in the future.