

Ethiopians Celebrate Christmas In Jerusalem

Editor's Note: In honor of the Christian holiday season we are pleased to present an article on an unusual Christmas observance in Israel entitled "Ethiopians Celebrate Christmas in Jerusalem," which we believe you will find most interesting.

The ancient community of Ethiopian Christians in Jerusalem start their unique colorful Christmas ceremonies after the rest of their co-religionists in other parts of the world have entered the New Year. On January 6th and 7th, according to the special Ethiopian calendar, fifty monks and ten nuns conduct all night Christmas services in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem, after a special fast that starts forty days before their Christmas eve.

Magnificent ceremonial dress is a feature of the annual celebration which also utilizes the symbols of the Lion of Judah and the Star of David. The latter is especially significant to the Ethiopians because they regard King David as the grandfather of their church, which was founded by King Menelik, the son of

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

Ethiopian Christians own several sites in Israel. In addition to the Archbishop's residence and Deir es-Sultan, two chapels on the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, six monasteries, three in Jerusalem and the others in Bethany, Jericho and near the Jordan River where Jesus is believed to have been baptized, belong to the Ethiopian Church and they all, as does every Christian Holy Place in Israel, enjoy the help and protection of the Government of Israel.

JERUSALEM - While the rest of the world is dismantling Christmas trees and considering New Year's resolutions, an ancient community of black-skinned Ethiopian Christians in Jerusalem starts its colorful Christmas ceremonies in an ornately decorated chapel on the roofs of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Deep within the winding paths of the walled Old City of Jerusalem, fifty black monks and ten nuns conduct all night Christmas services on January 6 and 7, according to their special Ethiopian calendar.

There are perhaps another 100 Christian people from Ethiopia also living in Israel, as well as pilgrims constantly coming and going, who attend these unusual services. Many of them have sought refuge here in recent years and they have been warmly received by the Israelis.

"I hope His birth has come to you in light," is the phrase uttered on Christmas by the Ethiopians in their language of Amharic. It is comparable to "Merry Christmas." This greeting, repeated over and over, is just a part of the Christmas service so colorful in vestments, drums and music.

The participants in the ceremonies dress in dramatic velvet robes. The capes, which reach to the floor, are heavily embroidered in gold and silver threads outlining such symbols as the lion of Judah and the star of David, which is also the insignia of the state of Israel. The star of David is particularly significant to the Ethiopians, because they believe that David was the grandfather of their church, which was founded by King Menelik, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

The forty days before the Ethiopian

Christmas, members of the community prepare for the celebration with a special fast. During the entire forty-day period the Ethiopians eat only vegetables in the afternoon; they do not even allow themselves eggs or milk. On the day before Christmas, there is a strict fast, with the eatings of only a little food at noon. The nothing is consumed until the morning of Christmas day, January 6.

The official Christmas prayers begin Christmas eve at about 8 p.m. in the chapel of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem. (The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is revered by Christians as the site of the crucifixion and believed by many to contain the tomb of Jesus from which He rose.) The church is especially holy to the Ethiopians because they say it is adjacent to the site which was given to them in the days of King Solomon.

Services in the chapel on the roof continue until two in the morning and include the use of traditional instruments - the drum and another metal instrument resembling cymbals, used in the temples of ancient Egypt and said to have come from the temple of Jerusalem.

The Ethiopians stand praying for many hours. They also carry with them a special

wooden stick about four-and-a-half feet tall with a curved silver top. In Ethiopia the lifting of the stick up and down is used for indicating rhythm in liturgical type dances. In Israel, the Ethiopians also use the stick for support while praying since they have been fasting and might be weakened.

After the services, about three in the morning, the worshippers enjoy a meal. At five in the morning, they all go to Bethlehem to pray in the Grotto of the Nativity, the traditional birth place of Jesus.

These unique ceremonies are repeated each year in Jerusalem by these dignified Christians from Africa. The Ethiopians are known in Israel for their quiet spoken politeness and their sense of charity and concern for other people.

Ethiopian Christians can be found in several locations in Israel. In addition to the Archbishop's residence and Deir es-Sultan (the two chapels atop the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre), the Ethiopian church has six monasteries in Israel - three in Jerusalem and the others in Bethany, Jericho and near the Jordan River - the place believed to be the site of Jesus' baptism. These Ethiopian holy places, as all Christian sites in Israel, enjoy the help and protection of the Israeli government.

New Mind - New World

By MATTHEW BILAL HAMIDULLAH

HUMAN FREEDOM
Part III

As we continue this series entitled, Human Freedom, the question arises, "what is a human?" This no doubt is something that we take for granted, and that is knowing what a human being is. We also take for granted that we know what a man is, and what a woman is; but if we really have not been taught what it is to be human and what it is to be a man or woman, then we really are without the true knowledge of these stages of growth. Man, unlike the animal kingdom (man is not an animal; man is mind), does not have any inborn nature. Man has to be taught his nature.

If we rear a dog in a human environment, the dog will remain a dog. He (the dog) has instincts which will guard over his growth and these instincts will insure that the dog will grow up to be a dog. But if we rear a child in a dog like environment, the child will grow up to have a dog like nature. Man has no instinctive nature. Man has to be taught his proper nature, and in this sense man is born "free". Man is born free in that man has the capacity to grow as a mind to reflect the beauty and dignity of Almighty God. Man was given the task of being the ruler in earth (see Bible, Genesis). Man was told by Almighty God to be the ruler of everything in the earth, everything in the heavens and everything in himself. Man was given the freedom to become the master of the physical creation. Man was told that his mastery would come through his remaining obedient to that One (God) that placed him in this high position. In the Holy Quran, the Holy Book or Bible for the Muslims, man is called the Kalifa or custodian of the earth.

In order for man (mind) to rule, mind must itself remain free. If mind becomes enslaved, then it can no longer be the ruler in the physical (earth). If we look around, there is no other creature that has as much freedom as the human being. The human can grow and grow to great heights and can accomplish much with his frail body but strong and highly developed mind. Our bodies do not place us in a superior position in the earth. There are many creatures that can out run man, out sex man, out lift man, and out do man in every physical area. But there is no creature that can out think man. Our minds make us superior in the physical earth.

As a human being (humus man) or mind up out of and ruling in the earth, our freedom guaranteed only through our obedience to Almighty God. God says in Bible Genesis that He made man (mind) in his own image. If we study the Bible for a few moments with an open mind, we will see that the authors of the Bible are talking about something greater than a flesh and blood man and woman. These men are talking about the creation of a certain consciousness that should rule in the earth.

Almighty God has dignified man and has given a man a greater challenge than he has given any other creation. He has challenged man to save himself. God has already saved the other forms of creation. Dogs, cats, horses, monkeys, lions, trees, are already saved. They have a nature that will prevent them from getting away from the path of salvation. You have to force an animal to get away from his nature. You have to beat him and constantly abuse an animal to get him from his natural behavior. But man (mind) will leave his human image very quickly and one need not beat mind (man) to get him away from his true human image. One simply has to tell man (mind) a lie and make him believe it and one will cause the mind to leave its natural path of growth and development.

As-Salaam-Alaikum (peace be unto you).

JUNIOR USHERS ELECT OFFICERS

The Junior Usher Board of Rogers Grove met at the home of Mrs. Mae Sue Champion, Saturday, December 17 to elect new officers for 1978. Nine of thirteen active members attended the meeting. They were Anthony Meadows, president; Sharon Rogers, secretary; Stanley Bailey, treasurer; George Durham, Wade and Wanda Worley, Gail and Michelle Everett and Kim Hart.

In-coming officers for 1978 are: Anthony Meadows was reelected president; Wanda Worley, secretary; Gail Everett elected treasurer. George Durham was appointed chairman of the Program Committee. Serving with him will be Stanley Bailey and Wade Worley. The Junior Ushers are under the leadership of Mrs. Marion Rogers, Junior Usher Advisor and Mrs. Annie Daye, Assistant Advisor.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

May the joy, peace, good will and spirit of the Christ Child be yours for the coming year.

Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Harvey
Mrs. Emma Corbett Saunders

CHURCH NEWS

DEATHS AND FUNERAL SERVICES



WILLIAMS

Funeral services for Howard Williams, of Chester, PA, were held Sunday, December 18 at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Chatham County by Dr. Marcus Ingram. Burial was in the Williams Family Cemetery in Chatham County.

Williams was born in Apex and attended the Wake County public schools, Berry O'Kelly High School in Method, NC and Hampton Institute. He was an auto mechanic. He was a retired employee of the VA Hospital in Coatesville, PA.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Annie Bell Williams; a son, Howard Williams of Chester, PA; a foster daughter, Mrs. Carolyn Brooks of Chester, PA; five sisters, Mrs. Madge W. Turner, Mrs. Mable W. Allen, Mrs. Thelma W. Hill, Mrs. Grace W. Williams and Mrs. Marion W. Alston.

Arrangements were by Fisher Funeral Parlor.

ROGERS

Funeral services for Mrs. Isabella Bailey Rogers, 75, of 312 Price Avenue, who died

Tuesday, December 13, were held Saturday, December 17 at St. Joseph's AME Church by Rev. W. W. Easley, Jr. Burial was in Beechwood Cemetery.

Surviving are two sons, Lonnie Rogers and William Rogers of New York, NY; three sisters, Mrs. Sarah Russell, Mrs. Sallie Williamson, and Mrs. Anna Barlett of Detroit, MI; a brother, Fred Bailey; two grandchildren.

DAVIDSON

Funeral services for John William Davidson of 1211 Crowell St. who died Friday, December 16 at Hillcrest Convalescent Center, were held Sunday, December 18 at St. Joseph's AME Church by Rev. W. W. Easley, Jr. Burial was in Beechwood Cemetery.

Davidson taught at several Durham schools. He was principal at Lyon Park Elementary School, Pearsontown Elementary School and Highland Junior High School and assistant principal at Hillside High School.

He was also supervisor of the juvenile court under Judge Manie Dowd Walker and director of Durham city playgrounds. He was a member of the jury commission of Durham County.

He attended St. Joseph's AME Church, where he served as class leader, a trustee and secretary of the trustee board.

He was also a member of the Doric Lodge No. 23, Consistory No. 218, Zeta Temple No. 176 and the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Celia T. Davidson; a daughter, Miss Celia E. Davidson; two brothers, Singleton Davidson of Cincinnati, OH and Booker Davidson of Louisville, KY.

Courtesy of Scarborough and Hargett Memorial Chapel and Gardens.

RANSOM

Funeral services for Mrs. Lelia Ransome of 1202 Colfax Street, who died Monday, December 12, were held Saturday, December 17 at Kyles Temple AME Zion Church by Dr. William M. Freeman. Burial was in Glennview Memorial Park.

Mrs. Ransome was employed by Hillhaven Convalescent Center. She was a member of Kyles Temple AME Zion Church, where she was a member of the senior choir, the Stewardess Board No. 1, the Life Member Crusade Council, the A&E Circle and the Prayer Band. She also served as a class leader. She was a member of the Neighborhood Friendly Helpers Club.

Surviving are her husband, Chester R. Ransom; a daughter, Mrs. Lillian Faye of Beltsville, MD; two sons, Chester D. Ransom of Washington, DC and Sidney R. Ransom; five sisters, Mrs. Bessie Hall, Mrs. Lillie Wall and Mrs. Bernice Steple, both of Rockingham, Mrs. Dora Covington and Mrs. Gladys Callahan, both of Washington, DC; two brothers, James Covington and Chauncey Covington, both of Washington, DC; and four grandchildren.

Courtesy of Scarborough and Hargett Memorial Chapel and Gardens.

KEITH

Funeral services for Thomas Keith, who died Wednesday, December 14 at Hillhaven Rose Manor Nursing Home, were held Tuesday, December 20 at Scarborough and Hargett Memorial Chapel by Rev. W. E. Daye. Burial

was in Rogers Grove Church Cemetery.

Surviving are a sister, Miss Thelma Keith of Loss Angeles CAL.

Courtesy of Scarborough and Hargett Memorial Chapel and Gardens.

EVERETT

Funeral services for Victor Everett of 3605 Four Seasons Drive, who died Monday, December 12 at Duke Medical Center, were held Saturday, December 17 at Scarborough and Hargett Memorial Chapel by Rev. Harold Timberlake. Burial was in Glennview Memorial Park.

Everett was born in Richmond County and had lived in Durham most of his life. He formerly attended St. Mark AME Zion Church. He was an employee of Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co. for over 30 years.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Jesse Lee Hawley Everett; a son, Robert G. Thorpe; two daughters, Mrs. Irene Womack of Rockingham and Miss Julia Thorpe of Washington, DC; six sisters, Mrs. Leslie Wilson of Washington, DC, Mrs. Eliza Quick of Hamlet, Mrs. Eva Covington of Rockingham and Mrs. Tina Blount, Mrs. Alberta Covington and Mrs. Cathleen 13 grandchildren.

Courtesy of Scarborough and Hargett Memorial Chapel and Gardens.

STRADFORD

Funeral services for Henry "Uncle" Stradford of 603 Carlton Avenue, who died Saturday, December 17 at Durham County General Hospital were held Wednesday at Emmanuel Temple Seventh Day Adventist Church by Elder Sloan. Burial was in Glenn-

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The Young Adults, along with the Sunday School of Rogers Grove, presented their annual Christmas program Sunday evening, December 18. The Sunday School sang various Christmas carols and the Young Adults presented a play entitled, "The Babe Gets Up From the Manger."

Rev. P. R. Jones, pastor of Rogers Grove, installed next year's officers: Mildred Meadows, president; Stanley Bailey, vice president; Anthony Meadows, secretary; and Vicki Rogers, assistant secretary. Advisors for the Young Adult Church are Mrs. Leslie Meadows, Mrs. Helen Jones, and Calvin Bailey. Mrs. Helen Jones could not be present because of illness. Gifts were exchanged at the close of the program and fruit bags were given members of the entire church.

W. A. AMEY'S FUNERAL SERVICE

Funeral services for Mrs. Nora Thomas, 2624 Lincoln Street, who died Friday evening at her home, were held Tuesday, December 20 at Fawcett Memorial Church. Burial was in Glennview Memorial Park.

WORDS FOR THE WORLD

O YE LOVERS OF THE ONE TRUE GOD! Strive that ye may truly recognize and know him, and observe befittingly His precepts.

-BAHA'I WRITINGS

CARD OF THANKS.....

We wish to thank our many friends for the cards, donations, food, visits, prayers and every act of kindness during the illness and loss of our beloved Husband and Brother.

The Flintall, Sanford and Rice Families.

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REV. LORENZO A. LYNCB, Pastor

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 25, 1977
CHRISTMAS DAY

9:30 A. M. - CHURCH SCHOOL
10:55 A. M. - WORSHIP - Sermon - The Pastor - "ON BEYOND A SECOND-HANDED APPROACH TO CHRIST!" (Matthew 2:8)

The Gospel Choir leading the singing - Mr. John H. Gattis, Organist - Mrs. Virginia W. Alston, Director

The Jr. Ushers ushering.