



An Open Letter to my Fellow Ethiopians for the New Year: Reflection Brings Questions

January 5, 2009

“My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within, my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because the children and infants faint in the streets of the city. They say to their mothers, “Where is bread and wine?” as they faint like wounded men in the streets of the city, as their lives ebb away in their mothers’ arms...What can I say for you? Your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you?” (Lamentations 2:11-13)ⁱ

Dear Ethiopian,

As we celebrate this New Year and reflect back on 2009, it draws me to examine myself and my purposes for my life. I invite you, meaning all Ethiopians—including Woyane or EPRDF supporters to do the same.

For me, I live a simple life, without many of the “extras.” In fact, the truth is, even maintaining this has been quite a struggle. Recently, it has caused me to really question myself as to how long I can continue this way. The holiday season has a way of only increasing such introspection. As a result, I have found myself engulfed in an inner dialogue, a conflict of sorts, about my soul, my life and the purposes God has given me in this life. It is all inextricably interwoven with my motherland, Ethiopia, Africa and after six years of this work, what my response should be in 2010 to this continuing crisis.

In the midst of these heavy and confusing feelings, I became aware of powerful passages from the book of Lamentations in the Bible, written in 586 BC, that spoke of the pain, suffering and grief of the people following the destruction of Jerusalem. These laments profoundly spoke to my heart over two thousand years later as they seemed to so closely describe the destruction going on to our people all over Ethiopia, pointing to part of the cause being, the lack of justice and compassion towards others. Is this not true of us Ethiopians?

My Fellow Ethiopians;

Whether you are Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Animist or a non-believer, I believe you may find that the images, emotion and pain expressed along with the lessons to be learned are greatly worthwhile to reflect upon as we enter this New Year; seeking new solutions to the deterioration of life in Ethiopia.

Let us first look at what is happening. It disturbs me greatly to see so many negative images and to hear so many tragic stories of suffering coming out from all over Ethiopia on a daily basis. These are some of the most recent stories:

In Gambella, the Indian company, **Karuturi Global is said to now control 300,000 hectares in the Gambella region or about 741,000 acres, an area larger than Luxembourg.ⁱⁱ This multi-national corporation**, with shareholders in Maryland and Boston, says the best part of the deal is that **the land is free for the first six years and then only \$1.18 per hectare for eighty-four more years! Apparently, equivalent land in countries like Malaysia and Indonesia would cost about \$350 per hectare.**

The Anuak governor of the Gambella region who is making these deals for and with the ruling regime in Addis Ababa is the same alleged genocide perpetrator, Omot Obang Olom, who provided the list of names of Anuak to be killed in the genocide of 2003. In 2004 he was promoted to governor for his “good work.” This is an evil regime executing a new kind of genocide and modern slavery that can drive one to tears.

My Fellow Ethiopians;

Another lament—a **mourning cry of great loss—from the Gambella region** is from the Mazengir, a tiny ethnic group whose people live in the forests and who sustain themselves as beekeepers and hunters. They total fewer than 2,500 people worldwide. They say, **“Our forests are about to be destroyed by the billionaire, Al Amoudi. These forests are our life! Without these forests, we are finished! The forest is our shelter, our food, our clothing and the source of everything to us!”**

A lament is being heard from Beninshangul-Gumuz as the government is making plans to give away 300,000 hectares of land, which will be cleared of its bamboo trees. They say, **“To us, the bamboo tree, let alone the land, defines who we are. It is our food, the material through which we build our homes, make our musical instruments and our weapons. Without the bamboo tree, our survival is questionable, but add to that the loss of our land and it will be the end of us as a people!”**

A lament is heard from Afar. They say, **“The government has never cared about us, but now our fertile land is being given to Egypt. On top of that, there are multi-national corporations who are using our resources and poisoning the river from which we drink our water. These new environmental hazards are not only killing the people, but our camels. To us, the camel is who we are and is our livelihood!”**

A lament is heard from Amhara who say, **“Our land has been taken over and we have been displaced. One elderly man refused to leave his home. He was slapped, hit and beaten by Ethiopian defense forces until he was bleeding from the mouth. He was then taken away by security forces and has not been heard of since. He was 80 years old.”**

A lament is coming from Oromiya. They said, **“Our land is being given to the Indian companies and anyone who speaks out against it is labeled as an OLF terrorist who is not supposed to have any rights or question any actions by the government.”**

Then, you hear the horror-stricken lament coming from the Ogaden. **“Part of our land, with many of our people inside, has been blocked by the Meles government and we have no way of knowing what is going on inside. Everyone is excluded from entering. We are fearful that once the information comes out it will shock the people like what happened after people learned what was taking place in the concentration camps [during the Holocaust].”**

A lament is heard from the Southern Nations as the people report, **“Our children and our elders have such serious malnutrition that they are dying daily from lack of food, but the government refuses to acknowledge it.”** Yet, Ethiopian Disaster Prevention Minister Mikitu Kassa recently admitted to the BBC that 5.7 million Ethiopians were currently getting food aid; but that **“in the Ethiopian context, [whatever that means] there is no hunger, no famine...”** and reports to the contrary were **“not evidence-based.”**ⁱⁱⁱ

In another part of the Southern Nations, in the lower Omo Valley, a place where nearly a million pastoralists, namely the Dasanech, Nyangatom, Mursi, Hamer, Bodi, Muguji and Karo live, the Gibe III Dam is being constructed without the consultation or consideration of the indigenous people. Once this dam is in operation, they tell us that it will mean the extinction of their people because they will lose their livelihood, as the dam blocks their sources of water needed for their survival, the growing of crops, fishing and daily water for them and their livestock. These people are among the most marginalized and discriminated against people in Ethiopia by this and previous governments. They are only exploited by people for tourism due to the plates they wear in their mouths. How many Ethiopians in the Diaspora care about these people?

My Fellow Ethiopians;

These are only a few examples I heard from the ground and I am sure, there are many more heartbreaking ones of how our Ethiopian brothers and sisters are being pushed off their land by their own government, which is then giving their indigenous land to foreign investors. As they are displaced, they are unable to farm or sustain themselves as they have always done. As they lose this source of livelihood, they are ending up as slave laborers, working for a pittance for these same wealthy investors, foreign multi-national corporations and countries who will be mostly exporting the food back to their own countries despite the fact that a representative from the World Food Program recently stated that over 16 million Ethiopians require foreign food aid from western donors just to survive!

Who are some of these investors, capitalizing on these deals? They include former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo^{iv} who will get 2,000 square meters in Oromiya, President Ismael Omar Gulleh of Djibouti (1300 hectares—some in Oromia) and his first lady, Khadra Mohamed (20 hectares for a flower farm southeast of Addis) and the National Bank of Egypt (20,000 hectares).^v Mohammed Ali Al Amoudi and his company, Saudi Star Agricultural Development, has been given 10,000 hectares in Gambella and has long term plans of acquiring 500,000 ht total, some coming from Benishangul-Gumuz and the Agew Awi Zone of Amhara Regional State.^{vi}

My Fellow Ethiopians;

This is just a beginning. In an August article on the government's website, Walta, it was reported that a delegation from Saudi Arabia has been told about "lots of unused land in the lowlands where lots can be grown" and how eager the Meles government was/is to provide 100's of thousands of hectares. In 2009, reportedly, 90 owners, leaders and representatives of nine giant Egyptian companies, along with 26 representatives of other Egyptian agricultural companies met to inspect land in Ethiopia.^{vii} Even the African Union has expressed concern about the land being given away to foreigners so quickly without regard to the people.

When I traveled back to Gambella in 2001 after not being back for a number of years, the inspiration of the land lifted by soul and gave me deep joy. Now, it is being given away for nothing to foreign countries and other investors, making us slaves in our ancestor's land.

My Fellow Ethiopians;

Ethiopia has become like a dying carcass surrounded by hungry vultures eyeing great opportunity. Many of these opportunists want Africa to remain exactly the way it is so the resources can be easily taken—with no strong institutions interfering, working only through greedy dictators anxious to "make good deals."

The sordid truth is that as long as the people do not know their rights, as long as they must put all their energy into daily survival or as long as Ethiopians in the Diaspora are each fighting for their own power or becoming opportunistic by overlooking all of this so they can gain financially by exploiting rather than helping their own people in Ethiopia, any kind of opportunist, foreign or otherwise, can have a "heyday," making lucrative deals with a greedy dictator who could care less about the people and their rights.

Why is this not outraging others to rise up? Am I, or only a minority of us, all alone? If this does not cause us to put our differences aside, how bad do things have to get? What has become of us and our moral conscience? Ethiopia is being turned into a slave state by the illegitimate government who is running the country! This is unacceptable! We don't even have to love one another in Ethiopia to share in our efforts to stop this.

In response, I have this inner turmoil of why this continues to happen; leading me to wonder, do other Ethiopians feel the same as I do and if they do, especially those in the Diaspora, why are we not better at collaborating to find a tangible solution to this? As I hear these stories from people on the ground in Ethiopia of the pain affecting them and others, I wonder, are others also disturbed by this? If so, why are we not doing more? Why is so much time and energy spent on complaining, blaming, accusing or coming up with excuses for not being involved?

My Fellow Ethiopians;

All of us can see the destruction among us, but why are we not speaking out with one voice, especially in the Diaspora where we have the privilege of free speech. Yet, when there is a concert for fun and entertainment, thousands of Ethiopians spend money to attend, but when it is about the future of the country, literally no one comes. What is going on? Am I alone in feeling this way?

Look at the crowds of thousands of Ethiopians that show up every year during the Ethiopian Soccer Tournament! The organizers do not even want Ethiopians to talk about human rights abuses and the lack of freedom and justice in the country. This event could provide a platform for telling the children of the country what is going on; but instead, those in charge pretend as if things are good in Ethiopia, ignoring the subject of the thousands of political prisoners or the system of ethnic apartheid that will completely destroy the country. What is going on? As my mind is preoccupied with such reflections, I wonder if others are also weighed down with such thoughts.

When some Ethiopians want some extra luxury, they find the money for it, but when asked to help the country, people bring out excuses for not being active or contributing. Is it greed, selfishness and/or a materialist worldview that makes us care so little for the lives of others when it is within our power to help? Why is it so many seem to be blinded to the need or if they see it, are so quick to overlook it as if it did not exist?

“We have suffered terror and pitfalls, ruin and destruction. Streams of tears flow from my eyes because my people are destroyed. My eyes will flow unceasingly, without relief, until the LORD looks down from heaven and sees. What I see brings grief to my soul because of all the women of my city.” (Lamentations 3:47-51)

My Fellow Ethiopians;

Those suffering the most are the vulnerable, the women, the elders and especially the children. For me, my childhood in Gambella was the best part of my life. I was free, happy and carefree; but today, the majority of Ethiopian children have been robbed of this. Do we care about these little ones? It is time to re-discover the God-created humanity in yourself that appreciates the humanity of another. That knowledge will give you a renewed sense of responsibility towards others. Missing this will leave us disconnected and empty even while our neediness drives us to seek fulfillment through meaningless and unsatisfying things and pursuits.

I ask, how long will this pain continue and how can it be eased? It cannot be eased by one person, one ethnic group, one religious group, one political party or any one group by itself; but instead, we need many Ethiopians who see another's pain as one's own; knowing that the pain and suffering in one group is no different than the pain and suffering of your own. The call to action is to any Ethiopian born in this land, regardless of your ethnicity, religion, gender, educational status or age. Please understand that a failure to take such action, often based on a disturbing lack of compassion towards others, is the reason for the continuing suffering of our people.

“Even jackals offer their breasts to nurse their young, but my people have become heartless like ostriches in the desert. Because of thirst the infant's tongue sticks to the roof of its mouth; the children beg for bread, but no one gives it to themtheir skin has shriveled on their bones; it has become as dry as a stick. Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of famine; racked with hunger, they waste away for lack of food from the field.” (Lamentations 4:3-4, 8b-9)

My Fellow Ethiopians;

Can anyone deny that this is Ethiopia? Does it remind you of Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan or Africa? As we begin 2010, ask yourself, what would make this year different from last year or any number of years before that? When will we see the demarcation between the Ethiopia of pain and suffering and a new, reconciled and transformed Ethiopia where “humanity comes before ethnicity” or where morality, truth, justice, freedom, equality and the respect for the dignity of others are freed from the dungeons of our past?

Just look at this next passage very carefully. What was described then is what we have now.

“Remember, O LORD, what has happened to us; look, and see our disgrace. Our inheritance has been turned over to aliens, our homes to foreigners. We have become orphans and fatherless, our mothers like widows. We must buy the water we drink; our wood can be had only at a price. Those who pursue us are at our heels; we are weary and find no rest. We submitted to Egypt and Assyria to get enough bread. Our fathers sinned and are no more and we bear their punishment. Slaves rule over us and there is none to free us from their hands. We get our bread at the risk of our lives because of the sword in the desert. Our skin is hot as an oven, feverish from hunger. Women have been ravished in Zion, and virgins in the town of Judah. Princes have been hung up by their hands; elders are shown no respect. Young men toil at the millstones; boys stagger under loads of wood. The elders are gone from the city gate; the young men have stopped their music. Joy is gone from our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning. The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned! Because of this our hearts are faint, because of these things our eyes grow dim for Mount Zion, [God’s presence] which lies desolate [as God is abandoned by us, the people] with jackals [opportunists] prowling over it.” (Lamentations 5:1-18)

Ethiopians or Africans who are out of touch with their souls may not accept this description as being true today, but otherwise, most will see the similarities between this description of an ancient country and our own 21st century Ethiopia and African continent. If it leads you to ask the question, who will change this, another passage will shed some light on who will not do it.

“Moreover, our eyes failed, looking in vain for help; from our towers we watched for a nation that could not save us. Men stalked us at every step, so we could not walk in our streets. Our end was near, our days were numbered for our end had come. Our pursuers were swifter than eagles in the sky; they chased us over the mountains and lay in wait for us in the desert.” (Lamentations 4: 17-19)

These people waited for an outsider—another nation—that could not do it. The truth of the material world is that people and countries put their own interests first. Washington DC, London, Berlin, Paris or other wealthy and powerful countries will not change Ethiopia. If they would or could, they would have done it a long time ago.

My Fellow Ethiopians;

We should not forget that slavery and such aggressions took place in Africa in the past, not only because of outsiders coming in, but because of those Africans who capitalized on the “opportunity” to either sell their brothers and sisters like cattle or to not defend them because the victims were not part of their own tribe. Those who are willing to compromise moral principles continue to flourish under the absence of law in Ethiopia today; pursuing the material and in doing so, betraying their fellow Ethiopians and advancing simply a different variation of the slavery. You can name them—“it” could be named “Meles,” a multi-national corporation, a foreign country or a wealthy billionaire who hosts extravaganza events like soccer tournaments while exploiting land and economic goldmines all over the country. It also could be “us” for doing nothing. Why are our leaders, particularly our Ethiopian religious leaders, not speaking out and taking a moral stand against evil; sometimes even promoting the ethnic apartheid system based on hate and division rather than on love and reconciliation.

“The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity. The oracles they gave you were false and misleading.....But it happened because of the sins of her prophets [leaders] and the iniquities of her priests, who shed within her the blood of the righteous. Now they grope through the streets like men who are blind. They are so defiled with blood that no one dares to touch their garments. “Go away! You are unclean!” men cry to them. “Away! Away! Don’t touch us!” When they flee and wander about, people among the nations say, “They can stay here no longer.” (Lamentations 2: 14, 4:13-15)

This latter reference could also apply to today’s African genocide perpetrators like Meles, al-Bashir and many others. In response, we have to come out from our comfortable lives. We do not have to wait for someone else. Some have to sacrifice for freedom and must invest in the future. It must be done by Ethiopians willing to step forward with action that upholds higher principles. You cannot sit waiting for someone else to do it for our people are in dire jeopardy.

My Fellow Ethiopians;

If each of us does nothing, the international image of Ethiopia as being synonymous with our suffering people—perhaps the worst in all of Africa—will remain. Our victory over the Italian invaders is long forgotten, being replaced with evidence of the destruction we have brought upon ourselves through our choices of leaders, through our own selfish and opportunistic alignment with the powerful, through the forsaking of God-given morality and because of our apathy over the suffering of the vulnerable human beings around us. What I am saying is that we Ethiopians have to rise up and change as people. We are guilty of the sin of not caring for each other, so how can we expect an Ethiopia that does not reflect the consequences of our sinful choices?

Look at the description of those who were being held accountable two thousand years ago that caused God to remove his blessings and bring corrective grief; the gold in the next passage, referring to the previously faithful chosen people. Think of how Meles calls himself as part of the “golden people of Tigray!” I am sure the majority of Tigrayans will not want to be included with Meles in calling themselves “golden” because they see all humankind as being equal and recognize the evil being perpetrated in their name.

“How the gold has lost its luster, the fine gold become dull! The sacred gems are scattered at the head of every street. How the precious sons of Zion, once worth their weight in gold, are now considered as pots of clay, the work of a potter’s hands!...Those who once ate delicacies are destitute in the streets. Those nurtured in purple [royal colors] now lie on ash heaps. The punishment of my people is greater than that of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment without a hand turned to help her.” (Lamentations 4: 1-2, 5-6)

Of what were these people guilty?

“To crush underfoot all prisoners in the land, to deny a man his rights before the Most High, to deprive a man of justice—would not the LORD see such things?” (Lamentations 3:34-36)

My Fellow Ethiopians;

God shows he cares about the poor, the vulnerable and the weak. The guilty were the powerful who believed in their own entitlement over others; ignoring and exploiting others simply because of self-interest and belief that they could get away with it. God said no to them and brought about their downfall and refinement through the invasion of the Babylonians. God’s judgment was meant for their redemption—as a means to lead to self examination, conviction of one’s wrongdoing, repentance, change and restoration of God’s blessings; therefore, that no one should complain.

“For he [God] does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men. Who can speak and have it happen if the LORD has not decreed it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?” Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins? Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD. Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven, and say: “We have sinned and rebelled...”

My Fellow Ethiopians;

What can we Ethiopians do?

If there is something to look forward to in 2010; for me, it is to stop complaining and to see more people come out, one at a time, to demonstrate genuine care for the people, not just pretence in order to advance one’s own power or interests. An old Ethiopian song during the war with Italy went like this:

**Hagere Ethiopia Mogn Ness Telala
Yemotelisss kerto Yegedelesh Bela**

**ሐገሬ ኢትዮጵያ ሞኝ ነሽ ተላላ፤
የሞተልሽ ቀርቶ የገደለሽ በላ።።**

Translation in English:

**“My country, Ethiopia, you are foolish and naive!
The ones who helped kill or destroy you
got everything instead of the ones who died for you!”**

My Fellow Ethiopians;

Does this remind you of today's Ethiopia where many Ethiopians are siding with the EPRDF for their own self-interests; even leasing land and making business deals with them? These are the ones who are helping to kill Ethiopia and to prolong our struggle; yet, they will be the first ones later to come forward to benefit from the sacrifices of others.

We, in the Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia, are working as best we can to make a change. *We are a grassroots social justice whose mission is to mobilize Ethiopians in the Diaspora and within Ethiopia to unite in a coalition across ethnic, regional, political, cultural, and religious lines around principles of truth, justice, freedom, the protection of human rights, equality and civility in order to bring about a more open, free and reconciled society in Ethiopia where humanity comes before ethnicity and where the same rights, opportunities and privileges are available to all because no one will be free until all are free.*

We have four areas of important concentration, chosen due to the urgency and risk to the people. They are: 1) **safety and rule of law**, [stopping ethnic violence and promoting reconciliation and accountability], 2) **promoting the respect of all human rights**, 3) **promoting a sustainable and healthy economy**, [with laws to protect exploitation and enhance equal opportunity] and 4) **advancing human development** to deal with hunger, health, education and well being. Each of these issues are already in the formation stages of development into working groups. Anyone with expertise in these areas, are welcome to join with others to address these issues.

My Fellow Ethiopians;

If you are an Ethiopian who really cares and want a change, step out. If you are someone who believes in the principles of the Solidarity Movement or some other organization who is working for the betterment of Ethiopia, support them financially, even contributing monthly because without financial support it will not happen. Lack of funding is a major obstacle to moving forward. If you are an Ethiopian with expert skills in some particular area, even if not mentioned above, step forward with your skills. For instance, In Ethiopia, there is no way to communicate. If you truly care, let us create a national radio station by helping to fund it, organize it or run it.

Everyone has to contribute. If we do not, Ethiopia will be the same next year and maybe even 30 years from now, if it exists at all. We are where we are today because the leaders and the people who came before us have failed in the primary task of any well-functioning society—to value each other. **We can become another failing generation; or instead, a generation that builds a better, more humane and honest future.**

Within every region of Ethiopia, if we listen, we will be able to hear stories of the pain, misery and suffering of our Ethiopian brothers and sisters. We are what has been described here in Lamentations by people feeling forgotten and forsaken; people seeking to be restored to God so they can return to him, **“unless you have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure.” (Lamentations 5:20-22)**

My Fellow Ethiopians;

For those of you who believe in God, reconciliation with God comes first, but to all of us, believers and non-believers alike, making a grassroots environment of people-to-people reconciliation in Ethiopia, where there is mutual respect for the humanity of each other, is foundational to the establishment of a “New Ethiopia.”

One of the reasons the Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia was created was to take action, not just talk. Its success depends on others doing the same. This is not about politics, but about becoming different people. **Some will see it as a threat and put up obstacles, repress the information or start duplicate organizations that will act to sabotage a greater, more united effort. Some may feel entitled to dominate over others, but such efforts will become empty structures clothed in attractive rhetoric, like the League of Nations that tolerated Italy's 1935 aggression towards Ethiopia—an organization formed based on winning ideals that could not withstand real life conflicts of self-interest on the part of its strongest members.**

My Fellow Ethiopians;

Where is our morality today in Ethiopia? Moral behavior towards others is not the possession of one group of people and not of another, but crosses all distinctions; as does the tendency to pursue self-interest above morality. Self-interest, this darkest of motivations, is seen in Lamentations to only lead to destruction; it is the antagonist to the goodness, justice and the morality to which God calls us that leads to peace with others.

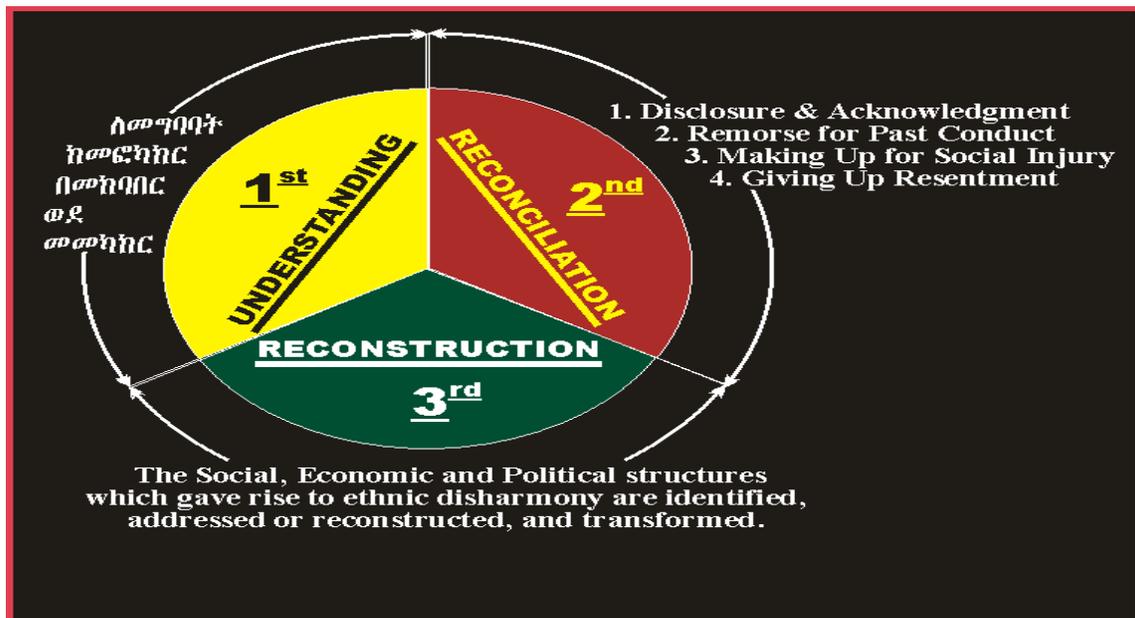
Why is it we discard the long-term rewards of doing what is right for the short-term rewards of immediate gratification when history tells us it will lead us into trouble. Someone has said, “When we fail to learn the lessons of history, we are certain to repeat them.” **Is this not what is going on in Ethiopia today? Can we learn from the lamentations of others two thousand years ago, or during Haile Selassie, Mengistu or over the last 19 years of the TPLF? Do we want this for tomorrow?**

In Ethiopia and in the Ethiopian Diaspora, we call on people from every ethnicity, region, political view, age, religion, gender and background to enter a moral fight for right. How will we know when we are on the right track?

The answer can be seen by re-utilizing the same passage from Lamentations 3:34-36 previously quoted describing God’s anger towards oppression and injustice, but with some correcting revisions; it will be when we: *“give freedom to, rather than crush underfoot, all prisoners in the land, when we give a man his rights, instead of denying a man those rights before the Most High, when we ensure a man justice, rather than to deprive a man of justice—would not the LORD see such things?”*

Even though there is guilt among all of us, there is good in every one of these ethnic groups. I am a witness to this as I have been among the people of the nine regions of Ethiopia—from the Ogaden, from the Oromiya, from the Southern Nations, from Benishangul-Gumuz, from Afar, from Tigray, from Harare, from Amhara and from Gambella; all encompassing rich varieties of people and cultures from over eighty different individual ethnicities. This is why I usually call us “the beautiful garden of Ethiopia.”

What is missing is the embracing of others. Politicians and the elite have failed to lead this embrace so we the people must begin by doing three things: 1) **understanding each other**, 2) **reconciling** and 3) **reconstruction of our society**.



In doing this, we must not avoid talking about our grievances because we must speak the truth about what has happened to us in order to find freedom from the chains of the past.

Avoiding speaking about this and not honestly confronting past wrongs will not get us anywhere. We have to speak the truth, acknowledge what was done wrong, listen to the pain of others, forgive, reconcile, embrace and sustain it all through moral accountability to God and social and legal accountability upheld by fair, impartial and effective systems of justice and strong and healthy institutions. If we the people of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa do not deal with this now, our slavery will worsen and so will the conflict as we ignore the God-given humanity of others.

My Fellow Ethiopians;

The laments of these people found in writings two thousand years old are descriptions of modern day Ethiopia. To end this, we must change. **Come out and do your part by joining the lament or cry for mother-Ethiopia** as Teddy Afro has already cried out in his song, **Yasteseryal, Mama Ethiopia: Mama Ya, Mama Ya, Mama Ya!** His song was a modern day lament for our country. **Are you, the reader, listening?**

“...my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.” The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD... Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him. Let him bury his face in the dust—there may yet be hope. Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace. For men are not cast off by the LORD forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love.” (Lamentations 3: 20b-32)

In pain, grief, tears and reflection; but in hope,

Your brother,



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ⁱ The Book of Lamentations, NIV Bible, Preface notes: “It describes an eyewitness account of the horrors and overwhelming sense of loss, a lament, which accompanied the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in 586 BC, offering some profound lessons to be learned from it.”

ⁱⁱ http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601080&sid=aeuJT_pSE68c#; Ethiopian Farms Lure Investor Funds as Workers Live in Poverty by Jason McLure.

ⁱⁱⁱ BBC report of January 1, 2010

^{iv} Nigerian President to invest in Ethiopia, Africa News, January 3, 2010

^v National Bank of Egypt to Grow Crops, Bloomberg, January 4, 2010

^{vi} Al Amoudi’s Agricultural Apparatuses Arrive, December 1, 2009 Special to Fortune, Wudineh Zenebe

^{vii} Ethiopian-Egyptian Accords, A Danger to Nile Basin Negotiations, Abbay Media, by Desalegn Sisay, January 2, 2010