



Where there is no vision, the people perish. Proverbs 28:18 (KJV)

Days of Celebration and March for a New Ethiopia

A suggested schedule with a daily emphasis for the Ethiopian Days of Focus on the future of all of us Ethiopians coming up on May 15 –18, 2008:

Summary:

These are the days we celebrate peace and renew our commitment to the resolution of all conflict by peaceful means. We commit or renew our commitment to political and social reconciliation in Ethiopia.

For all of these things to succeed, we, the Ethiopian people have to take ownership. Start organizing in your community. This not a message made for a political statement alone, but it is about creating a future not only for us, but also for future generations where we can live and thrive together.

It will take time and effort. Even in family disagreement it takes a lot of work to resolve problems and challenges, so let us not be hesitant to work hard to build a NEW ETHIOPIA and better future for those who will be left behind. Be an advocate for the future. Be a better good Samaritan to others than you expect towards yourself. This is the only way this effort will truly succeed.

Day One:

Thursday, May 15 – A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE: The Tent of Grieving and Celebration

Day Two:

Friday, May 16 – A DAY OF UNIT: Worldwide March for Ethiopian Freedom, Justice and Human Rights

Day Three:

Saturday, May 17 – DAY OF REACHING OUT: Building New Connections

Day Four:

Sunday, May 18 – DAY OF PRAYER: Confession, Thanksgiving, Reconciliation and Petition

Activities

Thursday, May 15 –DAY OF REMEMBRANCE: A Tent of Grieving and Celebration.

In Ethiopian culture, erecting a tent is part of the way grieves the loss of a loved one. It is when family, neighbors, friends, community members and even passersby mourn the loss of someone who has died. The family of the one who died and those who attend support each other by joining under this tent of grief, remembering and honoring the memory of the person who died.

This day is to remember all the Ethiopians within the country who have been killed, who have disappeared or who have died from the humanitarian disasters that accompany tyranny. Let us not let them die in vain. This is the day we can remember the sacrifices of those who not only died to build democracy in Ethiopia, but let us also remember and pray for those still in prison or still suffering throughout the country. This is a day to remember the innocent victims before and after the 2005 massacres as well as those who died during those protests for freedom. The tent can also be used for a wedding celebration. Let us celebrate of the spring of true Democracy in Ethiopia, 2005

Action suggestions:

- Pray for those still locked up in prison or are suffering in many other ways.
- Call or write to someone or group who has lost a family member, ethnic group members, etc to express your sympathy and remembrance of their lost one.
- Publish or read aloud a list names of those who died
- Wear traditional cultural clothes of mourning, when marching, use slogans like “Our people did not die in vain.”
- Ask people outside your groups about their losses or do research on this
- Take 10 or more minutes to reflect on these losses and what hopes you have for the future of democracy for generations to come. Resolve to contribute what you can to help.
- Ask these questions: Are the people of Ethiopia still thirsty for democracy? Will the victims of torture, massacre and illegal detentions ever get justice? Do your best to help and encourage others to do the same.

Friday, May 16 – A DAY OF UNITY: Worldwide March for Ethiopian Freedom, Justice and Human Rights

This is the day for a Worldwide March for Ethiopian Freedom and Justice—a day when all Ethiopians put their humanity before their ethnicity. Leaders of all political parties, civic groups, religious groups and others should make a statement about the shared value and worth of every person in the greater family of Ethiopians.

It is a day when those from all over Ethiopia should be invited to march side by side with other Ethiopians from every diverse group within the country. Public talks should be about the suffering of others. One group should carry a sign for another—signs that might say, “Eradicate tribal thinking!” or “God created us equal.” Ethiopians could wear T- shirts with a slogan, “I love Ethiopia” or “No to ethnic politics,” or “Do your Dirsha (share)” or “No one group will be free unless we all are free!”

This is a day to celebrate our Ethiopian unity—a day for us to declare that we are not defined by others who want to control us politically by dividing us ethnically. It is a day we say, we have much ethnic diversity, but one Ethiopian national identity.

This is a day to reflect upon what Ethiopia has become and what she could be. This is day we celebrate the principles of democracy which include reaffirmation of the ultimate power of the people, the principles of justice, the rule of law and human rights. Increase our understanding of democratic rights and principles by reading the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Amharic version at:),

It is a day we reflect on what we have done to help Ethiopia and its people, how to get involved if we are not, how to contribute more if we are. It is a day to think about solutions to Ethiopia's problems.

We ask civil society leaders, political activists, political and community leaders, journalists and others in formal or informal leadership positions to sponsor, encourage, promote and lead activities, especially public ones that promote Ethiopian unity and ethnic diversity.

Saturday, May 17 – DAY OF REACHING OUT: Building New Connections

This is a day to reflect upon what Ethiopia has become and what she could be if only we could live in greater harmony and peace. It is a day we reflect on what we have done to help Ethiopia and its people, how to get involved if we are not. It is a day to think about solutions to Ethiopia's problems.

In Ethiopian culture, we brew coffee and sit in circles where our hospitality is not limited to anyone. On this day, organize coffee circles where a family, community, church, mosque, synagogue or other organization could brew coffee or tea and then invite some Ethiopians you have never before included in your circles. Reach out beyond own ethnic groups. Invite people to your home and cook some food—perhaps people of whom you are skeptical or people you have met in the last several days. Reach out in different directions.

Let us celebrate our diversity. Read about other groups. Give opportunity for someone outside your own ethnic group to speak at your home or meeting, even by having them read a poem, or by sharing a humorous or an interesting story of their culture or experience.

Different political parties could speak on behalf of others with the leaders reaching out to leaders of other groups to bring new groups together. Religious leaders, political leaders, civic leaders and others should all make an attempt to find a way to start a dialogue that could lead to better understanding, improved relationships and new ways to work together on shared goals.

Sunday, May 18 – DAY OF PRAYER: Confession, Thanksgiving, Reconciliation and Petition

This is a day to seek our Creator God as our only real hope and to restore any brokenness in our relationship. As flawed people, we need to confess our wrongful ways and seek God's help in correcting them.

We thank the Almighty for his beneficence and mercy. It is a day to thank God for his creation, for his goodness, his faithfulness and for his love for each of us and for our neighbor. We can also thank him for his promises to “be found” by us if we earnestly seek Him with all our hearts, souls and minds.

He also wants us to reconcile with our family, neighbors and countrymen. This is a day we ask each other forgiveness for what we have done wrong intentionally and unknowingly. We must reconcile with God, ourselves, and with others. Go to others, asking for forgiveness, saying you are sorry for what you have done or for something others of your group has done to them. Tell them how you feel.

Create an environment for your and their descendents to live in peace rather than on unresolved grudges, anger and difficulties from the past. Reach out to others in the spirit of forgiveness and acceptance.

This is a day of petitioning God with every specific request... We pray for His help in resolving Ethiopia's critical situation in ways beyond what we could even ask or imagine. We are also part of what helps or hinders our country, so we should prayer to become the kind of people that do right to our neighbors. .

This is a day when we call on our religious leaders to lead us through prayer vigils, teaching, services or readings. It is a day to offer private prayers wherever we may be – in our homes, businesses, cars, at work or in our houses of worship.

*For more information please contact
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