



Millennium Celebration in Washington D.C Gaining Momentum

On February 27, 2007, the Committee for the Celebration of the Ethiopian Millennium (CCEM) held a successful town-hall meeting in Washington D.C.'s Unification Church.

Representatives of Ethiopian Churches, Civic Organizations, Political Parties, Print, Radio and Television Media, Women and Youth Organizations, Musicians Association, Sports Clubs and interested individuals attended the town-hall meeting. At the start of the meeting, CCEM representatives informed the public the genesis of CCEM. CCEM was formed by interested individuals and has no relationship with the Government-Sponsored activity in Ethiopia. CCEM indicated that regardless of where Ethiopians live at the moment celebrating the coming of the Third Millennium is important milestone; it highlighted the historical and social necessity to Ethiopians of welcoming this once-in-a-thousand-years occasion.

The Representatives informed the public what CCEM has in the planning of the New Year celebration. Since Meskerem 1, 2000 will fall on **Wednesday** September 12, 2007, CCEM unveiled that the New Year Celebration is planned as four-days event that is set to start on **Friday**, September 7, 2007. The following are the major planned events:

1. **Symposium:** Under the theme of "Reflections on the Millennium and Lights into the Future", scholars in various fields are invited to partake in assessing our past, present and shed some light what ought to be expected of Ethiopia and Ethiopians in the new millennium;
2. **Musical Gala:** In what will be one of the most extraordinary coordination and collaboration of many Ethiopian artists, a musical celebration of Ethiopian cultural and modern music and dance will be in display;

3. **Football Competition:** In cooperation with Ethiopian soccer clubs in North America, a mini-soccer competition is in the making;
4. **Prayer Vigil:** In collaboration with the many faiths of Ethiopia, this event will mark a program of prayer for Ethiopia and Ethiopians as we embark on a new millennium;
5. **Demonstration and Parade:** There will be a public parade and demonstration of hope for a "Democratic Millennium in Ethiopia". Unlike demonstrations against certain events, this parade and gathering will be a coming together of thousands of Ethiopians to show their best wishes to Ethiopia and Ethiopians for democracy, peace, justice, good governance, economic and social elevation in the coming millennium.

CCEM related to the public that although the New Year Celebration is planned in Washington D.C., the committee is comprised of individuals and organizations across the United States. The Committee is also in communication with organizers of similar events in Europe and Australia.

The Town-Hall participants shared their admiration for CCEM and what has been accomplished so far and informed their desire to work with the Committee. Moreover, the participants conveyed to CCEM many concrete ideas and supportive suggestions. The following are some of the major ideas:

- To create a working bylaw and division of responsibility for the remaining months;
- To include additional volunteers in the sub-committees;
- To include an Award program as part of the celebration of this Millennium;
- To intensify the fund-raising effort through the Media and organizations;
- To safe-guard the planning from potential disruptors and duplicated committees not-representatives of the interests of the Diaspora;

The participants at the Town-Hall meeting promised to contribute their share to make the coming New Year the best celebration ever. The meeting ended in a high spirit of commitment to working together. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2007.

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