



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church in the Western Hemisphere and Southern Africa records

1939-1998

Sc MG 777

Summary

Creator: Holy Trinity Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Bronx, New York, N.Y.)

Title: Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church in the Western Hemisphere and Southern Africa records

Date: 1939-1998

Size: 3.17 linear feet (6 boxes)

Source: Gift of Victor Smythe, November 2007.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo ("made one") Church maintains full communion with the Armenian, Syrian, Indian, and Coptic Orthodox Churches, together known as the Oriental Orthodox Churches. In 1959, Abuna Theophilus, the Archbishop of Harar Province in Ethiopia, established the Western Hemisphere branch in New York, Jamaica, and Guyana. In 1990, a congregation was established in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and brought into the diocese. The Holy Trinity EOC Bronx assembly served as the headquarters of the Western Hemisphere and South Africa Archdiocese. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOC) in the Western Hemisphere and Southern Africa records (1939-1998) consist primarily of correspondence but also contain minutes; addresses and speeches by clergy; printed matter; some ephemera; a notebook of members' information (1970); and financial statements and documents (1956-1984). A significant portion of the correspondence (1993-1997) relates to tensions within the EOC generated by the installation of Abuna Paulos, an archbishop elected by the Holy Synod in Addis Ababa to replace Abuna Yesehaq, the Archbishop of the EOC in the Western Hemisphere and Southern Africa, and the Bronx EOC's legal challenge of Paulos's authority over the congregation and its property. The correspondence also records inquiries from persons interested in the liturgy of the EOC; general news of the EOC in Ethiopia, the United States and Caribbean; and needs of the EOC in South Africa. Also represented in the collection are correspondence and financial ledgers of the Ethiopian World Federation (1938-1970) and some records of the Ethiopian Students' Association in North America, including a list of Ethiopian students in the United States in 1965.

Conditions Governing Access:

Box 6, which contains legal documents, is closed until 2065.

Preferred citation: [Item], Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church in the Western Hemisphere and Southern Africa records, Sc MG 777, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English Some material is written in Amharic.

Processing note: Accessioned by Edwina Ashie-Nikoi, March 2010.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the General Research and Reference Division: books and magazines

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

Creator History

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo ("made one") Church maintains full communion with the Armenian, Syrian, Indian, and Coptic Orthodox Churches, together known as the Oriental Orthodox Churches. In 1959, Abuna Theophilus, the Archbishop of Harar Province in Ethiopia, established the Western Hemisphere branch in New York, Jamaica, and Guyana. In 1990, a congregation was established in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and brought into the diocese. The Holy Trinity EOC Bronx assembly served as the headquarters of the Western Hemisphere and South Africa Archdiocese.

Scope and Content Note

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOC) in the Western Hemisphere and Southern Africa records (1939-1998) consist primarily of correspondence but also contain minutes; addresses and speeches by clergy; printed matter; some ephemera; a notebook of members' information (1970); and financial statements and documents (1956-1984). A significant portion of the correspondence (1993-1997) relates to tensions within the EOC generated by the installation of Abuna Paulos, an archbishop elected by the Holy Synod in Addis Ababa to replace Abuna Yesehaq, the Archbishop of the EOC in the Western Hemisphere and Southern Africa, and the Bronx EOC's legal challenge of Paulos's authority over the congregation and its property. The correspondence also records inquiries from persons interested in the liturgy of the EOC; general news of the EOC in Ethiopia, the United States and Caribbean; and needs of the EOC in South Africa. Also represented in the collection are correspondence and financial ledgers of the Ethiopian World Federation (1938-1970) and some records of the Ethiopian Students' Association in North America, including a list of Ethiopian students in the United States in 1965.

Key Terms

Subjects

African Americans -- Religion

Geographic Names

United States -- Religious life and customs

Names

Smythe, Victor N.

Yesehaq, Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the Western Hemisphere, 1933-2005

Ethiopian Students Union in North America. New York Chapter

Ethiopian World Federation

Holy Trinity Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (Bronx, New York, N.Y.)

Container List

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- b. 1 f. 2 Emperor of Ethiopia's Fund 1938
- b. 1 f. 3 1960s
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 - b. 2 f. 16 Western Hemisphere Abyssinian Cultural Center
 - b. 2 f. 17 Smythe, Victor. "Where Charity Begins: Philanthropy in African-American Churches"
- b. 3 Ethiopian Federation ledger books 1938-1939
- b. 4 f. 1 Ethiopian World Federation legal material 1964-1970
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- b. 4 f. 3 Ethiopian World Publishing Co. Day book 1944
- b. 4 f. 4 Records of minutes 1960
- b. 5 f. 1 Members' information 1970
- b. 5 f. 2 Ledger book 1939
- b. 6 Restricted files (legal) 1993-1996
 - Restricted until 2065.