



Heart of Compassion Missionary Ministries Newsletter

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Darkness to Light

Anyone who visits Ethiopia must see the amazing scenery of its national parks, observe the numerous species of birds, and explore the ancient ruins, but behind all of its beauty and splendor is darkness.

During this mission's trip, we had the opportunity to take a 12 hour bus ride to the city of Gondar, located in the northern part of Ethiopia. In this part of Ethiopia, the dominant religion is Christian Orthodox.



During our visit, we were introduced to a man who was raised in the Christian Orthodox religion, but converted to true Christianity after hearing the gospel. He pointed out that even though "Christian" is used in the description of this religion, their

practices and beliefs are different from what we read in the Bible.

As we listened to Tamirat's testimony, we learned that 43% of the Ethiopian population is Christian Orthodox; a religion based



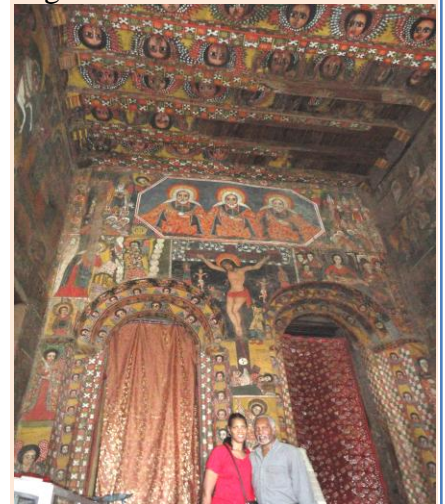
on traditions mixed with Old Testament principles and selective teachings from the New Testament.

For example, people in the Christian Orthodox religion believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, the saints, and the angels are the mediators between God and man, even though in the New Testament, the Bible says, ***"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus"*** (1 Timothy 2:5, NKJV).

In our quest to learn more, we visited Debre Birhan Selassie Church in Gondar, I thought to myself, even though the history and art are educational and enlightening,

the Christian Orthodox Church continues to cast itself and its believers in darkness by following the same practices, beliefs, and religious traditions that have been passed down over many generations, rather than following the Bible.

While walking through the Debre Birhan Selassie Church, we were told that the paintings on the walls were a depiction of biblical scenes and the saints, whereas the ceiling is covered with paintings of hundreds of angels.



Tamirat also stated that in every Christian Orthodox Church there is a replica of the Ark of the Covenant and that the priests still practice the rituals of that day.

Moreover, the Christian Orthodox Church continues to practice an Old Testament law that every year, on the Day of Atonement the high priest must enter in to the Most Holy Place to ask God to forgive the people for their sins. The priests do this with no regard to New Testament Scriptures. In Hebrews 9:14, NLT, it says, ***“Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins”*** As believers through Christ Jesus, now, we can go directly to the throne room to ask God to forgive us for our sins rather asking a priest.

Finally, we learned that in the Christian Orthodox religion, communion can only be taken by children up to age 12, by couples just getting married, and by elderly people, even though the New Testament does not set an age bracket for who can or cannot take communion. The Bible says that we take communion in remembrance of Jesus as often as you drink it.

Even though there were many more beliefs, practices, and traditions of the Christian Orthodox religion that we could write about, our goal is not to put down the people of the Christian Orthodox Church but to lift up Jesus and to let true believers know

that Satan is continuing to keep people in darkness by having them believe in rituals and traditions, rather than the gospel.

Even though Tamirat has suffered persecution because of his conversion, thank God someone witnessed to him because now he is no longer in darkness but in Light. Amen!

As Christians, we know that following religious doctrine and traditions is not what makes us Christians. We must be disciplined followers of Christ and we must believe the Bible in its entirety.



That’s why we must go where God calls us to go, even if it means going to another country to preach the gospel and even if it takes 12 hours on a bus to get there.



We must still go because there is someone who is seeking the truth so they too will come out of darkness and in to the Light.

The Prison Ministry Reaching out to Muslims

The Bible says, ***“Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body”*** Hebrews 13:3 (ESV).

As the Holy Spirit directed us throughout Ethiopia, we were introduced to a ministry that ministered to prisoners. We believe that this was another appointment from God because we had no thoughts of working with prisoners until we met Minister Solomon, Director of the Prison Ministry for Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) in Ethiopia.



Minister Solomon explained how the prison ministry was able to preach the gospel to Muslims and Orthodox people in prison because of the open doors that they have been given in the prisons throughout Ethiopia. Currently, there are 125 prisons in Ethiopia. Each prison has a minister trained by Minister Solomon.

We learned that many of the prisoners in northern Ethiopia follow a traditional way of reconciling their differences between each other.

For example, if one person kills another person, the family of the dead family member must take retribution by killing the person who committed the murder or kill another member of that same family.

This type of vigilante justice is why so many people in the northern part of Ethiopia are in prison for murder. If retribution is not taken by one family member, then another will take retribution and the person who was supposed to take retribution will become an outcast from the family.



This is why the prison ministry is also involved in teaching people that these traditions must no longer be practiced.

The goal of the prison ministry is to preach the gospel, intervene in the community before disputes get out of hand, and to help the prisoners to help themselves by

teaching them business skills that they can develop while in prison that will help them once they complete their prison sentence.

Continuing to Help People to Help Themselves

Another mission of our ministry is to help people to help themselves, so they in turn can help other people. To better accomplish our mission, we have teamed up with an organization called Blessing the Children International. Although this organization primarily is involved with educating and helping orphaned children, using their resources, we have been able to identify people within the extended families of the people whom they are helping. In doing so, we are able to help them with their business ideas so that they can help their family.

In the past, we were working with pastors from different churches but we quickly learned that these pastors were so involved with ministering, counseling, and teaching that we could better serve the people by working with an organization that already has ties with social workers and project officers in each of the five churches that we are working through.

In this case, we found that by working with the project officer of Blessing the Children International, Ethiopia, we are able to more effectively accomplish our mission while helping the right person to develop their business ideas.

For example, during this mission, we helped finance a project that will help a young woman named Seble Girma to establish a business to make and sell injera.

Seble is a single mother that recently lost her job. Through your donations, we were able to purchase 2 electric injera baking machines and the basic ingredients to start her business.



Selecting the Right People to Help

There were many more business ideas that we heard about while we were in Ethiopia. But before we help anyone, we have to do our research by praying and seeking God. In other words, we must make sure that the person that we are selecting to help is the person whom God is leading us to help, rather than helping someone out of our own emotions because there are so many people who are in desperate need of help.

Testimonies

Do you remember Beletu? She recently graduated from taxi school



and is now driving her own Bajaj! (A three wheeled covered taxi). Since many people do not own a car or a bicycle, a Bajaj is the most convenient way to get

around town. Now that Beletu graduated from taxi school and has her own Bajaj, she is earning an income to pay her tithes, give offerings, and contribute to her family's household income. All of this is because of your donations.

Another Testimony

Do you remember Elemalish and her donkey, Sitotha, meaning gift? Well, we would like to share her testimony of God's blessing.



God is a God of increase and we being His children should also increase. Now she is earning an income to care for her family because of your donations. She no longer carries the dry manure on her back to sell; she has a donkey, Sitotha, to do that now. With the income that Elemalish receives, she pays her tithes, gives offerings, and is able to care for her family. She also purchased a young cow from selling her sheep.

Please continue to pray for her husband because he is not following the Lord but is in a religion that is keeping him in darkness. Keep him in your prayers.

We Must Continue to Pray...

As I helped this farmer plow the ground, the old fashion way, in preparation of the "Teff" crop used to make injera, a staple meal that all Ethiopians eat,



I was shocked to learn that many farmers are now opting out of growing Teff. How could this be? There is another crop that farmers are growing that is yielding them more money but is cursing the ground. You see, when farmers grow Teff, it takes a lot more work but the ground is still useable for the next year's crop.

On the other hand, farmers have decided to grow Chat. Chat is illegal in the United States and in many other countries, but not in Ethiopia. And when a farmer grows Chat, it wipes out all the nutrients from the ground and they are unable to grow anything else, other than more Chat, for years to come.

There are several reasons why Chat is in high demand: It's legal to export to neighboring countries, there is a great demand among young people to use Chat, and it's faster and more profitable to grow. As a result, many farmers have decided to grow Chat, despite the curse that it places on the land. It is a sad situation and we must pray that the people of Ethiopia will vote to make this drug illegal. Amen!

Thank You

As you continue to sow into this ministry, we will continue to sow into God's people; financially and spiritually. We love what God has commissioned us to do and we will not stop until He says to stop. We are planning to return again to Ethiopia in February or March 2012, so please keep us in your prayers.

Reaching People and Touching Lives Around the World

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them..." Matthew 9:36

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