

Ethiopia and the Coptic Church

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Date: 19 June 2011

Preacher: Dr. Olav Slaymaker

[0 : 00] I'd like to open with a brief word of prayer and then tell you something about the context and then we will see how we go.

Our God our Father, we ask for your help and guidance in all that is said and thought and done in this place. Thank you for the privileges that we enjoy.

Thank you for the vision that you have given to this church and to all that are associated with it. We ask that you would help us to see that vision in this particular context of Ethiopia and its particular challenges this morning.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So I did have a very sophisticated talk on the relation between faith and science, which was planned for today.

We've had two such outstanding presentations the last two Sundays, one from Shin. Last week we had another excellent presentation, all of which have focused on the limitations of science.

[1 : 24] And I thought we needed to relax a little bit and show some pictures. It's very difficult to show pictures of faith and science.

So today I'm going to give you something of a slideshow, but it has got the serious intent of giving us a greater understanding of the importance of Ethiopia and the critical role, potentially, of the Orthodox Ethiopian Church.

So the outline of the talk is written here. Who cares? Who cares? Who cares? Who cares? Who cares about Ethiopia?

Secondly, a brief discussion of the vast variations in the natural endowments of Ethiopia. Some very brief statement about the history.

I'm very hesitant to say anything about the history in the presence of Sheila, who's our authoritative historian in this group. Then some description of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which is a national, conservative church faced with rapidly changing environments.

[2 : 47] Then some discussion of the hierarchy and mode of worship, distinctively Eastern Orthodox, from the Coptic tradition. Then a discussion of what business as usual in the Orthodox Church would mean, potentially.

And some discussion, briefly, of the dynamic alternatives, which include revolution, revolution, Islam, and or evangelical Christianity.

Any one of these represents a dynamic alternative. I'm not recommending all of them equally. I'm simply pointing out that there's a real challenge and there's a critical moment in time in Ethiopia's history.

So let's go to the question of who cares first. If we care about poverty and famine, then Ethiopia should grab our attention.

1973, 1984, 2000, involved more than 100,000 deaths in each year. And in 1973, 74, more than a million deaths from drought and famine associated with it.

[4 : 08] In a country of 80 million people, it's a huge dislocation. And although we are not famous for our attention to the social gospel in this church, nevertheless, we have had some addresses on the topic.

And there are profound concerns in our community about the state of our society. And if we think about a nation that is struck with such severe famine and drought, we should be concerned about it.

Secondly, Ethiopia is unique among African nations in a number of ways. Not least in terms of poverty and famine. The proportion of the population in absolute poverty is 62%.

Which compares with a figure for Canada of about 10%. Life expectancy is 46%. In Canada, 80%.

And the famines of 1973 and 1984 and 2000 hit the world press. Secondly, Ethiopia sits at the crossroads of Christianity and Islam.

[5 : 33] Now, we could make the same case for a number of other countries. But I want you to note that it's not often appreciated that Ethiopia is the second most populous country of Africa.

And in that situation, two-thirds of the population is, folks, formally Christian. And one-third is, folks, formally Islam.

But as you realize, formal Islam is rather more dynamic than formal Christianity. So the challenge is engaged. Thirdly, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is compromised in its relationship to older power structures.

Many of which are meaningless to the younger generation. Forty percent of the population of Ethiopia is under 21. And the church, and I should have opened by saying I brought my friend Jonas Abraham here, who is from Ethiopia.

He is here to correct me if I make some serious blunders. But 40% of the population being under 21, many of whom find it very difficult to understand the nature of the nature of the liturgy and the nature of the creeds of the Orthodox Ethiopian Church.

[6 : 57] The Pentecostal and Evangelical Christian community is growing rapidly, but it's still a small proportion of the total Christian witness in Ethiopia.

During my travels in Ethiopia in February, I was not aware of the presence of such an event. A group, the Pentecostals, Evangelical witness, because they meet in each other's homes, and in less attractive buildings than those which we see around the countryside.

We're impressed with the architecture of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, but actually what is going on, in many respects, is the growth of the home church and the smaller units of church activity, which has something to say to us here at St. John's in our present situation.

And finally, before getting into the geography, a question for the group. When I arrived in Addis Ababa, I found myself staying at the Hotel Gihon.

Which of our Bible scholars can tell me anything about Gihon? One of the rivers? This is an amazing congregation.

[8 : 18] People have actually read Genesis here. Gihon, one of the four rivers coming out of Egypt. So, this is a profoundly Christian culture.

There are a lot of... I mean, this is just an incidental case, the name of the hotel that I was staying at. But the imagery and the context of the scriptures is certainly not alien to the society.

Well, let's then move to the promised slideshow. This is a bare-bones map of the structure of Ethiopia. These are the mountain ranges shown in dark brown.

And the plateau area is shown in mustard. And the lower part of the foothills in green. And the blank is low. And particularly important is the Great Rift Valley of East Africa, which bifurcates here in the northeastern part of Ethiopia.

And is a dramatic and hostile environment. It's hostile in terms of the amount of volcanic activity that is associated with it. But it's more hostile in terms of the extreme temperatures that are experienced.

[9 : 34] So, 45 degrees is not an uncommon occurrence. It was 40 degrees when I was there in February. So, the limited opportunities for producing any agricultural crops in this particular northeastern corner.

The important thing to notice is that it is surrounded by Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and Sudan. So, it sits there in a very crucial relationship to those surrounding countries.

It's a history of war and difficulties with each of these neighboring countries. And the difficulty associated with those relationships we'll maybe comment on in a moment.

Well, here are two rather advanced maps. To notice I'm totally dependent on maps as a geographer. Thank you, Bill, for that new title.

It picks out the map of Africa as it was in 1941. And it shows you how many countries were independent in 1941.

[10 : 57] 1941. 1941 was important because the Italians had just been kicked out of Ethiopia. And here's Ethiopia, which at that time included Eritrea.

And here's the independent Africa in the early 1990s, where everybody is independent. So, the particular importance of Ethiopia as an independent African nation is emphasized in this map, or these two maps.

This is not a picture that I took. It is a photograph taken at the time of the 1973-74 famine.

And it shows the people from the northern part of Tigray province traveling with all their worldly goods, several hundreds of kilometers towards the western side of the country, seeking new land, seeking possibilities of pursuing agricultural potential.

This gives you some idea of the distoniness and the hostility of some of the landscape. Terraces are cultivated everywhere, even as high as 14,000 feet above sea level.

[12 : 24] There is agricultural activity. You'll recognize that this is almost at the equator, so therefore the climate is possible.

But you see the steepness of these terraced lands, giving rise to some of the most drastic soil erosion of any country in the world. But it's amazing that indeed they are able to queue out these terraces.

Now this is a parable. This is the railway station in Addis Ababa. There is, however, no railway. Well, it's not quite true.

There is a railway, but it doesn't function. So if you plan to take the train from Addis Ababa to Djibouti, you will find that it doesn't run.

The parable is this. It is a nation which is huge, and it is varied, and it is dramatic, but it is not easily traversed.

[13 : 31] And certainly by railway, you have no possibility of getting around. It's also a totally agricultural nation.

That's to say, only 20% are urbanized. Here's a typical town called Desi. It's about 250,000 people in population.

You see the folks carrying their goods on their heads in a typical local fashion. The crowdedness of the streets, the enormously dense population within those urban environments, the limited infrastructure.

So this is also a very severe problem. It also has magnificent art. And I hope Robert will appreciate this one.

It is on it. The United Nations Center in Addis Ababa has this magnificent stained glass window which commemorates the building of the nation.

[14 : 40] That is, a local artist who is very well known and has done international work. Here's an impression of the nature of the landscape.

It's the so-called Simeon Mountains which is in the northern part of the country. You can see that even at these high elevations there are agricultural fields everywhere. But there are these massive gorges that are cut into the plateau and the big rivers like the tributaries of the Nile and the Tikhizi and the Blue Nile form 3, 4, 5,000 foot gorges into this plateau.

Another interesting thing about Ethiopia is that it's recorded the only victory by a national African country over a European colonizing power in 1896.

The Battle of Adwa is called. They actually destroyed the Italian invading forces at this location which is close to the northern rim of Ethiopia.

A dramatic landscape. Of course the Italians did try and get their own back later on. They were in 1937-41. But nevertheless, that was a very famous and it's the only, as far as I know, the only example of a victory over the colonizing, or attempting to colonize nations.

[16 : 15] This location is called the Window to the Afar. It's a window from the highlands over towards the lower highlands to the east and in the direction of the very dry country.

This is while the denuding of the hillsides results from the constant search for wood, for fuel.

Anybody want to ride on a camel? This is characteristic, it's a very unsafe sort of thing. So, you know, on top of this, you know, you feel very powerful initially but then you start to wobble.

It's not so good. And then, well, in general, the migration of the camel groups across the nation in this fashion.

Now, in terms of the, oh, just one other thing in terms of the variations. This is the Danakil Depression in the northeastern part of the country where I said it was rather warm.

[17 : 27] And they're essentially salt flats where the only economic activity is the actual evaporating of the salts in these lakes in this fashion.

You see what there's absolutely no vegetation growth. It's really quite hostile. There is more that could be said about the geography but I'm told that there's a limited patience for geography amongst the public.

So, therefore, we move on to the history. As I mentioned, uniquely among African nations, Ethiopia was never colonized.

However, its history is extremely complex involving changing state borders in response to both internal conflicts and external. The rise of Islam, attempted colonization by Italy, and the violent takeover by a communist regime from 1974 to 1991, a regime called the Derg.

Some of you may recall that the Emperor Haile Selassie was beheaded by the Marxist regime as a closure on the traditional emperor's role.

[18 : 49] But, of course, I'm glad to say that the contemporary regime is much more favorable, not only towards traditional structures, but also towards the church.

Historically, the introduction of Judaism into Ethiopia is associated with the visit of the Queen of Sheba, King Solomon in Jerusalem. On her return to Ethiopia, so the story goes, she gave birth to a son called Menelik.

And when Menelik grew up, he visited his father back in Jerusalem and returned home accompanied by many Israelites, also carrying with him or with them the Ark of the Covenant.

Now, the ability to check this information is limited. I was told that the Ark of the Covenant was present in Aksum, but no one is allowed to check it out.

So, I have to call on Jonas in a minute. Maybe he's seen it. But, the important point really, which is undisputed, is that the connection with Judaism has been continuous over nearly 3,000 years.

[20 : 04] And, the importance of this is to note the influence of Judaism on the ceremonies and rituals of the Orthodox Church, which is quite substantial. At the time, the pre-Christian Ethiopia was dominated by the northern part of Ethiopia around Aksum.

And, it doesn't look a very exciting sort of place, but in fact, this is meant to be a prelude to the monuments that were built pre-Christian.

and this is the preparation of such obelisks, which they did by filling these cracks with water and encouraging the weathering of the rock and eventually breaking off huge slabs of rock, forming obelisks like this.

these are some of the largest freestanding solid rock monuments anywhere in the world. One could think of these as being the kind of Stonehenge of Ethiopia, marking the pre-Christian period.

On the sides of these obelisks there are serpents indicating the nature of the worship of the serpent, which was a practice prior to Christian influence.

[21 : 41] And sometimes these obelisks didn't do too well. And this one apparently fell down about near 750 or thereabouts.

It's been sitting there for a long time, just, I guess, but that's where you can examine very closely all the pagan symbolism associated with it.

The introduction of Christianity, of course, is associated with Acts chapter 8 verses 26 to 40. I won't ask you to quote this, but a certain eunuch, the treasurer of the queen Candace of Ethiopia, went to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel.

And as you know, there he met Philip the deacon and was baptized by him. Ethiopian tradition asserts that he returned home and evangelized people back home.

The paper trace for that is not very strong. The paper trace for the introduction of Christianity formally is much stronger, associated with merchants from the Roman Empire moving through the Red Sea and entering the Ethiopian landmass for gold, for ivory, and for incense of various kinds.

[23 : 18] And specifically, Frumentius, a Syrio-Greek from Tyre on the Mediterranean coast, helped to educate the queen of Ethiopia's young son.

And when this young son became king, Frumentius became his particular advisor and he evangelized the king. The king was converted through his ministry and then Frumentius decided he'd like to go home.

Then he went home and called in at Alexandria on his way home to explain to the newly appointed bishop, Athanasius. Anybody here heard about Athanasius? If you know your prayer books, you'll be able to find the Athanasian creed in full detail.

But Athanasius said, sorry, you can't go home. You're too valuable to us in Ethiopia. Please stay and I'll make you bishop. So Frumentius became the first bishop there in Axum.

And this was all occurring in the fourth century around the first council of Nicaea, 325 and 330, which was the date from which the kingdom of Axum adopted Christianity formally.

[24 : 47] there was a dramatic uptake of Christianity among the ruling parties. Interesting evidence is that the coins that were minted in the early part of this emperor's reign, I won't trouble you with the names of these people, but the interesting thing is that the coins minted in the early part of this reign were the pagan symbol of the crescent and disc and serpent, while those minted in the latter part of his reign bore the sign of the cross, demonstrating the official conversion of the state.

It would take much too long to go into the detail of the history and it would be very boring for most of you. So I just want to now move on to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and its nature in the present time.

So Oriental Orthodox Church, commonly referred to as the Coptic Church, but in 1959 it split from the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria. Up to the time, up to 1959, no Ethiopian was permitted to occupy the position of patriarch or bishop in the Ethiopian Church.

So in 1959 this change meant that Ethiopians were now admitted to the rank of patriarch and bishop.

Patriarch, by the way, is roughly equivalent to the Pope in this context. So what this means in practice is that they were formerly ruled from Egypt, but they now have their own patriarch.

[26 : 37] the autonomy of this church was then confirmed and the heads of Oriental Orthodox churches met for the first time since the Council of Ephesus in 1965.

The church claims 38 million members in Ethiopia, there are about 14 million Protestants and 28 million Muslims.

As of 1997, there were 30,000 parish churches in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. There were 400,000 clergy, 40 archbishops and archdioceses and 40 million lay adherents to the church, of which, as I mentioned, about 38 are in Ethiopia.

So, immediately opposite these obelisks, you can see the ruins of the pre-Christian obelisks here, immediately opposite is the famous church of St. Mary of Zion and it is in this cathedral supposedly that the Ark of the Covenant is located.

Other features which are very important, well, these little people are looking very puzzled, these strange geographists, but this lake, this lake hike, as it's called, H-A-Y-Q, is a site of a very famous monastery and there's a very strong monastic tradition in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

[28 : 25] there's also a very strong and dramatic development of rock-cut churches. These people are actually going to church and the church is this building here which is cut directly out of the bedrock.

Why is this? Well, this was for defensive purposes during the Middle Ages and this particular location where you were planning to go to, Ethiopia, is fascinating.

It's a place called Lali Bella. It's a St. George's church and as you can see, they get good turnout for their services. Much, much of the outside.

Here's one of the priests of the, this is a different kind of rock-cut church, a place called Wickrow. And the interesting thing here is that this is, this is the church that that particular priest is in charge of.

It maybe looks fairly conventional from the front, but if you look at it from the side, you'll see that it's cut out of the sandstone bedrock. And this is the front of the church that you just saw a moment ago.

[29 : 41] And here is the side of the church in the, in the raw bedrock. Here are some strange geographists.

What are they doing? Geography? No, no, no. This is a moment of, this is a moment of relaxation. Now, everyone entering an Ethiopian Orthodox church has to take their shoes off.

So, not all geographists are very flexible. So, there they are, struggling to get their shoes back on again. So, and, illuminated Bibles are used in the churches today.

An enormous number of these wonderful Bibles are available on the black market. you can be persuaded to buy one in Addis Ababa or elsewhere, but you won't get it out of the country.

So, beware. And, the inside of this Debrey Virhan Selassie church, which is at Dondar, which is one of the old capitals of Ethiopia, gives you some impression of the beauty of the interior of these churches.

[31 : 10] Now, to get to the point, this is an Orthodox church. It has an Athanasian creed, which is identical to that which we'll find in our own prayer book.

It is extraordinarily, I would say, overpopulated by priests. If one was being negative, one would say a priest-ridden church.

one of the reasons for this is the requirement that five priests have to be present at any service of mass. So, there's no unemployment for people training for the ministry in this church.

This is looking very serious. I mentioned that there was no unemployment because there's a large number of jobs for priests. people who are in the church.

What does that mean in terms of the dynamic of what's going on in Ethiopia? Well, there is a structural problem, a number of structural problems. One is that the language of the Orthodox church is a language called his.

[32 : 23] Is that correct for pronunciation? It's a language which has not changed very much from early medieval times. And the younger generation of course, well, in fact, the ordinary person in the pew, there are no pews, the ordinary person standing in the church has no idea what's going on.

So, the comparison between the Roman Catholic church and its use of Latin is rather comparable. So, you have a priestly class which is able to really debate the doctrines and the changes in the church which is comparatively inaccessible to the ordinary person in the church.

I'll come back to that shortly, but let me just talk a little bit about the nature of the church which I happened to attend. Now, again, I'll just give another apology here.

It's much easier to give a talk about Ethiopia having been there for only three weeks than it would be someone who had been there for several years. So, I'm giving you my impressions and I'll understand if it's not terribly authoritative in some cases.

But here's a description of one of the churches which I went into when I wasn't geographizing. The structure is likely circular or in this case what I was octagonal with three concentric rings.

[34 : 07] Innermost is the Holy of Holies where the Ark rests. Now, this is not the Ark of the Covenant. This is the Ark as the essentially similar to the way in which the Jewish Old Testament tradition has it.

This is what I meant about the influence of Judaism on the Church even today. So, in the Holy of Holies where the Ark rests, only priests and deacons have access to it.

The Ark represents the Ark of the Covenant and it rests on an altar. The sanctity of a Church depends upon the presence of an Ark and without it services cannot be held.

On occasion when the Ark is carried in procession, everyone prostrates themselves in its presence. The second part of the concentric arrangement is reserved for communicants and the women are segregated from the men.

Those of us brought up in Wales will recognize this tradition. The women segregated from the men, only those who feel pure and who have fasted regularly and have conducted themselves blamelessly receive communion.

[35 : 27] For this reason, most of the communicants are either babes in arms or very old people. The outer chamber of the Church is called the place of the cantors and is divided into three sections.

The western part is occupied by the cantors and one part is for women and the third part is for the men. The south door is for the women and the east and the north door are for men.

Those of the congregation who feel particularly unclean ritually stand in the churchyard throughout the service. And often there are as many people in the churchyard as in the church.

This is okay because the church precincts are considered sacred. And this is regarded as the same as attending church. Standing in the outer courtyard.

normally there are no seats in the church. Brush mats cover the floor and as mentioned shoes must be removed before entering a church. Because the services are lengthy, prayer sticks are provided for the cantors and important members of the congregation.

[36 : 46] However, the truly devout refuse to use the prayer sticks and exceptionally pious people mortify the flesh by standing on one leg throughout the service. And this happened in the service which I attended.

There was a couple of people who were standing on one leg and I imagine the mortification is considerable. Well, bad enough for most of us standing on two legs.

But it's an indication of the sort of, well, we'd say almost the Old Testament atmosphere of the official church.

Prostration plays an important role. On Good Friday, the faithful spend the whole day in church performing the act of prostration many hundreds of times to the limits of their physical strength.

I wasn't there on Good Friday, but this is what I told. The faithful, and here we can learn something, the faithful should pray seven times each day.

[37 : 56] And I'm sure that this is the influence of Islam, not to suggest that we shouldn't pray seven times a day, but there is such huge competition in the public square from prayers from the Muslim community that it is important for the Orthodox church to witness to its concern to maintain active prayers.

Fasting is strictly observed. There are approximately 250 fast days in the year. How many days in the year are they?

There are very few days that are not fast days. But the average person, it says in my source book, that the average person fasts about 180 days in the year.

fasting is fast. Fasts, maybe we don't eat in this church, we don't even know what fasting is. But those of us with the sorts of shapes that I have know absolutely nothing about fasting.

Glad to see that some of you look a little slimmer. fasting is not as hard to do. But it does underline the fact that certain days of the year we need to reflect on our faith and our commitments.

[39 : 23] Abstinence from meat and all animal products and no food or drink before noon is a typical sequence. Well, several of our daughters would do fine in this kind of fasting.

This is what they do all the time. But, you know, it's a very intriguing thing that this activity is so common.

But you can see also why there's a mismatch between the interests very often of the more senior and more scholarly members of the clergy and the average person in the church.

So my point here, which is I've actually got to this point here, business as usual equals stagnation. My impression, without wishing to be standing outside and saying that we are better than thou, nevertheless it seems to me that the church, the growth of the Orthodox Church is very strictly limited.

by the way in which the structure, the nature of the priesthood, the nature of the liturgy, seems to be stuck in past practice.

[40 : 44] Many of the distinctives of the Ethiopian Church were established between the 4th and 7th centuries. The Gize liturgy and the literature and the translation of the Bible into Gize, by the Nine Saints, these are Nine Saints coming from the Mediterranean region.

Music and art flourished greatly. Ethiopian Church music and an inspired hymnody became a feature of worship in the Ethiopian Church.

And indeed, in the service which I attended, the music was absolutely magnificent. religion. But the whole question of the stagnation is really caught up with the way in which the Church is linked to the political structures.

In that sense, we can also sympathize as an Anglican Church linked in with political structures and the difficulties that our links with national churches in different parts of the world have caused us.

There has been evangelization within, by the Orthodox Church within Ethiopia, especially during the 16th to 18th and 19th centuries, southern western and eastern Ethiopia were evangelized overcoming many of the Islam victories that had occurred previously.

[42 : 23] But as soon as the Marxist regime was in place, Mengistu and his Derg regime, all the property of the Church was nationalized and bishops who were sympathetic with the Marxist regime were installed.

And so one has a church totally dependent upon the political state of the time. After the Derg regime collapsed in 1991, the Orthodox Church has regained much of its influence, but with a great deal of reduced land holdings and a great deal of reduced power.

All the bishops who were not Marxist sympathizers were hired and in some cases were put to death. Fortunately, since 1991, the freedom of religion situation has improved.

Now finally, the dynamic alternatives, which seem to me to be the important implications of all this. Reformation, the Reformation that we experienced in the West, has not occurred in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Church. So this is one context in which Reformation would be possible of this Orthodox Church, if one could imagine the sort of movement that occurred in the European context in the 16th century.

[44 : 13] Revolution has occurred and been shown to be wanting. The revolution of the Marxist Derg regime was appalling.

Islam is everywhere active and Evangelical Christianity is growing at a remarkable rate.

the sign term used for Protestants is Pente, which comes from the Pentecostal affiliation.

Basically it describes Ethiopian Christians who are not members of the Ethiopian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Ethiopian Catholic churches. The work of the Sudan Interior Mission is quite remarkable.

they started work in the 1920s but were kicked out in 1937 by the Italian invaders. But before they were kicked out there were some significant conversions, estimates of 75 to 100 people.

[45 : 26] When the members of the Sudan Interior Mission came back in 1941 after the conclusion of the Italian invasion, they found a flourishing church which had grown to several thousands of people and it's one of the stories that I imagine there are people in this audience who know more about it than I, but it's quite a miraculous story of growth and of dynamism.

mission. That Sudan Interior Mission is now called Serving in Mission and it incorporates a whole community of the so-called fellowship of evangelical believers within Ethiopia.

So as mentioned previously the numbers are relatively small but nevertheless they're in the millions now and this is an extremely critical moment.

So what I'm trying to project here is a situation which is critical not only in terms of Ethiopia's own future politically and democratically but also in terms of the future of the Orthodox Church and also in terms of the future of the evangelical witness.

on this planet. In a sense Ethiopia incorporates all these challenges in a very dramatic way. Quite a few Christians have been martyred in the rural areas where people really don't understand very often the significance of the evangelical witness.

[47 : 20] And what seems to be happening is that the growth of the evangelical witness is highly focused in the big cities the big city Addis Ababa and in some of the other lesser cities.

But in the rural areas there's still enormous conflict. So it seems to me we need to pray very much both for the reform of the Orthodox Church and for the growth of the evangelical faith and the two could in effect in the most ideal circumstances work together in terms of recognizing the similar creedal basis but also recognizing some obvious difficulties in communication.

So that's my summary of the impressions that I got on a brief visit and I do look forward to your questions and I shall ask my good friend Ronis to answer all the difficult questions.

Thank you. Thank you.

you know I did look briefly but I can't say that I researched the question of Anglican witness in Ethiopia.

[49 : 18] I guess they are actually ruled from Jerusalem. It's a long way away. It's even further away than Alexandria was. So I don't know what that particular context is.

He was a part of St. John and left because he worked with him and he was at that point and he changed considerably then.

Well I mean this is a very interesting point. By going and doing some other kinds of activities one doesn't necessarily get a comprehensive view of what is happening.

I'm trying to project what I picked up and it's partial. But I do think that there are two things that are important to us. One is that we need to take this matter seriously.

The critical role of the church in Ethiopia both from the point of view of evangelical witness but also from the point of view of the stability of the world order.

[50 : 25] This is an unstable situation politically as well as spiritually. Yeah.

Please. Two questions. Do you know if there is much of a Jewish community still in Ethiopia and secondly could you think more about the current influence of Islam?

What sorts of things make it more dynamic? I can't say much about the Jewish influence. You will remember there was a dramatic incident a few years ago when Jewish people were rescued out of Ethiopia during the Deog regime and they were in danger of their lives so that there certainly was a strong Jewish community there.

No, no, they had a difficult time. In fact, they're kind of strangers in both places now. So I don't know what the situation is with respect to it.

Jonas, do you know much about Jewish presence in Ethiopia? As you mentioned, there are some reliance of Jewish people in Northern States of Ethiopia that say right now there are 30 70%, 70%, 70%, 70%, 70%, 70%, 70%, 70%, together with S, minimum, as now the other country.

[52 : 02] And the remaining are also in the process of doing that. That's right, because they prefer to do the spirit and .

OK. The other question was? What makes Islam one of the dynamic alternatives? What's their current influence? Well, I think every place you go to in Ethiopia has some Muslim presence and you're aware of it because if you're a late sleeper, you're awoken by the sound of the Mosin.

There are, however, certain parts of Ethiopia which are very strongly Muslim, where you'd expect them to be. The city of Harar is apparently the fourth most important city in the Muslim world, and that is located in the northeastern part of Ethiopia.

Harar has got about a little over a hundred mosques within its limits, and it's a walled city, fascinating location to visit if you happen to go there.

And the presence of Islam is everywhere there. One of the curious and interesting things is that the question of rising early in the morning, well, my experience was that I was first of all awoken by the sound of cocks crowing.

[53 : 43] Roosters were crowing around about four o'clock in the morning. And then in a number of places I was awoken at five o'clock by the services that were being held in the Orthodox Church.

There were five o'clock services in which the singing was quite strong, and the singing was projected across the city square by microphone, almost in competition.

And then at six o'clock the Merzian joined in. By this time the sound was overwhelming. All temptation to sleep in.

It was a pattern of... But more seriously, my comment about the dynamism of Islam is that it is assumed that every person who is a member of the Muslim faith is going to evangelize.

And it's not assumed so readily in our Orthodox or even in many of the Protestant traditions that evangelism is important.

[54 : 54] So the implications are clear. If we look at more secular reasons, the average number of children in Muslim families is significantly higher than that in non-Muslim families, partly because of the presence of polygamous families as being acceptable in the Muslim tradition.

So there's sort of a population growth impelling the Islam movement, and there's also the personal commitment part of it, which therefore makes it extremely important to recognize that the numbers, although there's two-thirds Christian and one-third Muslim, it's not a slam bang.

it's not over. It's not over. Yes? Well, did you find any cooperation between the Christian and the Christians in South Sudan?

Do I understand South Sudan, which is going to be independent in a few days? Yes. That's right. as well as everyone's things.

Yes, I didn't, I can't really speak to that, I just didn't say that, but you're right, I mean, this is clearly a very important opportunity. the whole sort of fact that the Sudan interior mission has had its initial successes in Sudan, and the fact that if you noticed on that first map, the longest border with Ethiopia is the Sudanese border, and all of that is part of the South Sudanese country that has now emerged.

[56 : 53] Yes? What was Italy's interest in Italy? Why would you want to colonize it? Be very careful here.

How many times? Well, I think, you see, they had made considerable efforts in the late 19th century to join the imperial bandwagon.

Eritrea was a place which they had considerable influence in. There were not very many Italian colonies.

They were interested in greater influence with respect to trade and with respect to their role as a European imperial power.

They felt a little bit left out with it, I guess, relative to some of the other European farmers. It's always been a poor country. It's always been a poor country.

[57 : 58] What I'm really asking, what was the treasure that Ethiopia has for interest in it? gold is certainly something of interest, but more importantly, trade.

If you look at the way in which the axis of trade, north, south, and east, west, focuses on Ethiopia. There is considerable interest in the, well, there was considerable interest in the coffee production.

As you know, it's the original coffee plant that comes from Ethiopia, and if it were not for Gat, Ethiopia would be very much stronger.

As you realize, the Gat prejudices, has prejudicial policies against agricultural activity in Africa, and so the coffee industry has lagged.

It's still the most productive source of dollars in Ethiopia at the moment, but it could be so much bigger with fair dealing across the nations.

[59 : 18] I'd like to pick up on what Carolyn said a moment ago. Both Islam and evangelical Christianity are proselytizing faiths. And I guess I'm wondering what kind of opposition to that the traditional church, thinking in terms of Coptic Christians are hanging on to the traditions, and assuming that most Ethiopians are going to be raised in that faith.

Are they opposing evangelical Christianity and Islam, and or is the government which apparently supports Comptic Christianity, are they opposing these two proselytizing religions?

I can only say that I was received with warm welcome in the Orthodox Church which I attended. I had the sense that people who were running the show were sort of inaccessible, but the people that I met in the outer courts of the church were extremely committed to their faith.

not feeling threatened. Not feeling threatened, and one imagines that the difficulty is for the official clergy to actually communicate through this technical language that they have.

Now, things are changing, I understand, and I think the breakdown of that language barrier is going to take place within the next decade.

[61 : 03] The question is, and then there's also the point about evangelization having taken place in the period between the 16th and the 19th century, so as to actually extend the influence of the Orthodox Church.

It's not dead, but it has extremely difficult structural limitations, it seems to me. And the Vatican II too, yeah.

Jonas? You said you'd correct me, so I'm sure. I know, I mean, I was speaking, I mean, this shows very good time, and you did it this time, and you took up for last series, the presentation and observation that you had made was really fascinating.

Being an Italian, I had a thing to do a lot of choices. I myself have got an opportunity to speak about Italian, and different issues.

so the points that we have made, and to time repeated to take us to India, beginning of 19th century, the prospects through religion, the drought, the population, the existing environmental problems, problems, but we hear terms, because us, they seem really fascinating.

[62 : 46] So I'm really very proud in you, having this challenge to give us a picture of Indonesia.

I have some comments here, but in general, I have been with you, to demonstrate that different regions have lived for long time, for example, Christianity and Islam.

That's been told, as we always do, since last year, we have been told that since last eight years, the situation has really changed and we have seen the conflicts mainly arising from, but the church and Islam, but Islam was accepting the evangelical and or anti coastal youth is in our program, even part of the family will become part of us, because as you may have witnessed, there is also intermarriage between the evangelical

Christianity or many post-times they don't really, they have many occasions have been destroyed the church transformation, not the big churches, but the churches, because they got really frustrated, because when evangelical Christianity or when they go to churches, they speak the word of God, in such an easy and enlightened way, not going to Jesus Christ and something secret or something unfitual, because everywhere, every time, in your life, wherever you ask a question of God, which is us, we will give the right answer.

These have shifted many young people from listening to the evangelical church. So, I mean, the help of the church really destroyed many of these churches and Christians to be treated to know what they need for.

[65 : 58] This is not the case when it comes to the next chapter. of the same of the issue. There is always this kind of issue.

Thank you, Jonas. We have to move on. But what you're saying is very interesting in the sense that things have changed in the last decade. that there's a greater sense of conflict and that this is really communicated through the younger generation, which is seeing a liveliness which they have missed in some of the more traditional contexts.

So this is, I think, at one level it's very encouraging, but it's at another level something that has to be prayed about and has to be very carefully managed.

But thank you for those comments. I guess we're more or less being under Bill's instructions. We cannot proceed when Bill is standing. Sorry.

Well, thank you. Thank you. Well, thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.