Number 35

Как слышать без проповедующего?

How Shall They Hear . . . ?

Siberia Letter of Rev. Alan Ludwig

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African Adventure

Once again this year I had the privilege of teaching for four weeks at Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The course, Biblical Hermeneutics, lasted from Mid-November to just before Christmas. This year the rector of our seminary in Novosibirsk, Rev. Alexey Streltsov, traveled with me and also taught a course on the theology of the early church.

Goat Meat on Hot Coals

Trouble Goes Ahead

We had our flights booked through Cairo, Egypt. Shortly before we left, however, a Russian airliner was downed by terrorists in Egypt. As a result, Russia canceled all flights to that country. So at the last minute we had to rebook through Istanbul, Turkey, and then take a non-Russian airline to Cairo and on to Addis Ababa.

A more personal tragedy took place in Addis. The Academic Dean of the seminary, Gedion Adugna, was robbed and murdered on his way home. This happened just two days before we left. It was a great blow to the seminary and has left a deep wound. Gedion, whom I worked with last year, was a fine young man and left behind a wife and two children, with a third on the way.

Students in Addis Ababa

Queen of Sheba's Baths

Ethiopian Traditional restaurant

The Addis Experience

Despite the preceding trouble, everything went smoothly with teaching. The students were most attentive and responsive. Rector Streltsov and I did a lot of walking in our free time, seeing the sights. Addis Ababa is a large city, so we couldn't see it all, but we saw a lot. In some areas where we walked people stared at us; they probably hadn't seen such light-skinned people before!

As I discovered already last year, the Ethiopian people are very hospitable, and the students and faculty at Mekane Yesus Seminary are no exception. We were invited to a number of dinners. At the end of the course the students gave me a beautiful Ethiopian cross in a frame as a token of their gratitude.

Cross Gift

Travels in Ethiopia and Beyond

While in Ethiopia, Rector Streltsov and I took a weekend trip to see two ancient cities in Ethiopia, both with a long Christian history. The first, Lalibela, features stone churches carved out of the rock that is there in abundance. Some of these

Stone Church, Lalibela

Please Pray

- for the bodily healing of our graduate Vladimir,
- for the consolation of the family of Gedion Adegna,

Lord, have mercy.

churches were quite amazing. The second city, Axum, features many old and new churches. One of them is supposed by legend to house the Ark of the Covenant. Of course, we weren't allowed to see this, or even approach that church.

Coptic Priest and I in one of the stone churches

Following our teaching we spent a few days in Egypt. A couple of days we spent in Alexandria, a city with an ancient Christian history. Sadly, very little of its glorious Christian past remains. Then we stayed in Cairo, spending most of our time in the Coptic quarter, where the Coptic Christians live and worship. The National Museum in Cairo was also

Coptic Church in Cairo

a highlight. The tombs of the ancient pharaohs were splendid indeed! Finally, we spent about a day in Istanbul, formerly Constantinople. It's truly sad to see how little of the Christian past remains after the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Turks in the fifteenth century. The once-glorious Church of St. Sophia, now a museum, still looks partly Christian but was turned into a mosque.

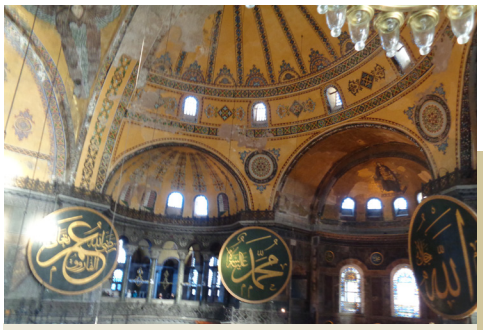
Complex of churches where the ark is kept

Trouble Precedes Again

If the downing of the Russian passenger airliner weren't enough, while we were conducting our courses a Russian military jet was shot down over Turkey. This caused us a little concern, because it could have

Alexandria

turned out that our flight from Istanbul to Moscow would be canceled. What would it have been like to spend Christmas listening to Muslim calls to prayer? But that didn't happen, and everything went very smoothly. Although we walked in some clearly non-tourist areas, we, as obvious foreigners, met with no trouble.



St. Sophia, Constantinople (Istanbul)

Axum Scene

Trouble Follows

While we were in Addis Ababa there was some unrest. A number of people were killed during protests against the city's plans to seize more land. This didn't touch us, but at the time we weren't sure

Axum Cross

what would happen. Then, shortly after we left Cairo and Istanbul, there was trouble in Cairo and a bomb in a tourist section of Istanbul. Our gracious Lord kept us from all harm and danger, so that we met with none of this.

Return to Frozen

After the sun and warmth of Africa and the relative warmth of Turkey, it was quite a change to return to Siberia! When we left in November, it was about 0 F. (-22 C.). People in Africa have no concept of what that's like. It was warmer on Christmas Eve, the day we returned. Still, the change was significant. As a result I spent several weeks with cold and flu. Then there were the makeup courses. Teaching in Ethiopia is an added responsibility.

Was it worth it? Yes. I'd do it all again!

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