

The Evangel in Ethiopia

Always Preaching Christ

Ethiopia- As we reflect on the need for the Gospel in its fullness and purity, the promise of the free gift of forgiveness, life and salvation that we have in Jesus Christ, it is easy to think of populations that are still in need of this beautiful, life-giving message and the peace that it brings. Those still caught up in traditional tribal animistic or spiritist pagan religions or Muslims (which make up about 1/3 of the population) quickly come to mind. But one group we often don't think about are the members of the largest Christian church in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC). We typically don't think about evangelizing members of other Christian denominations, but just a couple points will make it clear why we need to share the Gospel with members of the EOTC.

First, consider this quote from an EOTC publication; "Fasting is abstinence from food, and is observed by man at certain times determined by law, to attain forgiveness of sins and much reward..." Also, this quote by a man raised in the EOTC. "I came to know Christ at the age of nineteen through reading the Bible. Though I was a strict traditional Orthodox Christian (EOTC), I could hardly differentiate between the Ethiopian Saint Takla Haymanot (whose monastery is close to my hometown) and Christ Jesus before I found that amazing book known as the Bible."

As we reflect on the significance of a church body that teaches its people that obedience to the law obtains forgiveness and to pray to the saints rather than or along with Jesus, we should be reminded of the medieval Roman Catholic Church Martin Luther grew up in. We know the suffering and despair this kind of theology was producing in a young Luther. As desperately as Luther needed the Good News of a loving Savior, so do the people of the EOTC. As Lutherans, we have the Gospel they need. This is one more reason we need to work with the EECMY to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all of Ethiopia and beyond.



Amharic—this is the language we will be learning. In this language, there are over 126 letters. To say "Good Morning!" you would say, "አንደምን አደርህ?" (i'ndemin aderik?)

We are on Facebook!

Note: you do not have to belong to facebook to see this page. Just follow the link:

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PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Mekane Yesus Seminary faculty and students
- that the Lord will meet the need to train thousands of pastors in the EECMY
- a smooth transition to Ethiopia
- Eric's work permits/and our family's official paperwork
- to be able to learn what we need to with humility and wisdom
- needed catechisms and Bibles
- a year in which the Gospel is spread in Ethiopia

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- the many churches who have welcomed us
- pastors who are faithful to God's Word
- the Rabe family
- safe travels during network and support building

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- the many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and partner with us

Missions Anyone?

There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

What Does a Missionary Do During the Week? Part II

Another aspect of the missionary life is preparation for deploying to our mission field. A huge part of that preparation takes place in becoming educated about the language, culture, country and church that we will be living with in our daily lives. This means that missionaries (husband and wife) going to Africa are enrolled in theological courses through the seminary. We learn about many aspects of missions. We will take a total of 8 online courses with reading assignments and or papers/discussions due each week. We just completed our first course this past week! Additionally, we have a required list of books, 9 in total for Ethiopia, which deal with culture, relationships, mercy work, charity, finances, societal issues, politics, etc. so that we can start to get a frame of reference for Ethiopia. We are thankful for the preparation and humbled by the enormous amount of information there is to learn. Thanks be to God that He works through us.

Happy Enkutatash! (Ethiopian New Year)

Enkutatash is the name for the Ethiopian New Year. It means "gift of jewels" in the Amharic language. The formal beginning of the New Year in Ethiopia takes place on September 11th (or 12th in a leap year). It is traditionally celebrated to honor the return of the Queen of Sheba from her visit with King Solomon. Popular legend says that Ethiopian chiefs of the country had gathered to refill the Queen's treasury with enku (jewels). She had gifted an enormous amount of gold to Solomon. (120 talents of gold = approx. 4.5 tons) It also celebrates the end of the rainy season.



The celebration usually starts with people going to church and then spending the day with much singing and dancing, gathering together of friends and relatives. Young girls put on new dresses, pick flowers and give them away, usually receiving some small gift in return. Young boys draw pictures of the saints, also receiving a small token. It is a day of many festivities and celebrations.

Closing Thoughts . . . Our Lord is always working through His people. We remember the Ethiopian eunuch: "So Philip ran to him (the eunuch) and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (*Acts 8:30ff*) Thank you in Jesus' Name for your support of the work which God has laid before us.

In Service to Christ— Eric, Johanna, Rachael, Naomi & Luke

To support our work financially, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Include "Stinnett-Ethiopia" in the memo line. Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at lcms.org/stinnett.