

Mission to Ethiopia

By Nancy Greenhaw



THE CHURCH IN ETHIOPIA is persecuted by the Orthodox, Pentecostals, and the Muslims. As recently as 25 years ago there was only one Protestant church in Bahir Dar– Dessie and now there are 19; there was one mosque and now there are 42! In addition, Ethiopia has been targeted by Islam as the last big country standing between them and Sub-Saharan Africa so evangelization is crucial.

Our team was privileged to attend the establishment of a new diocese of Bahir Dar – Dessie and the installation of the new bishop, Eparch Lesanu Christos Matheos Semahun (gold vestments).

This mission included work in two different dioceses: Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar – Dessie. We addressed a variety of groups: priests religious, lay leaders, and university students. We were honored to attend the installation of the bishop in Bahir Dar – Dessie. Our team included, Joseph and Serah Alumansi from Uganda and Fr. Scott McCaig, CC who is Moderator for the Companions of the Cross. Because of delayed flights, we missed the meeting of the Plenary Association of Bishops of Ethiopia. Fortunately, Fr. Scott very ably spoke on behalf of Renewal Ministries.

Addis Ababa

The day we arrived in Addis Ababa, we spoke at the annual meeting of the Our Lady of Ethiopia Catholic Priests Association. Getting to the meeting was difficult. The entire downtown area was blocked off because more than a million people had come to protest the beheading of 30 Ethiopian Christians (one was a Muslim) by ISIS.

Fr. Scott spoke about the four key aspects of the New Evangelization: witness, proclamation, discipleship, and mission. He also emphasized the importance of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. He said we are like the apostles. Although they were with Jesus for three years witnessing His miracles, signs and wonders, they were not changed. After Jesus died and rose they hid in fear and then went back to their previous occupations. “Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We will go with you.’ They went out and got into the boat” (Jn 21:3).

Fr. Scott then described the effects of Baptism of the Holy Spirit: 1) a new relationship with Jesus, 2) new abilities and new power to overcome the power of sin and temptations, and 3) new charisms. He also presented the Five Keys of the *Unbound* model of healing and deliverance.

In Ethiopia, many Catholics are leaving the Church to join Pentecostal groups so the Bishop asked Lloyd to give a presentation on knowing and defending the Catholic faith. His presentation had the priests shouting “amen” and “alleluia.” Many came up to ask when he could come teach in their parishes. Joseph and Serah finished the day with a talk on the Charismatic Renewal and the positive effects it has had on the Church in Uganda.

Our next assignment was speaking to about 75 lay leaders and religious sisters. Fr. Scott spoke on the New Evangelization and Marian apologetics. Lloyd spoke on apologetics. Joseph and Serah fleshed out exactly how the New Evangelization works in their lives. I spoke on the mercy of God through the life of St. Therese of Lisieux.



Lloyd spoke at the annual meeting of priests in the Addis Ababa diocese. His topic was defending the Catholic faith.



Fr. Scott McCaig, CC was a big hit with the beautiful Ethiopian children.

Bahir Dar – Dessie

Next, we flew to the new diocese of Bahir Dar – Dessie. For five years the government has refused the Catholic Church the right to build a cathedral here. Although this new diocese has a school, it has no church and no bishop’s residence.

Our first assignment here was teaching university students from both Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar – Dessie. The program was held at Blessed Gabre Michael Catholic School. Bishop Semahun insisted on doing the translation himself. He loves the kids and the kids love him. And he obviously enjoyed being with us.

We spoke on apologetics, provided an overview of the Five Keys of *Unbound*, led them in reciting the Miracle Prayer to accept Jesus as their Lord, and finished with a time of renunciation. The students were a bit shy but interested and excited. Once they understood the process, there was much in their lives that they wanted to renounce! Joseph and Serah then talked about Baptism in the Spirit and led the students in a prayer asking for a fresh anointing of the Spirit.

Sunday was a big day for the town, the local Church in the Ethiopian Rite and the Church universal. A new diocese (Eparchy) was established and a new charismatic bishop was installed: Eparch (Bishop) Lesanu Christos Matheos Semahun. The Ethiopian rite Mass started at 8:30 a.m. and lasted until noon. We recognized the offertory and communion, but not much else.

Joining the celebration were a people known as the Gumuz from Ambaraon on the border of Sudan and Ethiopia. They were a “no people,” slaves for centuries. Recently, they were evangelized by the Comboni Fathers. The Gumuz have now come out of slavery and are beginning to join the rest of society. They came by bus and are so grateful to be Catholic and to have a new bishop. About 70 were baptized by the new bishop the following weekend!

We returned to Addis Ababa where we spoke with the Charismatics. Lloyd began with an overview of the Charismatic Renewal and explained the key role the Renewal plays in the New Evangelization. He also spoke on defending the faith. I spoke on mercy and releasing God’s power with the Five Keys. Fr. Scott spoke about the New Evangelization. Joe and Serah spoke on obedience and how the Renewal grew and prospered in Uganda. ✝



University students with the Renewal Ministries team, Cardinal Souraphiel and the bishops from the dioceses of Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar – Dessie.



The Team:

Joseph & Serah Alumansi,
Uganda

Lloyd & Nancy Greenhaw,
United States

Fr. Scott McCaig, CC,
Canada

