

Global Church Blurb - Somalia

Chose Somalia because of all the pirate stuff in news

- pop. about 10 million
- on east coast of Africa, borders Ethiopia and Kenya
- most speak Somali language, some Arabic
- Question: Anyone except Christy know the capital...? (Mogadishu)

Called "the most lawless country in the world."

- basically anarchy since 1991 (regional warlords, etc.).

Christianity/church situation:

- 99.95% Muslim
- about 1500 Christians total (= 1400 Eastern orthodox (nominal), 120 Catholic, 80 Protestant.)
 - o estimated another 500 Somali Christians located in other countries
 - o refugees in Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen and elsewhere
- church completely driven underground, some martyred
- desperately need whole Christian *families* – the great majority of Christians are only men
- Somali Bible published 1977 but only safe to distribute in refugee camps and outside country
- three mission groups broadcast some Christian radio programs into Somalia.
- used to have correspondence Bible courses, but ceased because of collapse of postal system.

Can you imagine living there?

Church history blurb

Question: Anyone name an early church leader that came right after the apostles themselves?

One was Polycarp:

- he bridged time when some apostles still alive (80-100 A.D.) into time of earliest "church fathers" (approx. 125-300 A.D.)
- was student of Apostle John, lived from 70-150 A.D.
- bishop/leader of church in Smyrna
 - o Smyrna – city/region in western Turkey
 - o was 1 of the 7 churches addressed by John in Revelation (READ: Rev 2:8-11)

Polycarp known for:

- combating numerous heresies
- his martyrdom:
 - o one of most well-documented events of antiquity
 - o arrested on charge of being Christian and refusing to worship Roman emperor
 - o 86 yrs old, so proconsul pitied him, tried to avoid his execution:
 - urged P to say "Caesar is Lord" and offer pinch of incense to Caesar's statue
 - o P's response: "Eighty-six years I have served Christ, and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"
 - o So burned alive at stake

Summary:

Polycarp = student of John, leader of one of early churches, fought heresy, famous martyr.

Doctrine Blurb:

kenosis

- “kenosis” is a (Greek) word that means “emptying”/“emptiness”
- it’s used to talk about what divine capacities God laid aside (“emptied” Himself of) in coming to earth as Jesus:
 - o e.g., nothing? omniscience? omnipotence? omnipresence! inability to sin?
 - o the central passage that it comes from:
 - Philippians 2:5-8 “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be exploited, but **emptied** himself, taking the very nature of a servant...”
 - o Can everyone look in their Bible at the Philippians passage—it’s one of the most varied (and argued) in different translations... What does yours say?
- Though sometimes *kenosis* is used to refer to a doctrine of radical emptying (Christ actually losing His former divinity), the term itself is simply a word the Bible uses in describing God’s entry into humanity. Scripture leaves us with at least a bit of mystery as to the extent of this kenosis. What have been your assumptions about Jesus’ limitations as God-in-the-flesh?

Heresy Blurb:

Arianism

- named for Christian priest named Arius (250-336 A.D.)
- heresy about Trinity and nature of Jesus:
 - o said Jesus was not of same substance as the Father
 - o in fact, there was a time when Jesus did not yet exist
 - o in a nutshell, Arianism suggest that Jesus is a created being

Question: Anyone aware of any modern-day cults/quasi-Christian religions that believe this? (not just that Jesus was a man—pretty much all non-Christians believe that—but religions that regard Jesus supernatural)

- Mormons (Jesus = “spirit child” born of God in heaven; became “a” god)
- Jehovah’s Witnesses (Jesus = archangel Michael “transferred” to Mary’s womb)

Sermon blurb:

1 – “Salvation poem” pen sounded pretty hokey to me, but question: Has anyone else heard of a pen or some other tract/WWJD/etc. thing actually help someone become a Christian?

2 – When David talked about two parts of “living evangelism” (i.e., loving actions as well as holy/godly behavior) he said/assumed that most people only think of the love-in-action side rather than our own personal holiness as being a witness to others. Actually, it didn’t sound unusual to me at all. I’ve always thought of my morality/personal holiness as a huge witness—but actually discouraged because several times I’ve really failed at it. Thoughts?

3 – The fact that almost all the apostles’ loving/healing deeds in Acts were accompanied by “in the name of Jesus” was powerful. I don’t think that means we’re supposed to just spout Jesus’ name every time we do something nice for someone, but there’s something to the fact that whenever something particularly noteworthy was accomplished (whenever people noticed something unusual), the apostles were verbally crediting Jesus for it. So if an unbeliever notices something different about our lives or asks us why we did some loving action, should we say something about Jesus?

4- To be honest, I seldom feel very motivated/capable of really talking explicitly about Jesus with non-believers...