

Dreamer helps unearth ancient church

Six years, a buried church was unearthed in Ethiopia. The church has invaluable historical and cultural value. Striking is that the unearthing is initiated by a man with a dream,

However, he had to pursue his mission and walk from the upper to the lower official's chest of drawers but to no avail until finally he went to journalists (the 4th estate). It was then that he realized that media has actually the power to bring about change.

From this time onwards the ears and eyes of the executives, congregates and the society at large started to open very widely.

Following his insistent claim that he is being haunted by a recurrent dream, that the Virgin Mary was speaking to him about a buried temple, Kasim Alemu Ahmed, with the assistance of the government, interested people and residents of Bole Sub City, Kebele 19, finally unearthed a year ago a buried church, human remains and artefacts.

Kasim, a Muslim in his mid forties, said he has been having the same dream for the past seven years.

"I have had to go to all government offices which I thought are responsible and accountable to the matter", Kassim said during the inauguration of the church rebuilt in a modern way, some eight months ago.

Upon reaching the area this reporter was able to see land full of trees and no sign showing there could be remains in that area.

With the help of some residents living near by, after a few days of the announcement on the media, they dug out features of a well-constructed semi-circular fence made of stones and recovered by human skeletons, giving some clue that there actually is something in that area.

These were evidences of the existence of a 'Tsilat' and a church at the same site, he said.

After these few sightings residents of the area however, have not taken the matter lightly on the people who made the unearthing and on him. According to Kasim, his statements were not welcomed then.

"Most residents have been adamant to believe what I have been saying. They fear the discovery of the church and whatever is in it would lead to their eviction from the area. It was not to lose their possession, and also with some secular beliefs that they were opposing us," he asserts.

On the other hand there were many guys who stood by his side. Some gave him moral encouragement while there were others who went on paying the money he was asked by the Government in order to excavate.

“Every night in my dream, I was being directed by the Virgin Mary to uncover this house of God,” says Kassim, reminiscing about those times.

Some residents have dismissed the man’s claim of “divine guidance,” and state whatever has been uncovered could have been something left at the time of the Italian occupation.

“Community elders had accepted that I was telling the truth. I have brought the issue to the attention of the city administration, police and the Tourism Commission but none of them were willing to consider my words. The only ones to respond were journalists.”

Kasim had taken the initiative to collect the signature of willing residents for the excavation and reconstruction of the church.

“I am willing to risk my neck, that what I say is the truth and that whatever is buried here is not Italian era. Buried here, and revealed to me by the Virgin Mary is a Holy tablet (Tsilat). I may be a Muslim, but the Virgin Mary has revealed this to me,” Kasim said two years ago.

“This dream has haunted me enough. I am now asking all that are in a position to do something about this, to act and help me put this to rest,” Kasim pleaded.

Another resident of the same neighborhood, Birhanu Belachew (a Christian) also claimed that he had also dreamt similar dreams.

He bizarrely claims that certain people living closely to the area suffer from physical and mental disorders.

Long time residents of the area that Capital spoke to say that the ground over the uncovered structure was fully covered with grass and there was no clue that something else existed below it.

Church people who had come to dig out the Tsilat had reportedly gotten into disagreement about how to go on with the process.

Kasim also spoke of “inscriptions written in a foreign language” on the sword that he says was found during the excavation.

After a year and tiresome activities the said church first built in the 4th century during the time of Abreha WeAtsebeha, was dug out and officially consecrated on January 13, 2007 in the presence of high church officials, and named Dagmawi Eyerusalem Yerer Sellasie Gedam.

Now that the church is fully reestablished, tourists visit it every day in large numbers.

The church holds a number of historical and spiritual articles that are invaluable to the country.

History has it that Ethiopia was christianized in the 4th century AD by two brothers from Tyre —St. Frumentius, later consecrated the first Ethiopian bishop, and Aedesius. They won the confidence of King Ezana at Aksum. It was this church that was built during this century which lasted hidden till today and came out phenomenally.

In addition to Ethiopia being one of the earliest civilizations, it is also one of the oldest Christian nations in the world. The Ethiopian court (governing officials) was first introduced to Christianity in approximately the year 42.

“Then the angels of the Lord said to Philip, start out and go south to the road that leads down from Jerusalem to Gaza. So he set out and was on his way when he caught sight of an Ethiopian. This man was a eunuch, a high official of the Kandake (Candace) Queen of Ethiopia in charge of all her treasure.”

A visitor who first went to the place said that he was really astonished by the man’s (Kassim) gift from the Lord and the things that were found in the place.

Like this monastery many others are found all over the country, the miracles that were revealed in this location are puzzling to all. The courageous man’s attempts finally bestowed fruit.

“I have a great belief that this place has a blessing for the whole Ethiopia and even to the world. All of us have to come to this historic and fascinating place and visit it. For this to come true around 800,000 birr was invested, including labor, material and cash contributions,” he told Capital.

There are other miracles that remain to be revealed yet. But Kassim is still facing problems and discrimination from the residents of the area (farmers) who fear eviction.

The entire event has been filmed and recorded, and endeavors to make it public are underway.