

ETHIOPIA: A FESTIVE JOURNEY TO AFRICA'S 'HOLY LAND'
(Return via Dubai)
(December 27th/09- January 18th/10)

Ancient religious festivals...spectacular exotic topography...layers of history ...mysterious Christian traditions ...the oldest evidence of human origins...an esoteric view of time...this 'Down Ancient Paths' venture to Ethiopia, the 'Galapagos Islands' of world Christianity, has it all. According to early legendary accounts of human beginnings, Cush, one of the sons of Ham and grandson of Noah, migrated to Ethiopia (known as the land of Cush in the Jewish scriptures) from Mesopotamia. A later legend claims that Menelik I, a son born to the Jewish King Solomon by the Queen of Sheba, settled in Axum, bringing the storied Ark of the Covenant with him from Jerusalem. He established a dynasty which with only brief interruptions reigned until 1974 ending with the overthrow of the Christian Emperor, Haile Selassie. Ethiopia has had one of the oldest monarchical lines in the world.

A journey to Ethiopia which occupies a substantial part of the Horn of Africa is literally a return to Christian antiquity on the 'Roof of Africa'. In her recent book, *Vertical Ethiopia (2007)*, Majka Burhardt describes Ethiopia as having 'extraordinary terrain' AND... you wouldn't want to miss a Jan. 6-7th Ethiopian Christmas celebration in the world famous, rock-hewn cave churches of Lalibela, the eighth wonder of the world, would you...

Day 1/ Dec. 27-28 Depart from Calgary for Frankfurt/Addis Ababa

Day 2/ Dec. 28 Arrive in Addis Ababa in the early evening after which we are transferred to the Ghion Hotel for overnite.

Day 3/ Dec. 29 Today is a much needed entire day of rest and refreshment after flying half way around the world! This attractive hotel with its rambling lush gardens and central location near Meskel Square takes its name from one of the rivers which had its ultimate source in the biblical Garden of Eden (Gen 2:13). **(Overnite: Ghion Hotel)**

Day 4/ Dec. 30 Today we explore Addis Abba ('New Flower' in Amharic) the third highest capital in the world at an altitude of between 2300-2500 meters and founded in 1887. We ascend Mt. Entoto where Emperor Menelik II made his permanent camp in 1881. The air is filled with the fragrant scent of eucalyptus trees as we make the climb. The summit, where Menelik was crowned, affords a panoramic view of the city and also features two churches built by the emperor, the one the Church of Miriam and the other dedicated to the Archangel Raguel. Nearby and still intact is the emperor's old palace and a museum featuring royal attire, war artifacts, period furniture and treasured books of historical interest. Descending from Mt. Entoto we contemplate the origins of humanity in our visit to the National Museum which ranks among the most important museums in sub-Saharan Africa. Here the recently discovered skeleton of Selam, an Australopithecus aphaeresis, is on exhibit. It was unearthed in 2000 at Dikika, Afar in northern Ethiopia. Selam is 150,000 years older than his more famous counterpart, Lucy, who is currently touring the United States. We continue our city tour to Holy Trinity Cathedral, the largest Orthodox Church in the country, built in 1941 with a somewhat chaotic mix of international styles to commemorate the patriots who defeated the Italian colonialist invaders in

the 1930's. The windows and walls of the church are adorned with Old and New Testament stories. Also of significance within the Cathedral are the tombs of the late Emperor Haile Selassie and his wife, Empress Menem. We continue to The Ethnographic Museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies on the campus of the University of Addis Ababa which includes among its many interesting displays and holdings, the actual bedroom of Emperor Haile Selassie and the first Christian coinage minted in the history of the world! Our day concludes at the Merkato, the largest open market in East Africa which is bursting with life. It serves up a fascinating medley of people and culture. There is virtually nothing which can't be purchased here! **(Overnite: Ghion Hotel)**

Day 5/ Dec. 31 After breakfast we drive northward from Addis Ababa to Debre Markos to commence our exploration of Ethiopia's ancient Christian heritage. Driving through beautiful open plains with lightly treed hills, after approximately 100 km. is the much revered monastery, Debre Libanos, founded by St. Tekle Haimanot in the 13th century. According to tradition the saint withdrew to a nearby cave and pursued a lifestyle of ceaseless prayer, standing upright for 22 years, as a result of his right leg withered and fell off. Situated at the bottom of an immense gorge through which one of the tributaries of the Blue Nile flows, this monastery is a modern centre of pilgrimage where many Ethiopian pilgrims still go seeking healing in its curative waters. During the Italian occupation the monastery was the site of some of the worst excesses of Fascist brutality (267 monks executed in 1937) hence the memorial to the martyrs. The Abbot of Debre Libanos is the spiritual head of all the Ethiopian monasteries and thus is given the title 'Itchige'. Our drive continues to Debre Markos via the Blue Nile Gorge. This is one of the most breathtaking stretches of road in Ethiopia plunging over 1000m with hairpin curves as it descends the escarpment to the bottom of the Gorge. The present road and bridge were built by the Italians who skilfully demonstrated their flair for civil engineering. At the end of the day we arrive at Debre Markos, capital of Gojam, formerly known as Mankorar ("coldplace"). Of special interest to us is the 19th century Church of Markos with its well executed paintings. **(Overnite: Shebel Hotel)**

Day 6/ Jan. 1 Our destination today is lakeside Bahir Dar via the District of Awi, home of the Agaw people who reside in neatly fenced compounds and circular residences with tall thatched roofs bound tightly by entwined bamboo sticks. Scenically nestled on the southern shore of Lake Tana with a population of almost 97,000, Bahir Dar is an important regional commercial centre beautified with wide streets, palms and flamboyant trees. Emperor Haile Selassie once briefly entertained the idea of making the town his capital. The town is symbolized by the famous *tankwa*, the open-ended papyrus canoe that continues to be used on Lake Tana for trade. Also, it was here that Jesuit missionaries attempted to impose Catholicism on the Ethiopian people, with disastrous consequences. On arrival we'll check in at the traditionally decorated Tana Hotel located in an Edenic setting, have lunch, take a rest and then venture into the countryside to the majestic Blue Nile Falls or Tissisat Falls ('Water of Smoke') approximately 30 km. from the town. Here the Blue Nile, which contributes 85% of the main Nile flow and the prized subject of adventurous explorer narratives, starts its long journey to the Mediterranean. **(Overnite: Tana Hotel)**

Day 7/ Jan. 2 This is a day when you need to make a choice according to your interests. One of your options is to participate in a day long excursion to the weaving cooperative of

Awramba founded in 1985 by a group of 20 persons to demonstrate to its members and the rest of Ethiopians that the best escape from poverty and hunger is not by religion or prayer but rather through education and hard work. It is the only overtly atheistic community to be found anywhere in Africa and takes pride in its egalitarian, non-sexist and nonracist ideology.

OR

You can join an intriguing expedition (will take approximately 7-8 hrs.) on Lake Tana to the mysterious, rock walled 'island' (in fact attached to the mainland) of Tana Cherkos, the purported, secret resting place of the Ark of the Covenant for 800 years. This journey will also provide the opportunity to visit two additional Tana monasteries- Rema Medhane Alem and Mitsle Fasiladas. **(Overnite: Tana Hotel)**

Day 8/ Jan. 3 Definitely a day to be anticipated! After an early breakfast we leave by chartered boat to traverse the 'watery wilderness' of Lake Tana, Ethiopia's largest crater lake, covering 3500 sq. km., with a maximum depth of 10 meters. It is the source of the Blue Nile. Monasteries dating to the 13th and 14th centuries exist on some 20 of the lake's 37 islands and introduce us to Ethiopia's version of 'desert spirituality'. Flocks of birds, especially pelicans, will be visible on this journey back in time. Our excursion first takes us to the Zeghie Peninsula, made affluent through the cultivation of coffee, which is noted for its 14th century churches with round, grass roofs and magnificent wall murals. We visit the two 13th-14th century churches, Betra Miriam and Ura Kidane Mehret, renovated around 1900, which house both ancient crowns and illuminated manuscripts. The latter has an exquisitely painted 'maqdas' which is practically a compendium of Ethiopian religious iconography. On Dek Island, the largest island in Lake Tana, is the monastery of Narga Selassie built by Queen Mentewab in 1747 and dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The round church of the monastery is unusually illuminated by 8 doorways. The colors of the interior canvas paintings (not frescoes) are intense in a variety of hues...red, orange, brown and a distinctive bluish shade of green. We disembark at Gorgora on the north shore of Lake Tana where we see the monastery of Debre Sina Mariam which contains a 14th century church with a conical thatched roof and some of the most complex murals to be seen in the Tana region. A 2 hr. drive on dirt road brings us before sundown to Gondar and the Goha Hotel situated strategically on a hill which offers a splendid, panoramic view of the town. **(Overnite: Goha Hotel)**

Day 9/ Jan. 4 After breakfast we undertake the exploration of Gondar, once the royal capital of Ethiopia. The charming atmosphere of the town, established in 1636 by the great Emperor Fasiladas, is enhanced by a landscape of incomparable beauty. Among its highlights are the castles and churches built by Fasiladas and his descendants. The fascinating Debre Birhan Selassie Church, its name meaning 'Trinity at the Mount of Light' (a UNESCO World Heritage site) has walls decorated with scenes of biblical lore and medieval history. As Ethiopia's most famous church, it is claimed to have been a onetime resting place of the Ark of the Covenant on its journey to Axum. It was the only church saved from the Mahdist invasion in the 1880's by a timely swarm of bees. The open plan of the church, combined with its completely painted interior, makes entering it a breathtaking experience, the spiritual intensity of which is heightened by standing underneath the ceiling decorated with the staring faces of 80 archangels who face both east and west symbolizing the omnipresence of God. 2 km. outside the town is the

Bath of King Fasiladas where during the season of Epiphany (Timkat) a nearby river is diverted to fill an area the size of a small swimming pool in order to accommodate mass baptisms which commemorate the baptism of Christ in the chilly waters. Our day concludes with the ruined palace of Queen Metowab and the Church of Qusquam Mariam on the outskirts of the town and a drive to the nearby village of Wolleka, a Falasha village which was once the thriving home of a community of Ethiopian Jews, most of whom were airlifted to Israel from 1985 to 1991. The 'Jewish' character of early Ethiopian Christianity continues to intrigue western Christian scholars. Buy your miniature statuette here of Solomon with the Queen of Sheba. Tonight we enjoy a traditional dinner and an entertaining experience of Azmari Beats, the Ethiopian equivalent of stand-up comedy done in Amharic. **(Overnite: Goha Hotel)**

Day 10/Jan. 5 This morning we take to the Ethiopia skies and fly to isolated Lalibela, perched on the rugged Lasta Mountains, the Rocks of Ages, at an altitude of 2630 meters...an unquestionable highlight of our itinerary. The scenery is the most awe-inspiring in the country. The town, capital of the Zagwe dynasty, was posthumously named after the legendary King Lalibela who in the 12th or 13th century aspired to build his own 'holy city' of Jerusalem' away from interfering Muslim presence. It ranks among the most important religious sites in all of Africa and perhaps in the entire Christian world. Place names in Lalibela duplicate those in the Scriptures- e.g. the Jordan River, the Mt. of Olives, the Holy Sepulchre, the tomb of Adam etc. which adds to its sacred atmosphere. The 11 monolithic churches of Lalibela date to the reign of King Lalibela in the period between 1180 -1220 AD. They can hardly be called 'constructed' as they were carved inside and outside from the solid rock...a technological wonder indeed said to have taken 24 years. One local tradition says that the churches were the handiwork of 'angels' but most likely 'Ethiopian angels'. Perhaps Egyptians and Indians or even the Knights Templar were involved. However the churches came to be, this is medieval Ethiopia at its best. The churches will be visited in two groups. The first group of 7 north of the Jordan River include Bet Golgotha, Bet Mikael, Bet Miriam, Bet Meskel, Bet Danaghel, and Bet Medhane Alem (said to be the largest rock-hewn church in the world). The second group, south of the Jordan River, is comprised of Bet Emanuel, Bet Merkorios, Bet Abba Libanos and Bet Gabriel-Rufa'el. The climax of the tour of the churches is reached at the oft photographed, Bet Giyorgis, (made known to the world by an episode of the 'Amazing Race') only reached through a tunnel. It is the most elegant of the churches lying towards the southwest of the town which achieves a visually perfect architectural design unsurpassed in Ethiopia. **(Overnite: Jerusalem Guesthouse)**

Day 11/Jan. 6 A real Ethiopian adventure is on the agenda for this morning...a hike or mule ride to the Church of Asetun Mariam (about a 4 hr. roundtrip) which ascends through small villages enroute to the top of a mountain at 3150m. where the church is located. The local priests quite justifiably claim they are 'closer to God and to heaven.' From this vantage point the views of the surrounding countryside are spectacular. Our afternoon destination is Yemrehana Christos (named after King Yemrehana Kristos who is buried there) which lies 20 km. northeast of Lalibela. It is the finest church outside the town built within a cave. The exterior of this 11th or 12th century church is decorated with white marble panels and the entire church sits on a foundation of olive-wood panels which allows it to float perfectly above the marshy ground below. Everywhere the carving and decoration is exceptional. To the rear of the church are the bones of innumerable pilgrims who chose to be buried at this holy site under an overhanging rock. Tonight is one of the liturgical highlights of our journey...we attend the Ethiopian

Christmas Eve celebration. The faithful participate in all night church services moving from church to church. Genna (Christmas) is observed after 43 days of fasting known as Tsome Gahad (Advent) and marked by a spectacular procession which lasts from midnight to 3:00 am. After the Mass people go home to break the fast with a meal of chicken, lamb or beef, injera bread and traditional drinks. The sight of candle burning, white robed worshippers crowded inside churches will be unforgettable. **(Overnite: Jerusalem Guesthouse)**

Day 12/Jan. 7/Christmas Today is the Ethiopian Christmas, a day of jubilant festivity wrapped in enthusiastic, colourful celebrations, the third most important festival (after Timkat and Meskel) in the Ethiopian ecclesiastical year. The air is filled with the vibrant chants of a multitude of Lalibela priests engaged in centuries old ritual dance which flows into a ceremonial procession commencing around dawn. Much needed rest time will come in the afternoon after the release of so much energy in a marathon of celebration. **(Overnite: Jerusalem Guesthouse)**

Day 13/Jan. 8 Today's flight to Axum, the sacred city of the Ethiopians, transports us into the fabled world of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba and the mythological traditions related to the Ark of the Covenant. According to the *Kebra Nagast* (Book of Kings), the city was the 10th century capital of the Queen of Sheba...probably more fantasy than fact. We visit the main churches of Axum including the most holy Church of St. Miriam of Zion Monastery church which allegedly houses and guards the Ark of the Covenant brought from the Temple in Jerusalem by Menelik I who according to tradition was the son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The church dates to the 4th or 5th centuries when the emperor became Christian, making it one of the earliest Christian churches in Africa (cf. Acts 8:26-38-Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch). Today we will be in the most holy precinct of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church almost within touching distance of the Holy Ark itself if one believes the tradition. The Cathedral of St. Mary of Zion is the repository of the crowns of the former emperors of Ethiopia and is considered to be the oldest church in all of Africa. The seven mysterious obelisks of Axum in the town centre (one of which was recently returned from Italy and another is reputedly the world's tallest monolith) invite us to contemplate their origins. Also of interest in King Ezana's Park is a trilingual tablet inscribed in Ge'ez, Sabeian, and Greek, Ethiopia's version of the Rosetta Stone. We then ascend a hill to view the castle of King Kaleb (514-542 AD). Next to be visited is the tomb of Kaleb and the tomb of King Basen who ruled Axum at the time of Christ's birth. In the late afternoon as the sun begins to set we read accounts of the meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba from various texts in the imaginative setting of the ruins of the queen's own partially reconstructed palace on the edge of town. Patronize the local market economy in this onetime center of a great African civilization on the fringe of the Graeco-Roman world which blossomed before the time of Christ...the historical facts concerning which remain obscure. Axum is truly one of the country's star attractions. It is to sub-Saharan Africa what the Egyptian pyramids are to North Africa. It is to Ethiopians what Mecca is to Saudi Arabians. **(Overnite: Remhai Hotel)**

Day 14/Jan. 9 Today we drive from Axum to Adigrat the largest town in Tigray province after Mekele. The town of Adwa enroute is of momentous historic significance to Ethiopians as it was here that Emperor Menelik II inflicted the most crushing defeat ever on a European army in Africa thereby saving Ethiopia from colonization. About 11km. east of Adwa is the Monastery of Abba Garima named after one of the nationally esteemed Nine Saints who founded it in the 6th

century. Among its treasures are 3 illuminated manuscripts from the 10th century. Further on we come to Yeha, Ethiopia's earliest capital with its dominating pre-Christian Temple of the Moon, the country's oldest building dating to 500 BC. As the earliest symbol of civilization in Ethiopia, scholars are still uncertain as to who built Yeha. Its temple survives as a ghostly relic of the past. Beside it stands a modern church dedicated to Abuna Aftse, another of the famous Nine Syrian Saints from the eastern Roman Empire who Christianized the country in the 6th century. The church houses crosses, old manuscripts and stones bearing Sabeian inscriptions. The physical challenge of the day is ascending to the spectacularly located Monastery of Debre Damo which dates to Axumite times and is claimed to contain the oldest intact church in Ethiopia. Accessible only up a cliff by rope! and not open to women...the hearty among us will undertake the arduous ascent to be rewarded by the opportunity to view the treasures of the Debre Damo church which have survived the ravages of time due to the elevated, secluded location. The plateau (2800m) on which the church sits is 24 meters from the ground. Start your bicep building, rope climbing preparation now! Our journey ends at Adigrat which lies on an important junction linking Ethiopia to Eritrea. **(Overnite: Hohama Hotel)**

Day 15/Jan. 10 Our destination today is Hawzien, 36km. south of Adigrat and less than 60km. from the northern Ethiopian border. Here one gains a commanding view of the Gheralta plains out of which the Gheralta mountains, a sandstone escarpment, rise abruptly. The solitudinous splendour of the region defies description...a rock climber's paradise...Ethiopia's vertical heritage. It feels like uncharted land, relatively untraveled by outsiders, where heat and aridity reign. Numerous churches have been hewn out of the sandstone but because they have not been cut free from the rock they are scarcely visible when looking up at them from the plain. Up to the mid 1960's the Tigray churches, perhaps around 120 in number, were hardly known outside the region even to Ethiopians. Resident monks claim that the churches date to either the 4th or 6th centuries, both highpoints in Ethiopian Christian history, but the evidence points to a more likely origin for most of the churches in the 13th and 14th centuries. The roughness of their sculpted style, some like renovated caves, suggests that dedicated monks on a spiritual quest for remote silence and not professional craftsmen (as in the case of Lalibela) built them.

Day 16/Jan. 11 The heart of Ethiopian Orthodoxy beats in the triangle between Axum, Debre Damo and Wukro. Many people bear the mark of the cross on their foreheads as an expression of their devotion. However, a large proportion of the rock-hewn churches of the Tigray region are inaccessible due to their daunting locations in the faces of cliffs to be scaled only by the skilled. Their hidden secrets have remained locked away for centuries. At least 80 of the churches are in the Wukro (means 'rock hewn') region in the centre of the rugged mountains of Tigray. Our first objective today is the Church of Inde Mariem Wukro, 6.5km northeast of the village of Nabelet overshadowed by towers of rock. The Church of Mariem, not a free standing structure, is both complex and magnificent. We continue on to the churches of Teklehaymanot in Hawzien and Gorgis Ma-kado both of which are architecturally interesting. **(Overnite: Gheralta Lodge)**

Day 17/Jan. 12 Today our excursion in this rock dominated, expansive wilderness proceeds to the Church of Abuna Yemata, 4 km. west of Megab, purportedly built over a period of 8 centuries starting in 800 AD. Though hardly spectacular in an architectural sense, the church is carved out of the face of one of mountains of Guh. Its sheer vertical relief prompts a second thought about climbing to it...without ropes!!! The final stage of the access is a gangplank. But

the effort is worth it...inside are beautifully preserved frescoes adorning two cupolas including a rarely seen depiction of the Nine Syrian Saints...Aragawi (also known as Abba Za-Mikael), Pantaleon (also known as Za-Somaet), Garima, Aftse, Guba, Alef, Likanos or Libanos (also known as Mataa), Yemata and Sehma. The colours are striking...red, blue, green and black over white backgrounds, the saints' faces gently radiating the spiritual vibrancy with which they lived and missionized Ethiopia. On the southern edge of the village of Dugem is the Church of Dugem Selassie, a tiny, antique church contained within a newer one. Once a double tombed chamber, it was most likely converted into a church. **(Overnite: Gheralta Lodge)**

Day 18/Jan. 13 After breakfast we drive via Wukro to Mekele, Tigray's capital. Enroute we visit Abreha Atsbeha one of the most revered churches in the region with deep spiritual roots. It was supposedly built by the two royal brothers, Abreha and Atsbeha, known in the West as the kings Ezana and Saizana. They were responsible for the conversion of Ethiopia to Christianity in the 4th century. Also, according to its clergy, the church was established by Frumentius (also known as Abba Salama, Father of Peace) who was the first *abuna* (archbishop) of Ethiopia and instrumental in the conversion of Ezana and Saizana. The church, which claims to possess a gold cross which belonged to Frumentius, is an important pilgrimage centre visited annually by thousands of pilgrims. Nearer to Wukro and also on our itinerary is Wukro Cherkos, the most accessible of the rock hewn churches in Tigray. Time permitting, after arriving in Mekele we'll visit the Italian-designed Yohannes IV museum constructed for the emperor in 1873 as his castle home. Mekele, at an altitude of 2062m., has a population of approximately 97,000. **(Overnite: Axum Hotel)**

Day 19/Jan. 14 This morning we leave the remote region of Tigray and fly back to Addis Ababa for a leisurely day which includes savouring the ever-changing array of contemporary and traditional paintings from all over Ethiopia which are on display at the Makush Art Gallery and an evening of enjoying local cuisine, dress and dances at an Addis restaurant. Save some energy for this!!! **(Overnite: Ghion Hotel)**

Day 20/Jan. 15 Our last day takes us back millennia of time to Ethiopia as a cradle of human origins. We drive southwest on the Jimma Road and then due south to the Butajira Road arriving at Melka Kunture near the Awash River Gorge. It is one of the country's most famous Neolithic archaeological sites where prehistoric, human made tools have been found. 5 km. further along on the Butajira Road is the rock-hewn Church of Adadi Mariam which dates to the period of the Lalibela churches though cruder in form than both the Lalibela and Tigray churches. In fact the local tradition claims that King Lalibela built the church on his visit to Mt. Zuqwala in 1106 AD. It was only rediscovered in the late 19th century. Continuing down the Butajira road we come to the Tiya monuments, one of Ethiopia's UNESCO World Heritage sites restored by French archaeologists. Of significance here are examples of a peculiar style of engraved, upright *stellae* which stretch across parts of southern Ethiopia. The monoliths, which serve as grave markers, display carvings of four designs- the sword, a symbol like the number '3' standing on its side, a sideways letter 'M' and a circle which appears only on a few graves (5) perhaps indicative of female gender. Three separate sections of standing monoliths give the site a certain 'mini-Stonehenge' character. The *stellae* date to between the 12th and 14th centuries. The identity of those buried in the graves however, remains a mystery. **(Overnite: Ghion Hotel)**

Day 21/Jan. 16 Today we transition from Addis to Dubai for some rest and relaxation before returning home.

Days 22-23 /Jan. 17-18 These final days of our journey in one of the richest and most powerful of the 7 city-states which constitute the United Arab Emirates are in juxtaposition to our travels in Ethiopia, one of the 10 poorest countries in the world. Such is the disparity of the human experience. Dubai is a testimony to the creative ingenuity of human beings. It symbolizes the pinnacle of human achievements in the 21st century. From the sands of a harsh desert environment which covers 1,588 square miles has emerged a cosmopolitan, commercial global crossroads which has architectural ambitions unrivalled in the world, all funded by petro-dollars. 27% of the world's construction cranes can be found in Dubai. The state, a shopping paradise for western tourists, boasts the world's largest airport, the world's tallest tower, the world's largest artificial harbour, the world's largest manmade island...all of these astonishing civilizational accomplishments emerging in the last 20 years. The Emirate Dubai International Financial Centre aspires to host 20% of the world's investment funds. We'll combine a guided tour of some of Dubai's major attractions with lots of free time to relax and explore the many dimensions of this Arabian convergence of East and West according to your interests and energy levels. Depart...

If you want to get on the seriously interested, right of first refusal list and receive a complete info package when it is ready, please contact Dr. Nienkirchen at cnienkirchen@ambrose.edu There are only 21 spaces available and the list of persons desirous of going is already growing! First come first served. Ethiopia is beginning to appear on the global radar screen as an exotic travel destination. This is your chance to experience the country in a more pristine state on a customized *Down Ancient Paths* itinerary before hordes of tourists arrive to turn the path into a multi-lane highway.