
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

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Listening for Women's Voices

Janet Bohren

I participated in a 14 day trans-cultural study trip organized by United Theological Seminary. While on this trip, I made a concerted effort to listen for the voices of women in the places we visited. I wanted to know about their lives at work and at home and their dreams for the future of women in their countries. An important goal of this trip was for us to hear perspectives from both sides of the Wall separating the West Bank and Israel. To this end a variety of meetings were set up for us to talk with different groups working to promote understanding across the complex political realities of this region.

This is a brief reflection on what I was able to observe relative to women's and girl's rights on a trip to Jordan, the West Bank, and Israel in January 2008 with the Society for Biblical Studies. My trip gave me a brief view of how important it is for us to support those in Jordan, the West Bank, Palestine, and Israel as they struggle for women's rights in the midst of the complex legal, political and cultural environments in which they live.

On one of our first nights in Amman, Jordan, we met and spoke with Reem Najjar, President of *UNICEF* for the Middle East and North Africa. Reem is Jordanian, Palestinian, and Christian. She spoke fervently of her earlier work for the YWCA in Jordan during which she helped

set up counseling centers, kindergartens, and legal help for women in refugee camps who had fled conflicts in Iraq and other countries. Later on our trip we visited a women's center at a refugee camp in the West Bank and saw the efforts there to provide women with computer skills, a market for their handcrafted items, and to provide girls with English instruction so that they could do better in the local schools. In the refugee camp I noticed that the girls were very shy and hesitant to approach us, while the young boys were full of energy and surrounded us at every turn.

While in Jerusalem we met with a spokeswoman for *B'Tselem*, the Israeli

(Continued on page 4)

Pilgrimage or Tourism?

Peter J. Miano

For many Western Protestant Christians, the concept of pilgrimage is poorly understood. Indeed, the effect of high volume commercial tourism in the lands of the Bible—pilgrimage in name only—has been to blur, if not completely obscure the meaning and significance of pilgrimage as a spiritual discipline. Commercial tourism so dominates Christian travel that many do not realize there is an alternative. Scripted, choreographed, sanitized tours masquerade as pilgrimage, co-opting the language, but falling way short of the redemptive, transforming, inspiring impact of authentic pilgrimage. The Society for Biblical Studies seeks to redeem pilgrimage from the polluting effects of commercial tourism. You have been part of this mission.

Pilgrimage has a long a noble his-

tory. It is a sacred obligation for Muslims and Jews. Although it has never been obligatory, Christian pilgrimage can be traced to the middle of the 2nd Century AD, when Melito of Sardis journeyed from Anatolia to Palestine for the purpose of better understanding his Bible by exploring the places mentioned in it. In 214 AD, Alexander of Cappodocia went to Jerusalem for prayer and *historia*, i.e., investigation of the places associated with biblical events, especially those associated with Jesus and his ministry. By that time, the places were well identified, indicating that he was not the first such pilgrim. Egeria, the 4th Century AD pilgrim, left a complete journal of her four year pilgrimage. For both early pilgrims, pilgrimage was a spiritual discipline involving the heart, soul, body and the mind. From the beginning of Christian pilgrimage, the journey involved prayer, praise, biblical inquiry,

investigation and personal, face to face encounters with the people in living, worshipping communities encountered along the way.

The biblical record indicates that Jesus himself participated in at least one pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On the other hand, his encounter with the woman at the well (John 4:1-42) seems to suggest that he did not place high priority on particular *places*, favoring instead, worship in spirit and in truth (John 4: 23-24). Early church leaders exploited this passage to discourage believers from journeying from Anatolia and Europe to Palestine. Their concern was the practical one that when people travel, they travel with their money and they spend their money in distant places, rather than in their local economies. As the volume of Christian pilgrims grew, some early church leaders feared the revenue

(Continued on page 6)

THE SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO BIBLICAL AND MISSION EDUCATION, FACILITATING MISSION EXPERIENCE AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL. IT ENABLES CLERGY AND LAITY TO STUDY THE BIBLE AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LANDS OF THE BIBLE. THE PURPOSES OF THE SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES ARE TO REFORM SCHOLARSHIP BY MAKING IT ACCESSIBLE, RELEVANT AND USEFUL; TO REDEEM THE IDEA OF PILGRIMAGE FROM COMMERCIAL TOURISM; TO RENEW THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

Responsible Application of the Bible

Dr. David F. Watson

As a New Testament scholar, I spend a great deal of my time teaching history and engaging in historical research. Understanding the proper historical context of the biblical writings is essential for gaining a better understanding of the writings themselves. It was a fantastic opportunity, then, for me to travel with a group of students from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, to Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank. We saw fascinating biblical sites. We visited Jerash, Jordan (biblical Gerasa). We stayed in Bethlehem and visited the Church of the Nativity. We walked the streets of Nazareth and Jerusalem. We took a boat out on the Sea of Galilee. As a historian, I felt it was a great privilege to visit these places. I took scads of pictures and kept a journal of our travels. In my teaching, I now incorporate both the images and insights that I brought back.

My interest in learning more about the world of the Bible, however, is not simply a matter of historical curi-

tion of them today.

With the Society for Biblical Studies, I found an organization that shares my love of both rigorous history and ethical reflection. During our trip, we had the opportunity to visit with Palestinians living on the West Bank. We met with Israelis who supported Israel's policies regarding the Palestinians and others who opposed those same policies. We saw the massive "separation barrier" that the Israelis are building. We visited a Palestinian refugee camp in Bethlehem. We learned that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not simply a two-sided confrontation, but is a complex issue with many different voices seeking a variety of resolutions.

The Middle East has a present and future and not simply a past. There are deep and abiding troubles in this part of the world and these troubles can in part be traced to the religious convictions of the parties involved. In the process of interpreting and applying our sacred texts, we should be aware of the ways in which our decisions come to bear on the lives of Israelis and Palestinians. The trip that my students and I

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IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Listening for Women's Voices</i>	1
<i>Pilgrimage or Tourism</i>	1
<i>Responsible Application of the Bible</i>	2
<i>From Wall to Welcome</i>	3
<i>The Exodus Experience</i>	4
<i>One of a Kind Mission</i>	5

osity. For people of faith, the books of the Bible are sacred texts that shape our ideas, attitudes, and actions, often in ways that we do not even perceive. There are profound ethical implications to the ways in which we think about and appropriate the biblical texts. Putting the works of the Bible in their proper historical context is an important part of responsible interpretation, but it is not the endgame. Rather, understanding what these texts meant in their original settings aids in the responsible applica-

tion of them today. took with The Society for Biblical Studies was an intense "crash course" on these issues. Each of us grew from this trip intellectually, ethically, and spiritually. I look forward to another trip to the Holy Land with S.B.S., once again to be immersed in this fascinating and complex part of the world.

David Watson is a professor of New Testament at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio

From Wall to Welcome

The Rev. Amy Cook

After the silence and shock during our first harsh glimpses of that wall, I was numb. When the realization of my own government's involvement in that divisive conflict hit a few seconds later, a cold heartbreak froze me. The thought actually chilled. My sparse hope for this place's redemption began to slip.

Outside interests and insider violence, which were the only things CNN had shown me, seemed too much. As a world power, haven't we learned anything through stumbling from one "War to End All Wars" into a second World War? Had we not gained peaceful ground in untangling the mess in Northern Ireland? As Christians, why had we stood by so quietly through this jarring injustice?

The contrasting warmth of our welcome at the inn was beautiful. Our Palestinian friends were eager to extend welcome and get us settled in. Their sincere kindness reminded me of coming home from college that first holiday: a cozy place, a huge meal, and attentive conversation.

However, the experience was disorienting. In many news stories I had read, "Palestinian" followed by labels like "bomber," "terrorist," "murderer," or "violence." Never had "Palestinian" preceded "host," "kind," "welcome", or even

"smile." The hospitality of our Palestinian hosts was also a silencing moment of correction. My view of these dear folks is forever changed.

Going to (and into) the pyramids was amazing. Our guides in Egypt and Jordan were helpful in understanding that part of the world. However, nothing compares to that first night in Bethlehem. If I could share any aspect of this experience, it would have been this hour, from wall to welcome.

A few months later, in a church I did not know well, I shared a children's sermon on the experience. The focus was our international Christian family and the amazing inclusion of Pentecost. There was a man from Palestine there. He and his family were touched. Apparently, they had rarely heard Palestinians mentioned without reference to fear and terrorism.

Thanks be to God for pilgrimage.

The Rev. Amy Cook is a United Methodist Pastor from Tennessee. She traveled with the Holston Annual Conference on The Exodus Experience

The Exodus Experience

Don Edmands

I low-crawled down a small shaft over 100 yards long. It was dark and musty. All of a sudden, it opened into the inner chamber of The Red Pyramid. Pinch me! Finally, a dream come true—I'm standing in the burial chamber of a pyramid near Cairo, Egypt. And it's only the first day of our two-week trip! Is this the highlight of the trip, on the first day?

Believe me it wasn't! When I got on the bus, I said to the Rev. Peter Miano who was co-leading our trip, "You will never top this!" Yet he did, day after day. I saw amazing things I didn't know existed. The fast pace trip was like adult basic training—on the bus early, going all day, arriving at our hotel after dark...and I was having the time of my life.

Before leaving Cairo, we visited the Great Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Mohammed Ali Mosque, the Egyptian Museum, and not enough time at the Kahn al Khalili bazaar. Before I go any further, let me assure you it was safe...probably safer than most big cities in the United States. The locals can say "dollar" better than you and I. They hounded us relentlessly in Cairo to sell us something or have our picture made for "a dollar." I observed one Egyptian approach an English

tourist and ask for "a pound." Quite the businessmen they are!

When we crossed "under" the Suez Canal, we left Africa and entered Asia. Did you know that, I didn't? A daylong trip deep into the Sinai Peninsula brought us to the Monastery of St. Katherine...the home of the "burning bush" and the trailhead for our climb to the summit of Mt. Sinai. That Moses was a heck of a guy...climbing Mt. Sinai was not easy. I was glad I made the climb when I saw Mary Francis (in her 70's) and a couple of pre-teenagers with our group on top. How embarrassing would that have been too have wimped out and not made the summit? Carry a jacket; it was cold up there.

While at St. Katherine, we got to visit the library that holds ancient manuscripts, which is not open to tourists. In the absolute middle of nowhere, here's this upstairs room that houses perhaps the best religious document collection in the world. And it contains a portion of the Codex Sinaiticus, the oldest manuscript of the Bible in existence. During our visit we were told there was a project in the works to photograph all the pages worldwide and publish a complete work for the world to study. Google "Codex Sinaiticus!" It has happened since I returned home! I'm not a religious scholar by any

The Exodus Experience, cont'd.

(Continued from page 3)

means, but I'm loving this trip!

Our next stop is Israel, but first we must cross the border. The crossing is uneventful except for Bob from Atlanta. Seems he bought a Koran in Egypt and the Israelis are suspicious. After a lot of explaining, we are on our way. We are staying in Bethlehem which is across the "Green Line." Translated, that means the Palestinian side of the Wall dividing Israel from the West Bank. Had you told me in advance I would be staying in Palestinian territory, I might have had second thoughts. However, the folks were friendly and made us feel right at home. We walked the streets at night and felt perfectly safe. By the way, take your ATM card, I used it everywhere to get money...not a problem.

The next morning, in the rain, we walked a short distance to The Church of Nativity, which marks the spot where Jesus was born...in a cave under the Church! Seems the folks in those days lived in caves, not houses, as one would think. So the next time you see a Nativity scene in a wooden stable, remember the cave. I had my picture taken with my hand on the spot where Jesus was born. How cool is that! We gathered up our dirty clothes and took them to a laundry, as we were half way through our adventure.

Our time in Israel was busy. We visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which marks the spot where the Crucifixion and burial of Jesus took place. We walked the Via Dolorosa where he carried the cross, and visited the Mount of Olives. We saw the Herodian and Masada—fortresses built by Herod the Builder King and the Dead Sea where the famous scrolls (Qumran) were found. I saw so many things I did not know existed. Explanation: it seems after Jesus' death, folks started making pilgrimages to places where he had been. Churches came along and build over the sites thus preserving them.

We took a boat ride on the Sea of

(Continued on page 7)

Listening for Women's Voices, cont'd.

(Continued from page 1)

Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. She spoke about how B'Tselem works to gather data on human rights violations in the occupied territories and to make this information available to the Israeli public. She explained that they need to send women interviewers to speak with the women in the West Bank and to encourage these women to accept video cameras to record their lives. She said it is harder to get the women's stories than the men's.

Mikhael Manekin, a spokesperson for *Breaking the Silence: Israeli soldiers talk about the Territories*, explained that young men in the Israeli Defense Forces face severe ethical dilemmas in the territories that they are not trained to deal with. *Breaking the Silence*, established in March 2004, has gathered and published examples of these ethical dilemmas from soldiers after they finish their service so that the Israeli public will have a better idea of the realities their young soldiers face. When I asked if the issues differed for women, he said yes, that the women must deal with "male domination" in their units.

During the week of Jan.10-18 the weekly Jordanian English language newspaper *The Star* had an article by Fida Khalil on violence against women. It noted that Jordanian law supports equal rights for women. During a 16 day campaign to abolish violence against women held last fall, the *Jordanian National Commission for Women*, other women's groups and the *United Nations* in Jordan developed a list of 16 forms of violence against women. The list is similar to what we would list in the United States. "Deprivation of education" stood out for me. This issue was emphasized by the speaker at the refugee camp, who talked about their efforts to assure the girls the same educational opportunities as the boys.

Finally, in a pamphlet entitled *This Week in Palestine, Issue 17, January 2008* that I found on the front desk at a resort hotel where we were staying in Jericho, there is an article entitled *Palestinian Women must Speak Out* by

Maha Mehanna. In this article, the author described the real and severe problem of sexual harassment in the work place for Palestinian women. She wrote "they keep their silence and tears inside and remain utterly alone." She explained why women are afraid to speak out and made a number of suggestions for improving the situation. But it all needs to begin with Palestinian women not fearing to speak out and that is a very hard thing given the culture, laws, and other political problems.

How do we hear each other's stories and work with each other to assure equal rights for women and girls? Although I had only a few brief glimpses of the challenges women in Jordan, Israel

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and the West Bank face, I learned how the women in these countries are working hard for women's rights. They face many legal and cultural barriers. Some issues are unique to their lives and cultures, but the issues for violence against women are similar for us all. The educated professional women I met cared about the women and children of their countries and were working hard to improve rights and opportunities for all across a large range of legal, health, and educational issues.

Dr. Janet Bohren is a student at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio

A One of a Kind Mission

Gary L. Olin

The Society for Biblical Studies is one of a kind. SBS is a classroom without walls, a graduate school whose campus is the lands of the Bible. For 12 years SBS has provided world-class experiential learning in Biblical studies, archaeology, mission studies, peace studies, multiculturalism, anthropology, geopolitical science, world history, and spiritual formation. Those who have traveled with SBS can add to the list the ways their understanding has grown, their lives have been enriched and their spirits renewed by its programs.

The Society for Biblical Studies is a not-for-profit educational enterprise. Unlike commercial tour companies, SBS does not sell its groups of travelers to souvenir vendors. It does not participate in the system of profiting from travelers' shopping. SBS does not use guides who take commissions for delivering busloads of

tourists to particular shops. Coach drivers and faculty do not receive kickbacks from souvenir shops and restaurants. With SBS, you will not see hundreds of dollars of hidden costs that suddenly appear on your invoice after the initial registration. Recently a commercial tour to the Holy Land was advertised for a surprisingly low price. However, the additions in the fine print along with the extra admissions charges and optional excursions made the total cost \$500 more than a similar SBS program that was obviously superior to the commercial one.

No educational institution can advance or even survive on tuition and fees alone. Tuition for SBS, the price a participant pays, never covers the total cost of all that goes into providing quality study programs. The list of related expenses includes time and cost intensive task of developing new distinctive programs. It includes institutional management, faculty salaries and expenses, administrative support, course preparation, on-site assistance,

transportation and housing costs and much more.

All educational institutions, including SBS, depend upon the generous support of others. The gifts of alumni/ae and friends, those whose lives have been enriched by its programs, and who believe in its mission often provide a significant portion of an institution's annual budget. SBS is blessed by such a faithful group of contributors many of whom give month after month, year after year to the work. Each year new persons are added to the list.

All of our Board of Directors—100%— supports SBS financially and The Board of Directors of The Society for Biblical Studies asks for you to become a partner in the ministry of SBS through the annual appeal for gifts in the fall of 2009.

The Rev. Dr. Gary L. Olin is President of the Board of Directors of The Society for Biblical Studies

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Pilgrimage or Tourism, *cont'd.*

(Continued from page 1)

hemorrhage implicit to pilgrimage. Not so coincidentally, but conveniently, places of spiritual significance began to spring up throughout Anatolia and Europe. Relics proliferated. Stories of disciples and prominent Gospel figures, such as Peter and Mary, the mother of Jesus, migrating to places in Asia Minor and Europe circulated and became entrenched traditions. The believer no longer had to travel to distant shores to investigate places associated with key events and people in the Gospel stories. Pilgrims could spend their money in their own backyards. Pilgrimage has long been associated with practical considerations and money.

Above all, Pilgrimage requires geographical travel. The requirement of travel necessitates tourist services such as transportation, lodging, meals and even souvenirs. Archaeological excavations reveal that amulets, charms and votive offerings were popular souvenir items in the time of Jesus when the population of Jerusalem would balloon from about 25,000 year round residents to as many as 100,000 people during festivals, such as Passover. Where did all those people stay? Where did they eat? How did they get around? How did they know which sites to visit? From the beginning, practicalities and simple economics influenced the development of Christian pilgrimage.

By the time Egeria embarked on her four year pilgrimage to the Holy Lands (ca. 380 AD), the sites associated with biblical events and people were well identified. The routes were well worn. The practicalities of lodging, transportation and even guiding services were well established. Depending on changing economic and political conditions, the volume of pilgrims expanded and contracted over the centuries. Some of these early pilgrims chronicled their journeys. Many left telltale signs of their presence, such as graffiti expressing veneration of a site. Still others left declarations of their coming, either inscribing their names on walls, columns or rock or, if they could not write, they would inscribe a simple "x," of which there are thousands on holy

sites dating back to the early Byzantine period. These telltale signs, along with archaeological data and written records, help us piece together an understanding of the significance and impact of pilgrimage from the earliest times through the Medieval period and our own day.

The story of pilgrimage becomes very interesting, indeed, in the Modern period, beginning, say around the 19th Century. Two new developments changed the profile of Christian pilgrimage. The first, most obvious factor, is the invention of new transportation technologies, such as steamship travel, railroads, cars, buses and airlines. All travel became easier. The spiritual value of pilgrimage was much more appealing when it was made easier. At the same time, a wider market for travel developed and high volume, commercial tourism under the guise of pilgrimage was born.

The second development is less obvious, but perhaps even more significant. It is the post-Enlightenment change in the intellectual climate of the modern world in which the culturally conditioned values and

From the beginning, practicalities and simple economics influenced the development of Christian pilgrimage.

assumptions of modern "science" came to be considered intellectual imperatives. Alexander of Cappodocia never could have imagined what *historia* was to become. Subjected to closer and more careful scrutiny, with the requirement of "proof," people began to realize that the sites long associated with biblical events and people had

precious little evidence to support their identification. What kind of evidence could be adduced to identify a site as the place where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount? The fact that more than one different site had come to be associated with the same biblical event aroused disbelief in many, eroding the credibility of pilgrimage. How is it, for example, that two sites in Jerusalem could mark the eternal resting place of Mary, the mother of Jesus? And how, if she were eternally resting in Jerusalem, could she also have been taken to Ephesus where pilgrim tradition insists that she lived the rest of her life?

In the modern world, questions that never nagged early pilgrims came to dominate modern scholars and pilgrims alike. Combined with the obvious commercialism of high volume tourism and the hucksterism it generated, the values and demands of the modern intellect cast pilgrimage in an increasingly negative light.

In 1867, Mark Twain took part in a well publicized "pilgrimage" to the Holy Lands. Displaying all the time bound values of his day, he tells of his experience in *The Innocents Abroad*. Assuming the mantle of an enlightened muckraker, he applied a hefty dose of Yankee skepticism to the enterprise of pilgrimage and exposed the practice of pilgrimage as simply high volume tourist gimcrackery with little intellectual credibility.

Today, Christian pilgrimage is plagued by the same kind of commercial hucksterism Mark Twain made fun of and many Christians view pilgrimage to the Holy Lands with suspicion. And well they should, because most Christian travel to the Holy Lands is little more than an elaborate money transfer system—a high gloss scam, one part Wal-Mart, one part Amway. Christians embark on guided tours packing misguided theologies and today we inherit the illegitimate offspring of this illicit marriage. The Holy Land is rendered a biblical Disneyland. Thus, the need to redeem pilgrimage from commercial sightseeing and the mission of The Society for Biblical Studies.

Among its three distinct objectives, The Society for Biblical Studies

(Continued on page 7)

Pilgrimage or Tourism, *cont'd.*

(Continued from page 6)

seeks to redeem pilgrimage from the corrosive effects of commercial sightseeing. There are many dimensions to this goal, but the primary method of pursuing it is introducing the traveler to the contemporary dynamics, including issues of war and peace, in the places we visit. Commercial sightseeing, frequently in the service of political forces, seeks to insulate the tourist from contemporary realities. Tourists, cloistered in high volume, Western styled hotels and restricted to carefully selected sites, never truly encounter the culture where they travel, often not even sampling local cuisine. More often than not their only exposure to local people is their guide or bus driver. Until we encounter the people who live and work where we are traveling and allow them to tell their own stories, we have not begun to experience authentic pilgrimage.

What is the difference between a tourist and a pilgrim? Tourists pass through places, but pilgrims let places pass through them, allowing their hearts to be changed. Tourists seek comfort, pilgrims

seek the cross, allowing themselves to hear the stories and experience the feelings of people faced with enormous challenges. Tourists ask questions about sites, pilgrims let sites ask *them* questions about personal responsibility in the face of obvious moral challenges. Tourists ask to walk *where* Jesus walked, pilgrims ask *how* Jesus walked.

As long as a tour is restricted to carefully selected archaeological sites, the tour operator maintains control over information. Once we encounter people along the way, an element of serendipity is introduced and we lose control over the information we hear. Then we begin to be introduced to issues, challenges and other realities that sometimes challenge us to struggle with life and death issues. Commercial tourism is an armchair activity, a purely backward looking nostalgia trip. Tourists ask questions about ancient sites and people who lived long ago. In authentic pilgrimage, sites ask questions of pilgrims and people pose questions to us. What is your responsibility in the face of what you have seen and heard? What difference does

the study of the Bible make in redressing wrongs? Authentic pilgrimage requires us to explore current realities and ask questions of the applicability of the biblical faith in our modern world. Tourists debate whether Jesus was buried in this spot or that one. Pilgrims learn that Christianity is not faith in an empty tomb at all, but in a risen Christ, one who continues to demand redress of pressing social realities.

On the first day after the Sabbath, three women came to Jesus' tomb expecting to anoint his body. Instead of Jesus' lifeless body, they found a young man in the tomb. He said to them, "He is not here...but go and tell the disciples and Peter that he goes before you into Galilee. That is where you will find him." (Mark 16:1-7)

Tourists learn that Galilee is a sort of biblical theme park—a place for enjoyment and repose. For Jesus, it was the place where he fed the hungry, healed the sick, preached good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed. Pilgrims learn that Galilee is the place where talk meets

(Continued on page 8)

The Exodus Experience, *cont'd.*

(Continued from page 4)

Galilee as the add-on part of our trip kicked-in. We visited Zippori, Nazareth, the Church of the Annunciation, the Jordan River, and more. We spent the night at an Israeli Kibbutz. Now, before you form an opinion of the Kibbutz, it was the nicest hotel we stayed in...what were you thinking?

Then we headed to Jordan. If you haven't seen Petra, well you haven't seen Petra! It is magnificent! And they were selling the same babbles they tried to get us to buy in Egypt. Don't suppose they turn this stuff out in factories somewhere? And not to be left out, Mount Nebo where Moses died. I don't have the space or time to tell you everything we did, but I promise if you like history and religion and travel and meeting folks, you will love The Exodus Experience!

**If you like
history and religion
and travel
and meeting
folks, you will
love The Exodus
Experience!**

I am adding this final paragraph to remind you this isn't the good ole USA. They do things different, act different, think different, and talk different. You have to go with the flow as they say. Before we climbed Mt. Sinai, we were told a Russian lady had had a heart attack and died on the mountain overnight. On my way down from the summit, I passed her body beside the trail covered with a blanket. Several of our younger clergymen were asked by the Egyptians to help carry her body down the mountain. They carried her for a ways before they gave out. A member of our group commented, "If this was the USA, they would have closed the trail and removed her immediately." Remember where you are and enjoy it!

Don Edmonds is a lay person from Tennessee

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

Pilgrimage or Tourism, *cont'd.*

(Continued from page 7)

walk, where mouth meets muscle, where the power of God meets the people of God. Tourists are interested in where Jesus walked 2,000 years ago. Pilgrims want to know and experience where and with whom Jesus is walking right now. "He goes before you into Galilee... that is where you will find him." The exploration of ancient sites is an imperative to enable us to contextualize the life and ministry of Jesus and Paul. But ours is not a faith in an empty archaeological site. We find the living Jesus among the living people, whenever, wherever the biblical faith is applied in our real world of social, political and moral challenges—just as Jesus and Paul did.

There is neither pilgrimage nor Bible study where there is no engaging of the moral dimensions of the Bible. Remove moral considerations from pilgrimage or from the study of the Bible and all that is left is a sanitized, low impact faith. Such a faith is a sort of spiritual anesthesia—easy enough, but not satisfactory for those who live in a world of moral challenge. In the

end, any faith which demands nothing, costs nothing and expects nothing is a faith which is worth nothing. Authentic pilgrimage invigorates the study of the Bible and

renews faith—the kind of faith that can transform pilgrimage, Bible study and the world. Redeeming pilgrimage is redemptive.

Tourists are interested in where Jesus walked 2,000 years ago. Pilgrims want to know and experience where and with whom Jesus is walking right now.

Redeeming pilgrimage from commercial sightseeing is an opportunity to make a positive difference. To participate in redeeming pilgrimage is to participate in a mission to reform the way in which Western Christians are perceived by their brothers and sisters in the Holy Land and at the same time to participate in a fortifying ministry of presence to people who are under enormous political, economic and theological stress. It is to make a difference between a faith which is devoid of relevance and vitality and one which is truly redemptive. Redeeming pilgrimage from commercial tourism can make a difference not only in reforming the concept of pilgrimage itself, but in revitalizing the study of the Bible and renewing personal faith. Redeeming pilgrimage is itself redemptive.