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Hidden Floor of Medieval Cathedral Bigger Than the White House Found in Sudan

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"This was a building larger than the famous White House ... And we are planning to excavate it,"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

A Polish-Sudanese archaeological mission has reached the original floor of a monumental medieval cathedral in Old Dongola, northern Sudan - the Great Church of Jesus, probably the largest church in medieval Nubia. The team uncovered a staircase with 11-metre-high walls that led down to the floor, the only place so far where the floor has been reached. Most of the church remains buried under the desert sand.

Artur Ob?Uski, head of the mission and director of the Polish Center of Mediterranean Archaeology at the University of Warsaw, stood at the bottom of that staircase and looked at a church floor no one has seen for centuries. "This was a building larger than the famous White House ... And we are planning to excavate it," he said.

The estimated size is startling: about 47 metres wide and 57 metres long, with the University of Warsaw putting its original height at about 21 metres - six or seven storeys tall. A medieval church in the Sudanese desert, bigger than the residence of the American president, built by Christians whose kingdoms have been forgotten by most of the world.

There is an important caution to this story, and it must be stated plainly. Sudan's Ministry of Culture said on 10-11 November that the discoveries come from the 2025 field season, not new excavations in November 2026, and that both the identification as the Great Church of Jesus and the description of the building as a cathedral are hypotheses needing further research. The dimensions remain provisional. What the team has found is real and extraordinary - but the full picture is still being dug out of the sand.

Old Dongola Cathedral: A Church Larger Than The White House

Old Dongola lies on the eastern bank of the Nile, about 160 km south-east of modern-day Dongola. It was the capital of Makuria, one of three Christian kingdoms that arose along the Nile after missionaries arrived in the 6th century. For centuries, these kingdoms were a Christian world in Africa - with bishops, monasteries, painted churches and a faith that shaped daily life.

The church was first identified in 2021. Since then, the team has worked carefully toward the floor, and the staircase with its 36-foot walls was the breakthrough that let them stand on it at last. Untill now, the floor had never been reached. The rest of the building is still buried, and the next field season is expected to establish its full size.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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