

Christian Family Life Education Program (FLEP)

P R O G R A M D E S C R I P T I O N

1. General Background

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) was constituted into a national church in 1959. The Church, being originally a mission-based association, has always stressed the importance of Outreach activities. The EECMY has also tried to focus on Christian Education ministries to nurture her members.

Much has been done on the basics of faith teaching for adult members, women, youth and children. However, very little has been done when it comes to focus on Christian family ministry, including parenting, family relations, couple communication, marriage counseling etc. In 1970-ies there was a trial to arrange "Christian Family Week Programs", but there was no continuation in that field.

Family is the foundation of the society. Consequently one can say that a congregation starts from a family. Christian families are the basic units of the church. The church is an assembly of family members.

If the church members feel happy in their marriages and families they are free to worship in their congregations. Likewise, if the church workers, paid and voluntary ones, live in joyful and healthy marriages and families they have a good starting point for their service in the church. Vice versa, if our people are troubled in their marriages and families this affects their worship and service, too.

The EECMY has been growing at least at a rate of 5-10 % every year for the last 30 years. Many of the new members come with many questions of family relations, some even have acute problems. Still most of the pastors and evangelists of the church do not have either the knowledge or experience in Christian family ministry to help these members.

2. Purpose of the Program

- 2.1. To explain the Biblical and Theological Foundation of the EECMY concerning Marriage and Family life;
- 2.2. To prepare the Church policy on Christian Marriage and Family life;
- 2.3. To raise awareness on Family issues;
- 2.4. To promote Christian Family Life Ministry, and
- 2.5. To finally achieve the goal of having Christian Family Life Education as an essential part of ordinary teaching in all the Church Units.

3. Objectives of the Program

- 3.1. To promote Christian Family Life Ministry through conducting awareness raising seminars and workshops etc.;
- 3.2. To educate church workers on Family issues including pre-marital teaching;
- 3.3. To offer the church workers an opportunity to renew their partnership in Marriage during a retreat-type of gathering;
- 3.4. To search for Key Persons to promote the Family Life Ministry in the EECMY;
- 3.5. To collect materials and create new materials on Marriage and Family life, and
- 3.6. To strengthen the Family Counseling activities in the Church.

4. Plan of Activities To achieve the above mentioned objectives through

- 4.1. Collecting materials for a Family Life Library in order to have a resource center for concerned church workers;
- 4.2. Promoting teaching on Family and Counseling issues in different Seminars and Bible Schools;
- 4.3. Conducting awareness raising seminars and workshops in different Church Units;
- 4.4. Running Marriage Courses and Retreats for different groups of Church workers;
- 4.5. Working on the Biblical and Theological Foundation and the Church policy on Christian Marriage and Family life;
- 4.6. Producing leaflets and booklets in order to raise awareness on family issues;
- 4.7. Creating materials including teaching aids for Christian Family Life Ministry;
- 4.8. Creating structures for Family Counseling activities in congregations;
- 4.9. Arranging program for Family Counseling in a local congregation, and
- 4.10. Producing a Training Handbook for the Christian Family Life Ministry;

5. Framework and the workers of the Program

In the beginning the program will be run under the framework of Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary (HMYS). The working area, however, is the whole Church in close cooperation with the EECMY Gospel Ministry Department.

The Missionary Couple, who have been called for this service, shall be stationed in Hossana and teach according to special arrangements periodically in HMYS. As teachers of HMYS they shall also plan and act for the Christian Family Life Program in any Church Units.

One of the main objectives of the Program is to search for Key Persons in different Church units. These Ethiopians, whether Church workers or voluntary ones, will participate in teaching and otherwise act as resource persons for the Program. They should gradually take responsibility of promoting the Christian Family Life Program in their respective working areas. The idea is not to employ new people but to integrate Christian Family Life Ministry to the existing Church activities.

In the long run the program is to be run under the EECMY Gospel Ministry Department.

6. The Duration of the Program

The aim is to have Christian Family Life Education as an essential part of ordinary teaching in all the Church Units. To achieve this aim the Program is to be run for several years to support different Church Units in continuing it as part of their ordinary work.

7. The Budget, Administration and the Equipment of the Program

The annual Budgets and any administrative or financial procedures will be under the HMYS until the Program is transferred to the Central Office of the EECMY. Any equipment purchased for the Program shall follow the Program when it is transferred to the EECMY Gospel Ministry Department.

(Text approved by the EECMY-HMYS Board June 3, 2000)