

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary

Christian Family Life Education Program 2000

ANNUAL REPORT OF YEAR 2000

(THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PROGRAM)



Group Discussion during IBS Marriage Course in Mettu, March 2000

Christian Family Life Education Program (**FLEP**)

FLEP REPORT 2000

Background

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus has grown rapidly. Many activities have been started based on the needs of the widening Church work.

The Church has taught the basics of faith for adult members, women, youth and children. However, very little has been done on the field of Christian family ministry including parenting, family relations, couple communication, marriage counselling etc.

Family is the foundation of the society. 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 are happy in their marriages and families they are free to worship in their congregations. Likewise, joyful and healthy marriage/family life benefits their service in the Church. Vice versa, troubled marriage/family life affects their worship and service, too.

The EECMY has been growing rapidly. Many of the new members come with various questions of family relations, some even with 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.

This is why the Church decided to start a program in order to strengthen Christian family life ministry.

Start of a new work

The Church called through the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) a Missionary Couple (Sr. Anna-Kaarina and Rev. Matti Palmu) to start the Marriage work. They had been serving the Church in different positions during 1974-93 in South Central Synod and later on in the Central Office.

While in Finland 1993-99 the Palmus attended a variety of Marriage Work courses (mainly arranged by the Church of Finland, Centre for Family Concern).

The Palmus arrived in Addis Abeba January 8, 2000. As it was not possible to get work permits for this work in Addis Abeba it was decided to start the work under the framework of the Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary (HMYS). The FLEP Budget (ETB 107.000 for the year 2000) is granted by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM).

FLEP ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 2000

- If not otherwise mentioned, Sr. Anna-Kaarina Palmu and Rev. Matti Palmu have been together the facilitators working and teaching as a couple.
- The teaching method has been participatory, there has been not much of lecturing.
- See also the summary list of FLEP Courses 2000 (Appendix)

A. TEACHING AT THE THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE EECMY

1. 13-17.3. Course on Pastoral Care and Counselling at the Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary (HMYS).

- Teaching material: Harold Taylor, "Tend my Sheep". An **intensive course**, 35 periods.
- The ordinary Course on Pastoral Care for 2nd year Diploma-students was given as an **intensive course** within one week, 35 periods.

2. 31.3. Teaching at the Terfa Jarso Bible School (TJBS) IBS, Mettu.

- General teaching about Marriage; questions and answers; 2 periods only.

3. 13-14.4. Special Course on Marriage at the Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary (HMYS).

- 15 periods. Topics: Marriage in OT/NT, Foundation of Marriage, Youth before Marriage, Preparations for Wedding, Taking care of one's Marriage, You yourself and Marriage, My expectations concerning Marriage, Problems concerning Marriage, Sexual relationships, Child raising and Family Planning, The role of the Church concerning Marriage, The EECMY FLEP-Program, What can I do for Marriage in my service?

4. 13-16.6. Marriage Course at HMYS - Shinshitsho Bible School (SBS):

- Four full days, altogether **25 periods**.
- Bible Studies (participatory method) on couples of the Bible.
- Topics were basically the same as above (No 3) and as at the Synods' Marriage courses (below under B).

5. 28.9-6.10. Course on Pastoral Care, Marriage Counselling and Family Life Education at the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS, Section of Pastoralia), Addis Abeba.

- Specification of the Course: BP 473 **Pastoral Care III** for Degree IV students, Term I, Block I and II.
- Teaching material: The students had previously studied the books a) Taylor, Tend My Sheep; b) Eide, Pastoral Care in an African Village.
- Writing assignment: "Marriage Customs and Attitudes".
- The course was given as an **intensive course** (all the five daily class periods) during Block A seven days and during Block B six days.
- Course Schedule: This course is normally a 4 periods per week -course, i.e. $2 \times 32 = 64$ periods. This intensive course included $7 + 6 = 13$ working days, altogether $13 \times 5 = 65$ periods.
- There were some Case Studies, where the students used Drama, too. - The students were very actively handling the Counselling cases and the theological standpoints of the Church and Church workers.

- 6. 13-17.11. Course on Pastoral Care and Marriage Counselling at the Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary (HMYS).**
- Teaching material: Oevind Eide, "Pastoral Care in an African Village".
 - The ordinary Course on Pastoral Care for 3rd year Diploma-students was given as an **intensive course** within one week, 25 periods.
- 7. Nov. 27.-Dec. 4. Teaching in Addis Abeba at the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS), the Course on Pastoral Care, Marriage Counselling, HIV/AIDS Counselling and Family Life Education.**
- Specification of the Course and Participants: see above (28.9-6.10.).
 - Teaching material: 1) Joe Leonard, "Family Ministry", 2) A WCC publication "A Guide to HIV/AIDS Pastoral Counselling", 3) A WCC publication "Facing AIDS, The Challenge, the Churches' Response" and 4) A WCC publication "Facing AIDS, Study Document and Statement on HIV/AIDS".
- 8. Dec. 11. Teaching at the Gidada Bible School (GBS) WWBS, Dembi Dollo, the 2nd year Bible School Students.**
- General teaching about Marriage; questions and answers; 3 periods only.
- 9. Dec. 16. Teaching at the Gidada Bible School (GBS) WWBS, Dembi Dollo, the T.E.E.-Diploma students.**
- General teaching about Marriage; questions and answers; 3 periods only.

B. TEACHING MARRIED COUPLES' COURSES IN THE EECMY SYNODS

- The Synods have invited pastors/evangelists to courses on the condition they come together with their wives. The emphasis has been on Marriage Enrichment, but the intention is also to encourage participants to teach similar issues in their work/home areas. The FLEP has paid the food and lodging, the sending bodies the costs related to participants' travels.
 - Course Topics: "Foundation of Marriage", "What do I expect of Marriage?", "Traditional, Modern and Christian Marriage", "Speaking and Listening", "How are the decisions made?", "Youth and Marriage Preparations", "Feelings", "Daily life in Marriage; Courtesies", "Woman and Marriage", "Man and Marriage", "How could the men / women show their love to each other?", "Threats of Marriage", "Church Worker's Wife", and "Church Worker and his Family".
 - There were a variety of group discussions: man and wife only, groups of couples, women's group & men's group and then many general discussions.
 - The Topics of Bible Studies (participatory method), if not otherwise mentioned, were: The Marriages of 1) Adam & Eve, 2) Mary & Joseph, 3) Jacob & Leah and 4) Priscilla & Aquila.
 - The Holy Communion Service concluded the Marriage Course Programs.
- 1. 28-31.3. Pastors' and their Wives' Marriage Course in IBS, Mettu:**
- Program: Tuesday 9 a.m. until Friday 2 p.m. Participants: **13 couples**.
 - Bible Studies: "Marriage in OT", "Marriage in NT", "The Pastor's Family as an Example" and "Christian Family Life".
 - Lectures on the local Marriage Culture: Oromo and Kafacho and Shakacho Cultures.

2. **8-12.5. Pastors' and their Wives' Marriage Course in SCS, Hossana :**
 - Program: Monday 8.30 a.m. until Friday 8.30 p.m. Participants: **16 couples**
 - Bible Studies: "Christian Family Life", "The Pastor's Family Life", "The Power of Prayer in Christian Family", "Marriage in OT" and "Marriage in NT".
 - Lectures on the local Marriage Culture: Kambaata and Hadiyya Cultures.

3. **4-7.9. Church Workers' and their Wives' Marriage Course in SWS, Arba Minch.**
 - Program: Monday 8.30 a.m. until Thursday 7 p.m. Participants: **22 couples**, 13 Pastors and 9 other Church Workers with their wives.
 - Lectures on the local Marriage Culture: Gamo, Konso and Dirashe Cultures.

4. **17-20.10. Church Workers' and their Wives' Marriage Course in SWBS, (Mizan Teferi) Aman**
 - Program: Tuesday 9 a.m. until Friday 6.40 p.m. Participants: **18 couples**, 8 Pastors and 10 other Church Workers with their wives.
 - Lectures on the local Marriage Culture: Bench & Mer, Shakicho and Shako Cultures.
 - The activity of the women during this course was remarkable. Almost all of them were able to speak Amharic and they were actively discussing.

5. **12-15.12. Pastors' and their Wives' Marriage Course in WWBS, Dembi Dollo.**
 - Program: Tuesday 9 a.m. until Friday 6.30 p.m. Participants: **15 couples**, Pastors with their wives.
 - Morning Prayers given by Kes Fite Birru, 91-years old Kes Kumsa and the Synod President (one of the participants!) Kes Teferi Barkesa.
 - The course was given in Amharic.

C. TEACHING OTHER COURSES

1. **3-5.3. Marriage Enrichment Retreat** for Finnish Missionaries in Bishoftu, Debre Zeit. Theme: "The Richness of the Feelings". The participants: Eight Finnish Missionary Couples.

2. **23-26.3. Course on Counselling and Couple Communication** for the Missionaries of Finnish Mission (FM) in FM station Shebe. A two full days course teaching Counselling, Job Counselling and Couple Communication. Bible Studies on Stewardship.
 - Participants: 9 missionaries (3 couples and 3 singles) of FM.

3. **3-5.11. Marriage Enrichment Retreat** in Hossana for Finnish Missionaries. - The participants: Seven Finnish Missionary Couples.

D. OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. **3.6. The HMYS Board Meeting** in Addis Abeba.
The HMYS Board approved a) the FLEP Program Description;
b) the FLEP Advisors' Job Description and c) the FLEP Annual Budget 2000.
2. In January, June and September the Advisors were at or around the **EECMY Executive Committee Meetings** at the Central Office in Addis Abeba. During the meeting breaks the FLEP was introduced to the representatives of all the Church Units. Discussions about the program were held as well as future course plans and arrangements made.
3. The Advisors were preparing the course materials, collecting different materials and literature for the future FLEP Library.
4. One of the main objectives of the FLEP is "to search for Key Persons to promote the Family Life Ministry in the EECMY. The Marriage Courses in the Synods seem to help in finding interested and capable persons/couples.

E. FUTURE PROSPECTS OF FLEP

The feedback from the Synods has been very positive. There seems to be a great need for focusing in Family Ministry in EECMY. We are grateful to our Lord and further on to the Church for the opportunity to serve on this field of service.

Respectfully submitted,
December 18, 2000

Sr. Anna-Kaarina Palmu
FLEP Advisor

Rev. Matti Palmu
FLEP Advisor

Appendixes:

1. Program Description of FLEP
2. Summary list of FLEP Courses during 2000
3. Daily Program of a Marriage Course in a Synod

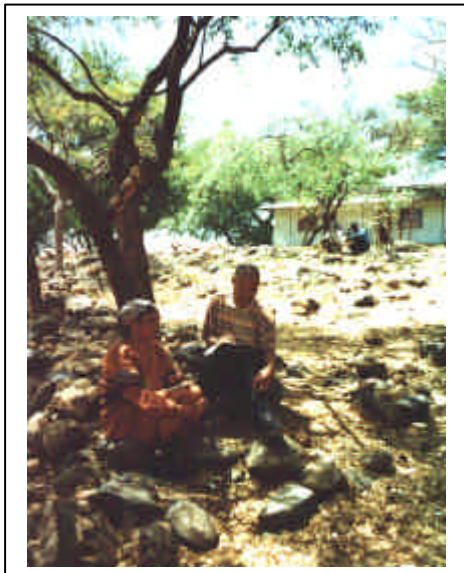
PICTURES OF FLEP ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 2000



1. The Marriage Course for Pastors and their wives in Mettu, IBS, in March, 2000.



4. Anna-Kaarina and Matti Palmu teaching at the Marriage Course in May, 2000



2. Couple discussion during the Marriage Course in Arba Minch, SWS, in September, 2000.



5. A Couple during session at the Marriage Course in Arba Minch, SWS, in Sept. 2000.



3. Women's Group Discussion during the SCS Marriage Course in Hossana, May 2000



6. Men's Group Discussion during the SWS Marriage Course in Arba Minch, Sept. 2000