

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary

Christian Family Life Education Program



(Couple discussions during the CGS -Ijaji Marriage Course, October 2002)

ANNUAL REPORT OF YEAR 2002

(THE THIRD YEAR OF THE PROGRAM)

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

FLEP REPORT 2002

Summary of the Report for Background

In the growing Mekane Yesus Church many people have family related questions, some even acute problems. But many church workers do not have either the knowledge or experience in Family Ministry to help those members.

The EECMY started in the year 2000 a program in order to strengthen Family Ministry. The Advisors of the Program have been Sr. Anna-Kaarina and Rev. Matti Palmu. They are sent by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), which also has granted the FLEP Budget (ETB 120.000 for 2002).

The Program is for the time being under the framework of the Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary (HMYS). According to the original plan the Program will be transferred to the EECMY Gospel Ministry Department.

The first three years of function have clearly shown that there is a big need for teaching and training additional teachers for various fields of Family Ministry on different levels of Church work.

Trainings

There have been **two kinds of basic Courses** during the year:

A) The FLEP Advisors have taught **courses in Theological institutions** of the Church: ONS (Onesimos Nesib Seminary, Aira) and MYTS (Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary, Addis Abeba), and also in ANS (Aira Nursing School). The starting point has been the Christian understanding of Marriage and Family life. The students have been encouraged to serve also as Marriage Counsellors in their future service.

B) There have been "**Basic Marriage Courses**" (**for couples only**) in six Synods / Work Areas. The emphasis has been on Marriage Enrichment, helping couples in their own family life. But the participants have also been encouraged to teach on Marriage in their work or home areas.

During the year altogether 127 couples attended the Basic Marriage Courses. The total number of participants of 11 different courses was 324.

Training of Trainers (TOT)

Sustainability is the crucial question concerning this Program. In the long run this kind of work cannot be run only by Central Office or by foreign missionaries. The program must be integrated into ordinary church activities on all levels of the church.

Year 2002 was a milestone for FLEP Program. The 1st Training of Trainers' Course (TOT) for Family Ministry was held in Hossana in April. God willing two more TOT's will be held during 2003. The local instructors in all Church Units either take the responsibility of the Family Ministry - or the Program will prove to have been a needed, but temporary feature in this church!

FLEP ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 2002

- 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 2002 (Appendix)

A. TEACHING AT THE THEOLOGICAL (and other) INSTITUTIONS OF THE EECMY

- 1. May 13 and 24 Teaching a two-day Intensive Course on Family Ministry at EECMY Aira Nursing School (ANS).**
 - General teaching on Marriage; many questions and answers.
 - 24 ordinary ANS Students, altogether 30 participants.
 - Altogether 16 periods. The course language: English.
- 2. May 20-23 Special Course on Marriage / Family Ministry at the Onesimos Nesib Seminary (ONS), Diploma Classes at ONS, Aira.**
 - General teaching on Marriage; many questions and answers.
 - 7 Theology students of 2nd year, 16 of 1st year, altogether 23 participants.
 - Altogether 23 periods. The course language: Amharic.
- 3. May 21 and 23 Teaching on Marriage and Family Life at the Onesimos Nesib Seminary (ONS), Diploma Students with their wives.**
 - General teaching on Marriage; questions and answers.
 - 5 Theology students with their wives, altogether 10 participants.
 - Altogether 5 periods. The course language: Amharic.
- 4. September 30 - October 4 Teaching in Addis Abeba at the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS) the Intensive Course on Family Ministry.**
 - This Course was part of the **Pastoral Care III** program.
 - Participants: 4th year Degree-students (16) and 3 Norwegian Exchange Students, and the MYTS Chaplain, altogether 20 participants.
 - The Reading assignments were from Taylor, Tend My Sheep, Leonard, Family Ministry, A practical guide for a teaching church, and "A Biblical Approach to Marriage and Family in Africa" by TAG.
 - The Writing assignment was "Marriage Customs and Attitudes" and after the course "How to plan Family Ministry".
 - Course Schedule: Pastoral Care III course is a 4 periods per week - course, i.e. $4 \times 16 = 64$ periods. During this intensive course there were 5 working days, which makes 5×5 periods = 25 periods.
 - There was a lot of active discussion on the questions brought up by the students and the teachers; The teaching method was participatory, there was not much of lecturing.
 - The Course was actually too short in order to cover the large material on Family Ministry.

B. TEACHING MARRIED COUPLES' COURSES IN THE EECMY SYNODS

- By the end of year 2002 the FLEP has arranged **A Basic Marriage Course** in all 17 EECMY Synods and two Area Works; the NEAW (North) is the only Area Work where this course has not yet been arranged. The Synods have invited pastors, evangelists and other responsible persons to courses with their wives or husbands. The emphasis has been on Marriage Enrichment having the wish that participants would also teach these issues in their work or home areas. The FLEP has paid the Course cost except the cost related to transport, which is considered as Local Contribution.
- The Course language was Amharic (Oromo translation in Ijaji and Begi).
- During the typical four-day Basic Marriage Course there have been 15 topics: 1. Introduction of Course; 2. Bible Study "The Marriage of Adam & Eve"; 3. "Foundation of Marriage"; 4. "What do I expect of Marriage?"; 5. Bible Study "The Marriage of Mary & Joseph"; 6. "Speaking and Listening"; 7. "How are the decisions made?"; 8. "About Feelings"; 9. "Marriage in the Local Culture"; 10. Bible Study "The Marriage of Jacob & Leah"; 11. "Daily life in Marriage; How could men / women show their love to each other?"; 12. "Woman and Marriage", "Man and Marriage"; 13. Bible Study "The Marriage of Priscilla & Aquila"; 14. "Troubles of Marriage"; and 15. "Church Worker's Family Life".
- The teaching method was participatory; there was not much of lecturing (except the presentation on the local Culture on Marriage). 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 participatory method was used also with the Bible Studies.
- Some Marriage books were presented for sale during the Courses (from September onwards).
- The book "Ye Tedar Mistir" (The Secret of Marriage, by Dr. Alemu Beeftu) has been given to all participating couples.
- Holy Communion Service concluded the Program at each Course place.

1. May 14-17 in BDS (Birbirna Dilla Synod), Aira

- Program from Tuesday 9.10 a.m. until Friday 6.40 p.m.
- Participants: **19 couples** (14 pastors and 5 other Church workers with their spouses).
- Presentation on "Traditional Marriage in Western Oromo Culture and how Christianity has changed it";
- The book "Ye Tedar Mistir" (The Secret of Marriage, by Dr. Alemu Beeftu) was given to all participating couples.
- The problem of Female Genital Mutilation seems to be bigger in the Western Synods / Area Work than in many other places; there was no clear opposition against it!

2. Sep 16-20 Basic Marriage Course in CES (Central Eth. Synod), Woliso

- Program from Monday 3.30 p.m. until Friday 3.30 p.m.
- Participants: **19 couples** (16 pastors and 3 other Church workers with their spouses).
- Presentation on "Traditional Marriage in Selale Area Culture and how Christianity has changed it"; There was a good presentation on how the Parish has objected certain harmful traditions connected to Marriage;
- A Pastor with his wife sung together giving a good example of a couple serving together;

3. **Oct 15-18 Basic Marriage Course in CGS (Central Gibe Synod), Ijaji**
 - Program from Tuesday 8.30 a.m. until Friday 7.20 p.m.
 - Participants: **20 couples** (19 pastors and 1 other Church worker with their spouses).
 - In place of presentation on "Traditional Marriage in Western Shewa Oromo Culture and how Christianity has changed it" there was a general discussion on the subject instead. Especially the positive points on the local Culture were stressed.
 - The CGS President participated in the Course with his wife.
4. **Nov 5-8 Basic Marriage Course in WS (Western Synod), Bodji**
 - Program from Tuesday 9.10 a.m. until Friday 6.30 p.m.
 - Participants: **18 couples** (13 pastors and 5 other Church workers with their spouses).
 - An oral presentation on "Traditional Marriage in Western Oromo Culture and how Christianity has changed it".
 - The WS President participated in the Course with his wife.
5. **Nov 12-15 Basic Marriage Course in GJS (Gimbi Jorgo Synod), Gimbi**
 - Program from Tuesday 8.50 a.m. until Friday 6.10 p.m.
 - Participants: **16 couples** (12 pastors and 4 other Church workers with their spouses). There were several other people who would have liked to participate, but who could not because they did not bring their wives with.
 - In place of presentations on "Traditional Marriage in Western Oromo Culture and how Christianity has changed it" and "Gumuz Traditional Marriage" there was a general discussion on the Local Culture Marriage and especially on the positive points in it.
6. **Dec 10-13 Basic Marriage Course in BGAW (Begi Gidami Area Work), Begi**
 - Program from Tuesday 8.35 a.m. until Friday 6.30 p.m.
 - Participants: full number, that is **22 couples** (12 pastors and 10 other Church workers with their spouses).
 - Presentation on "Traditional Marriage in Western Oromo Culture and how Christianity has changed it";
 - The BGAW Coordinator participated in the Course with his wife.

C. THE 1ST TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT) COURSE IN APRIL, 2002

Apr 15-26, 2002 the 1st EECMY-FLEP Training of Trainers' Course for Family Ministry was held in Hossana.

- The Facilitators were Sr. Anna-Kaarina and Rev. Matti Palmu;
- The extent of the Course was 76 periods during 10 Course Days.
- Program from 1st week Tuesday 9 a.m. until 2nd week Friday 9 p.m. The first week Saturday there was an Excursion to the SCS Synod Centre and HMYS Seminary compound and visiting the Palmus' Home
- The SCS Evangelism Director held a Bible Study in the first morning. There were also presentations on the activities of Social Health Centre and the SCS AIDS Work as well as on Family Planning.

- There were altogether **19 Participants** (8 couples and 3 without their spouses) from 6 Synods or Work Areas: SCS - Hossana, SWS - Arba Minch, SCES - Awasa, SS - Dilla, SEAW - Dodola and WWBS - Dembi Dollo. Out of the participants 7 couples and one without the spouse were from outside Hossana. It was a great disappointment that the SES (South Ethiopia Synod, Hagere Mariam) did not send anybody to this Training of Trainers Course. This will badly affect the future Family Ministry work in that Synod.
- The participants were given the following books: 1) "Questions Young People ask" (or in Amharic Bewotatoch yeminesu tiyakewoch); 2) "Answers for your Marriage" (or in Amharic Yegabicha enkokili-shoch ena mefthewochachew); 3) Betesebna yelijoch astedadeg (Family and Child Raising), and 4) Yemistehn bahirye tefetro ewek (I. Trobish: Understanding your Wife; Her Ovarian cycle and Fertile days).
- The teaching method was participatory. There were many discussions on various topics. Especially there was much discussion on the meaning of "Family Ministry", "Christian Family Life Education", "Marriage Counselling", etc.
- The participants were given "**The EECMY Handbook for Family Ministry**" and they were all **practising as trainers** or instructors leading turn by turn various teaching sessions.
- The participants reported which kind of Family Ministry activities there are in their respective Synods or Working Area. There was a thorough and very useful discussion on how to arrange Christian Family Life Education in different areas, how to manage if there is no specific budget for this work, who could be the target groups, which kind of courses should be the most needed, what are the most needed topics, how to train more trainers for this work, etc.
- The participants were very active and they seem to have special interest and call to serve in Family Ministry in their working areas.
- The Holy Communion and a Special Supper finished the Course.

D. ABOUT THE 1ST DRAFT OF THE "EECMY HANDBOOK FOR FAMILY MINISTRY"

The first Draft of "EECMY Handbook for Family Ministry" was finalized before the 1st TOT in April. It includes teaching aid for 17 lessons and 11 Bible Studies, consisting altogether 92 pages (including 27 pages Appendices).

The List of Contents of "Handbook for Family Ministry" can be seen as Appendix of this Report.

E. OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. The advisors have been "around" the **EECMY Executive Committee Meeting** at the Central Office in Addis Abeba January 14-18, June 4-7 and October 8-12. During the meeting breaks we have done detailed course-appointments with various Church Units and held general discussions about the FLEP Activities with various representatives of the Church Units.
2. The Advisors have participated in the **EECMY Gospel Ministry Department (GMD) Staff Meetings** (March 19; Discussion on "GMD Self Assessment") and December 4 (Reports 2002 and Action Plans 2003).

As recorded from the very beginning in 2000, the FLEP shall in future be part of EECMY-GMD in Central Office, Addis Abeba.

3. Leave&work in Finland July 2 - September 9, 2002: (in Finland for Annual Leave and Sick Leave, partly for work reasons);

Various duties given by FELM during the stay in Finland:

- **July 10-16 Marriage Camp** in Kalajoki; 17 couples / families participating, plus 6 couples as Group Leaders, altogether 23 couples; The Palmus were the Group Leaders for three Missionary couples (coming from Indonesia, Botswana and Croatia); in another group there were Missionary couples from Nepal, Bangladesh and Uzbekistan; The Palmus were lecturing on (1) Forgiveness and (2) Everyday love;

- August 8-12 in Kauniainen **Training of Trainers' (TOT) on Family Ministry** for Missionaries coming from various FELM working countries; Participants (including the facilitators) 23 adults, 10 children, coming from Botswana, Senegal, Thailand, Nepal, Russia and Ethiopia; The Palmus were lecturing on EECMY-FLEP activities in Ethiopia and acted as facilitators during the course;

4. **Nov 19-22 EECMY-GMD Evangelism Staff Consultation in Addis Abeba**, Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary. Nov 19 amongst other reports we presented three papers: "What about FLEP now, and especially what about FLEP sustainability in future?", "Future FLEP activities, updated in October, 2002", and statistics titled "FLEP Courses 2000, 2001 and 2002". - There were about 30 participants. - It was decided, that during the similar Consultation 2003 there will be a specific session for the FLEP matters.
5. The Advisors have been **preparing the course materials, collecting different materials and literature** for the growing FLEP Library.
6. One of the main objectives of the FLEP is "**to search for Key Persons to promote the Family Life Ministry in the EECMY**". Different Courses held in the Synods and training institutions help in finding interested and capable persons or couples. The Advisors have also used various opportunities in order to raise awareness for the need of Family Ministry in Church and Society.

F. FUTURE PROSPECTS OF EECMY - FLEP

- The FLEP activities expanding in different directions

The FLEP Advisors have taught the Basic Marriage Course in all 17 Synods and 2 Working Areas. The people trained through TOT have taught in five different Synods or Working Area. This is the very positive sign of Family Ministry being expanded in the Church by the local responsible teachers.

- Future Family Ministry within EECMY

The feedback from the Synods and Theological Institutions concerning the FLEP Activities has been very positive and encouraging. There is a great need for focusing in Family Ministry in EECMY.

The FLEP Advisors plan to expand soon the Training of Trainers' Courses. This seems to be the only way to fulfil the tremendous challenge in strengthening the Family Ministry of the Church.

In the long run the aim is to have Christian Family Life Education as an essential part of ordinary teaching in all the Church Units.

We are grateful to our Lord and further on to EECMY and FELM for the opportunity to continue on this field of service.

Respectfully submitted,
December 17, 2002

Sr. Anna-Kaarina Palmu
FLEP Advisor

Rev. Matti Palmu
FLEP Advisor

Appendixes:

1. Program Description of FLEP
2. Summary list of FLEP Courses during 2002
3. Daily Program of a Marriage Course in a Synod
4. The List of Contents of "Handbook for Family Ministry"
5. Future FLEP Activities, updated December 2002.

PICTURES OF FLEP ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 2002



(Left:)
The participants
of the 1st FLEP
Training of
Trainers' (TOT)
in Hossana,
April 2002



(Left:)
The Participants
planning their
future service
on the field of
Family Ministry
during the
TOT Course,
April 2002



(Left:)
Sr. Anna-Kaarina Palmu and
Rev. Matti Palmu
teaching at the Mekane Yesus
Theological Seminary (MYTS)
in Addis Abeba, October 2002

(Right:)
Couple Discussion
during Basic Marriage
Course in GJS, Gimbi,
November 2002

