

The Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
The 7th General Assembly
Report presented by the Council of
Lutheran Congregations in Addis Ababa

Debre-Zeit

Jan. 13 - 19, 1971.

This is the first report to be presented to the General Assembly of the EC-MY by the Council of Lutheran Congregations in Addis Ababa.

Although the CLCAA was formally established and started to function as a Council, the idea of forming such a Council originated in 1967.

Even prior to the formal organization of the Council, the Lutheran Congregations in Addis Ababa started to come together with a view to making attempts to find solutions to their common problem confronting them in the carrying out of their responsibilities.

The need for the formation of the CLCAA emerged out of a concrete urban situation which demanded of the Congregation a re-thinking of their philosophy or assumption in a city of complex social nature like Addis. It is very easy to take newly emerging situations which will subsequently entail lagging behind the time a lamentable course unless tackled before it is too late. It is the realization of things of this nature that has stimulated the thinking of our Congregations in Addis Ababa to co-operate in forming the CLCAA.

When the CLCAA was formally constituted in October of 1969 its objectives have been stated in its Terms of Reference as follows:

1. "To foster fellowship among the congregations of this Council and with other Christian groups.
2. To coordinate the evangelistic programs of member congregations as found necessary and advice member congregation, supporting Synods and Churches on new opportunities for work in Addis Ababa.
3. To organize and maintain a system of referring members, especially those who come into Addis Ababa from the provinces.
4. To coordinate the educational programs of member congregations as found necessary (Sunday School, Youth work, Literacy, etc.) and advice and assist on the development and use of teaching materials.
5. To advice on opportunities to meet social needs and coordinate social programs of member congregations.
6. To arrange for research projects on urban concerns from which member congregations can find ways to be more effective in their ministries.

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Islam in Africa Project.

- 1) I am working in Ethiopia since one year teaching in the Mekanissa Seminary and at some other places and doing some research concerning the Islam in Ethiopia. I would like to give here a short general report about my findings. As we know Christianity was the first of these two religions in our country. But only a few hundred years latter the Islam came into Ethiopia and took its way step by step from the coast to the highlands. Now we have about 50% Muslims in Ethiopia.
- 2) The Islam is concentrated in a few very strong centres and is spreading from these centres more and more into the other parts of our country. I will mention and describe here shortly the main schools of the Islam in the field of our church and missions.
- 3) In the Northern Synod I met the famous Scheich Muhammad Zain al-Dani in his school in Dana. He teaches about one thousand students. The students stay at Dana up to ten or fifteen years and study the Arabic language, The Qoran, Exegesis of the Qoran, history of Islam, the laws and the creeds of the Islam. The library of Dana is well equipped. I saw dictionaries with twenty volumes. We have the same books in our libraries at the universities in Europe.
- 4) Dana is located on a hill between the Highlands and the Danakil desert, about 50 kms north of Woldia. Having completed their studies the students go to other places and open own schools and teach as shaikhs. The Shaikh Muhammad Zain al-Dani is a rich man, a landlord who can support his students, if they are poor. I have also seen his students working on his fields and harvesting.

In the lowlands and in the desert, at the highway and even in the highlands you will find a lot of other Qoranic schools, where the shaikhs are teaching the basic knowledge of the Islam. The best students of these lower schools later attend the most important school in Dana.
- 5) In the Wollo province I found another very important school between Bati and Kombolcha in the mountains. The name of the place is Godjam and the name of the shaikh is Muhammad Saddik. He is an old man, about ninety years, and twenty or thirty years ago his school attracted hundreds of students. But now, since he is old and sick, he got only fifty or one hundred students. The teaching is also done on a very high level and they have got a number of good Arabic books concerning all the different subjects of the Islam.
- 6) In the mountains east of Dessie you will find a number of very attractive mosques. But so far I couldn't visit them and cannot describe their teachers and the level of teaching.
- 7) In the Central Synod we have the big mosques in Addis Ababa with a number of smaller schools. In the town there is no real Islamic university or high school as in Dana or Godjam. But the Arabic traders in Addis Ababa run an Arabic school with some modern subjects. They teach here all the subjects of the Islam and in addition also English and Geography and Mathematics.