

be appreciated. Looking at the situation of our church and at her history up to the present, one may conclude that evangelistic outreach was at the heart of the ECMY, while nurture was at its minimum. There seems now to be a shift of emphasis from evangelistic outreach to nurture. These two aspects of the Christian ministry should be maintained in a balanced manner. The responsibility for evangelistic outreach is laid on the shoulders of the ECMY, for this country as well as elsewhere, and there is no one else to carry out this responsibility for her. The only reason for retaining expatriates is for evangelistic outreach, which can never be neglected without entailing serious consequences for the life of the church. The ECMY has many ethnic groups in her fold, speaking various languages. One of the handicaps to nurture was the policy of the feudal system which had hindered the use of the vernaculars spoken in the country by the different ethnic groups.

The present policy of the government encourages the development of the various languages, and the use of these languages should be taken as a good opportunity for the production of Christian literature in the languages the people understand. A substantial amount of funds and sufficient personnel should be assigned to produce Christian literature in the mother tongues of our membership. Those who preach should be requested to keep their sermons and devotions in writing.

12. The Cost of Discipleship

To believe in Christ is to take the form of a servant, to be a servant for others. The full implications of the Suffering Servant in the Old Testament (see Isaiah 42,1-4; 52,13; 53,1-12) as fulfilled in the New Testament (John 13,12-17; Philippians 2,5-11) should be practiced by the ECMY today. There is a turning point in the history of any nation, any church or any individual person. September 12, 1974, was a turning point in the history of this country. Ethiopia can never be what she was before September 1974. Fundamental changes,

especially in the economic field, have taken place. One should expect that changes in the economic aspect of the country would generally affect the salary scales introduced under the feudal system.

Ethiopia with one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world will not be able to maintain the salary scales in practice at present. My contention is not whether the government will be able to pay people on the basis of the salary scales in practice or not, the point is that a Socialist government will not be able to operate on scales introduced by a feudal system.

As a church, the ECMY has a prophetic role to play in this society. It is our duty to remind the government of some issues that we consider to be of vital importance to the life of our country.

The aim of this Memorandum is not to discuss our relationship with the government, but to raise some vital issues as they relate to the life of the ECMY, so that they may be discussed with a view to making drastic policy decisions to meet the demands of the time we are confronted with, due to the process of historical development as Ethiopia marches forward into the future.

The ECMY has to interpret the signs of the time, as we believe in the God of history who determines the destiny of nations. History is the field of activity of the Creator of the universe, and it is our duty to detect and interpret the guiding hands of God in the present historical development in our country, and to cooperate with the God of history in order to shape her future history.

One of the demands of the time for the ECMY is to take drastic steps in matters pertaining to the present practices of payment for the employees under her. There are arguments in favour of a drastic review of payment practices now in operation. One may bring up a number of points in support of this view. But as it is impossible to dwell on all the points in this outline, let me mention two or three

reasons for the sake of argument. A drastic review of payment practices must be made for the sake of the church: "Though he was rich, yet he became poor for our sake" (2 Corinthians 8,9). We should be prepared to give up luxury for the sake of the Gospel of salvation. Another point is that the ECMY should be an example to others. This church has been able to set an example in showing interest to the outcast in our society. The third point is that a realistic view of the economic situation of our country requires a drastic review of the salary scales now in operation in the country as well as in the church.

In this matter, which is so personal to every one of us, we have to make decisions affecting our personal interests, our living standard, the luxury that we enjoy, thereby setting an example for the government as for others concerned, not by words but by actions of sacrificial nature. This is what it means to be the church for others. Jesus Christ lived and sacrificed himself for others.

In my opinion the minimum payment for anyone working under the ECMY should be seventy Ethiopian dollars, while the maximum payment should be four hundred and fifty (450) Ethiopian dollars per month. My suggestion is that as of January 1976 payments should be adjusted in such a way that for those receiving less than seventy dollars a month, increment should be made to bring them up, and cuts should be made from those getting more than four hundred and fifty dollars a month, so that will be maximum. Those in categories between ninety and four hundred and fifty dollars will have to face a cut of a certain percentage of their salaries, but those with less than ninety dollars should not be affected by this reduction.

Personnel working in project undertakings for a limited period of time should be employed on contract not exceeding a two-year period at a time. Thus, their salaries will not be affected by this decision.

In my opinion this is the cost of discipleship we have to pay for the sake of the Gospel and for the sake of our country. This is what the love of Christ demands of us in the present historical development. This is what it means to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves in the present concrete Ethiopian situation.

Let not anyone deceive himself in taking Christianity as one of the social systems or ideologies. To be a Christian is to be a follower of the risen Christ, confessing him as the Lord of history. The confession that "Christ died for our sins" implies that we, the confessors are ready to sacrifice whatever the Lord of history demands of us in a concrete situation. To pay the cost of discipleship is not to buy our salvation; it is to demonstrate the quality of love that led Jesus of Nazareth to the Cross. To pay the cost of discipleship in the present situation means for us to take a concrete decision to go from Jerusalem to Golgotha (Matthew 20,17-19; Acts 20,22-24).

The demands for the cost of discipleship will be met by various responses from each one of us. To some it will mean a reduction of pay in a drastic way. To others it will mean giving everything away to be members in farmers' associations. Still to some who earn their means of living, either through the employment of wife or husband, it will mean serving in a different manner. Whichever may be the way we respond, the inevitable demand of the cost of discipleship is that the saving power of the Gospel should be preached regardless of the sacrifices it may entail (Romans 1,17-18).

13. Higher Theological Education

The best theological scholarships should be afforded to those who have proved to be committed to the ministry of the church. However, the purpose for higher theological scholarship must be redefined in the light of the Biblical understanding of the ministry of the church. This is to say that the purpose for theological

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Scholarship should be to give better service to the Church of Jesus Christ, rather than to earn a better salary. From those to whom much is given much is required, says the Bible. There should be no difference of salary on the basis of certificates, diplomas or degrees. Any payment to be made to those serving in the ECMY must be the minimum to enable the person concerned to live. An opportunity to attract someone to work under the ECMY should never be given in the form of salary or scholarship. Serving in the church must come out of a calling from the Holy Spirit. The purpose, therefore, for a higher theological scholarship should be explained to the prospective students in such a way that they should be clear in their minds that they are being given higher education, not to earn higher salaries, but to render better service to the people of God. The expectations of the ECMY from the seminaries should be clearly defined in such a way that these expectations should, in turn, influence preparation for theological education.

14. The Central Administration of the ECMY

The Central Administration as well as the Synod Administrations must be simplified and reduced to the minimum. At present there are about 40 people working in the Central Administration. In the light of the changes taking place in Ethiopia, these must be reduced by 50% beginning January of 1976 as concrete steps towards self-reliance. There are positions to be discontinued and other positions to be created which, in my opinion, will call for amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the ECMY.

In restructuring the ECMY the heavy expenses incurred in the Yemissrach Dimts, as well as the wisdom of running two seminaries under a church of the size of the ECMY, should be studied in terms of good stewardship.