

MEKANE YESUS SEMINARY
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES

1. PURPOSE:

The Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus knows that it has its calling within the diversity of cultural expressions of contemporary Ethiopia.

This Department is being established,

- a) to foster research into the cultural, social, economic, linguistic and religious expressions of the diverse ethnic groups and peoples and rural and urban population of contemporary Ethiopia. In times past the majority of the ethnic groups and peoples of Ethiopia were deprived in large measure of opportunities for research into and the development of their cultural heritage. Sociological research had been hampered by political considerations. With the political changes that have been introduced since the overthrow of the feudal regime there is opportunity for greatly expanding the cultural, linguistic, sociological and religious research that has been conducted - although mostly by foreigners - and especially to enter into fields prohibited by till now. The intent of such a Department would be in the first instance to foster research by Ethiopians, to collect objective material and information in a systematic way, using and fostering the abilities of students, giving financial support to specific research projects, publications, etc. In all of this activity the intent of the Department would not be to foster any limited interests, research projects will be open also to persons who are not related to the ECMY. The intent is to encourage the greatest possible objectivity and comprehensiveness.
- b) to encourage the ECMY and the other churches of Ethiopia to relate their message, mission, literature, worship, etc. to the cultural heritage and the cultural development of the ethnic groups and peoples of Ethiopia. Up till now the churches have either clung to a particular heritage of one or two ethnic groups, or have adopted and adapted imported cultural patterns. The intent of the Department in this phase of its work, would be to confront the ECMY and other churches with the results of cultural and social research and challenge the churches to relate more adequately to cultural and social forms as they are identified.

2. METHODS OF WORK:

- a. Building up a specialist library;
- b. Collection of materials (audio, visual, written);
- c. Guided students research (during the semester and on vacations);
- d. Research projects and grants;
- e. Seminars, workshops, etc.;
- f. Publications;

Cooperation:

Cooperation will be sought with appropriate national and international bodies promoting research in and on contemporary Ethiopia.

3. ORGANIZATION:

A Research Council shall be invited on the recommendation of the MYS staff, by the MYS Board to guide the development of the Department, receive reports on the work of the Department and approve special research projects and grants and publications.

The Board of the Mekane Yesus Seminary shall approve all requests for financing projects and programmes and all special requests for extra funds. The Board shall not have the right to veto specific research projects, seminars, workshops, publications, etc., but may propose to the Research Council general areas for research or specific projects.

The director of the Department will as a member of the MYS staff work in close relation with the staff. He will report regularly to the staff on the findings and results of the different projects etc. The MYS staff will especially see to that the purpose mentioned in 1. b. above will be taken care of.

4. FINANCES:

The MYS Board will seek to enlist other Ethiopian churches in the financing of the Department.

The Board may approve approaches to national, overseas or international bodies for financing of special research projects or programmes, with the endorsement of the president of the ECMY.

5. ETHIOPIAN RESEARCH:

The Department will welcome the seconding of personnel from outside the country, but will lay stress on including Ethiopians in the collecting, systematizing and evaluation of research materials.

6. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INITIAL DIRECTOR:

He should have a doctorate in cultural anthropology or Ethiopian studies and be acquainted with research methods in rural, urban, or religious sociology, or linguistics, and be able with the advice of the Research Council and other cooperating bodies to guide the collection of materials, in all these fields. He shall have the capacity and experience of having initiated and organized research and participated in the administration of a research programme. He shall be able to work with others and guide others in their work. If he is an expatriate, he shall seek an Ethiopian as his successor and, within a year of assuming the directorship, propose to the Board and the Research Council steps to achieve this within a reasonable period. It may be that upon securing of a successor he could stay on as Advisor and otherwise participate in the research and other programmes.

Accepted in principle by the ECMY Executive Committee in its October meeting 1975.

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Addis Ababa, June 18, 1976

Ref: Dnr A 6600-105/75 RB/43
Your letters of March 15 and May 21, 1976
MYS, Department of Cultural and Linguistic Studies

Dear Friend,

Since I had been asked by other donors to give a kind of report on the progress of our plans for the MEKANE YESUS SEMINARY, DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES (MYS-DCLS), I also read your above mentioned letters. J. Bakke who went on furlough told me that he was going to meet you in Sweden anyhow, and therefore I would like to state with regard to your questions only the following:

GENERAL

1. The MYS-DCLS had been approved by the MYS Board on its meeting on Oct. 20, 1975. Resolution MYEB 39 reads as follows: "A proposal concerning a possible Cultural Institute of the ECOMY worked out by a group consisting of Rev. Gudina, Dr. Saevernaas and the staff of the seminary was presented. Resolved: That the proposal be sent to the Executive Committee of the ECOMY for further consideration and possible action."
2. The Executive Committee of the ECOMY passed the following resolution on its 10th meeting on Oct. 25, 1975. Resolution EC-36-47 reads as follows: "The Rev. J. Bakke, Principal of the Mekane Yesus Seminary presented the plans for a Cultural and Linguistic Institute to be attached to the MYS (EC-35-21.3). In line with the proposal the Executive Committee resolved: a) that the name of the Institution be the 'Mekane Yesus Seminary, Department of Cultural and Linguistic Studies', b) that the Secretary Staff and the Rev. Gudina Tuma and Dr. Olav Saevernaas serve as a committee to review the proposal in the light of consultations and officially submit it to Donor Agencies, c) that the committee make initial negotiations for a Director and a minimum budget."

PERSONNEL

At present our major problem is to start the MYS-DCLS. Still we didn't find any person who would be willing to serve for one term as Director of the DCLS. As we have indicated in our paper (cf. MYS-DCLS no. 6) "he should have a doctorate in cultural anthropology." It looks as if such persons are difficult to get hold of.

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Dated as of January 14, 1976 we got a letter from Mr. Carol Winnings from ICS of which you also received a copy. So far it is the only reaction which shows strong interest in our new department, but so far we didn't hear whether Mr. C. Winnings has got already some promising contacts.

The Missionsanstalt Hermanneburg, W.-Germany, didn't react to our question of finding a qualified director for the DCLS. (For their reaction to finances see below.)

The American Lutheran Church suggested the name of Pastor Bliese for this post. The MYS Board discussed this suggestion on its last meeting but didn't resolve to call Pastor Bliese.

From the Norwegian Lutheran Mission we didn't get any reply.

Therefore, I would like to ask you to contact the ICS, Mr. Winnings, or even others and help us in finding a person suitable for that task. The understanding of the MYS Board on its last meeting had been - though not stated in the minutes - to put all emphasis on finding a director for the DCLS.

Since you served this seminary for such a long time I assume that still in your heart a special place has been reserved for our work here and you might understand the awful situation that an approved program cannot be started because a qualified person is not available. So, please, try to engage yourself in the search for such a person.

FINANCES

1. So far we got a promise of the Missionsanstalt Hermanneburg to grant for 1976 Eth.\$ 7,700,00 under the condition that "other partners have promised to cover the rest of the budget". (The budget for 1976 had been estimated with Eth.\$ 14,600,00 for specialist library, research and basic office equipment. The salary of the director is not included in this amount.)

2. If you have any means to help us covering the remaining Eth.\$ 6,900,00 or part thereof we could at least start in cooperation with the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of the Addis Ababa University to build up the specialist library.

3. The Budget Proposal 1977 of the ECOMY mentions the amount of Eth.\$ 125,129,00 as grant needed for the MYS. The Encl. no. 3 includes on page 2 for the MYS "Cultural dept." (= DCLS) Eth.\$ 29,286,00. The increase owing to new work from 1976 to 1977 is actually 51,9 % as indicated in the budget proposal.

At present we have the understanding that after the completion of the new administration building we don't need to apply for capital investment funds for the DCLS.

With kind regards and great expectations from you,

Hopefully yours

Guardeg Wesenick
Vice Principal

cc: Mr. Carol Winnings, ICS Uppsala
Rev. Gudina Tuma, ECOMY

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