

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH MEKANE YESUS
8TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY, YIRGALEM
A REPORT FROM THE WESTERN SYNOD
January 18 - 23, 1973

All thy works shall give thanks to thee, O Lord, and all thy saints shall bless thee! They shall speak of the glory of thy Kingdom, and tell of thy power. As it is written: to speak of the glory of His Kingdom and tell of His power all the privileges of the saints. Therefore we praise God who also gave us this chance, and we will now present the report of the Western Synod.

1. Evangelical Work

As we reported to the 7th General Assembly in the Western Synod there were 166 congregations, 40 preaching places and totally 71,559 members. Since then, 8 preaching places have become congregations and the number of preaching places has increased to 50. We are also very happy to announce that 16,557 souls have been added to our Church so the total number of our members is at present 88,116.

2. Workers

It is clear that workers are needed as the work itself is increasing; therefore 4 more missionaries have been called and 8 more Ethiopians who have completed their training course. They have been ordained and are now serving in the congregations.

At the 7th General Assembly of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus we reported that through the ECMY Head office we had requested the Norwegian Missionary Society to send us workers. Now, 2 pastors and 3 nurses have been sent and have started work in Assosa Awraja in Begi Woreda and in the Nile Valley.

Similarly, the Onisimos Nasib Bible School graduated 7 evangelists in 1963(E.C) and 15 in 1964 after 2½ years of study, and these evangelists are now at work.

28 evangelists have been sent by the synod to the Mekane Yesus Seminary for a degree certificate and a three year training course. We extend our gratitude to the 7th General Assembly of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus for its resolution concerning the training of future pastors.

The above mentioned ones are not the only workers in the synod. Three are workers in different institutions who are transferred from place to place.

3. Youth Work

This work which also includes Sunday school lesson for children is in progress. At the 7th General Assembly we reported that the number of youth groups were 84, and the number of members were 3861. At present we have 148 youth groups with 7133 members. The number of Sunday schools have increased from 73 to 102 during these two years, and the members from 3664 to 4273.

Besides gathering together for spiritual meetings, the youth groups have also rendered social services. They have made bridges over big rivers, built houses for sick and old ones and by this shown true love towards people.

In conformity with the decision of the church to make the year of 1965 Et.C. The year of teaching Adult, the youth started the campaign with 120 groups, and as of Tikimt 30, 2267 illiterate young people have registered and started learning.

Even with all this progress we are still of the opinion that the youth work could do better if we think and plan more. Furthermore the children and the youth will in the future replace the old ones in the worship and the service in the church. The youth should therefore be trained in supervision and management of the church. Thus we have applied for scholarship for three young people, and are now waiting for the answer.

4. School program

The schools run by the Synod for public service are developing and improving.

1. Two Bible schools with 33 students.
2. Schools giving academic education,
 - a) Out of three elementary and junior secondary schools one has opened 10th grade this year (1965 Et.C.). This is in accordance with the plan that the school will open 12th grade in the future. Therefore we have one elementary school and two junior secondary schools.
 - b) 6 schools have up to 6th grade each and the students sat for the general examination of grade 6 in June last year.
 - c) 14 schools up to grade 5
 - d) 207 Literacy schools up to 4th grade and below.
3. There are 3 handicraft schools with 25 students. The Synod has established a committee to study ways and means by which these schools may be recognized, and be in accordance with the school regulation and also that graduates of these schools may obtain good results.
4. The Nedjo Teacher's Training School was giving a one year course to those who had completed 8th grade, but now the school gives a two year course and has graduated the first group. The second group is at present on training. This kind of training has been useful for lower classes as the salary of the graduates is reasonably low. All graduates have been employed by the synod and we hope future graduates too will be employed.
5. A Youth hostel and centre for students who are coming in to the towns for secondary education has been built in Gimbi with funds from donor agencies. The hostel and centre was inaugurated on Tikimt 20, 1964. The hostel accommodates 46 students, but we have not solved the problem for the girls. Therefore, because of the situation for the girls we are forced to build a new hostel for them and an additional hostel for boys.
6. The Synod has built a school for the blind in Gimbi town with a fund obtained from the Christophel Blinden Mission through German Hermannsburg mission. The school was inaugurated on Tikimt 7, 1965. There are 16 blind students, and the school is run by one missionary, two Ethiopian teachers and a varden.

5. Medical Work

The Synod has one hospital and 8 clinics. Patients are admitted for treatment and besides a medical team visits the villages giving medical advice in the field of public health such as care for the children and care for pregnant women. The work is on progress in Asosa at Begi.

A Health station was built by the Ministry of Public Health, when the construction of the building was finished, the work was taken over by the Synod in accordance with the agreement signed between the Ministry of Public Health and the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

Similarly with a fund obtained from donor agencies, we have established a clinic in Mendi at a place called Kiltu Karra, and a school and clinic in Nedjo.

area at a place called Kongcro Dissi. The whole project costs \$120,000 and has served twice a week as of Miazia 1964. The project could not give full service due to the fact that nurses could not be obtained for employment according to the plan.

In addition a nurse serves in one of the six districts of the Synod by going from place to place. The nurse has served well by giving advice to schools, congregations and by giving treatment to those whose houses are far away from clinics. It is also believed that more could be achieved if necessary equipment were obtained.

Moreover, with a fund obtained from the German Mission and in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health lepers' control is established in the Nile Valley and the nurse in charge of the area has almost controlled the disease. A man who knows the area well has been given a course related to this work. He is now employed and assists the nurse in her work.

6. Women's Program

Although much has not been done in the area of women's work, women in different congregations have meetings once a week where they make handworks. When they sell the handworks, the income goes to the budget of the Synod. This kind of work is still progressing.

The Synod has also opened a school to teach housewives and girls home-economics. In 1964 the short courses were conducted 5 times. Besides home-economics, training was given in supervision of making handwork, and how to care for babies. The course has been useful.

7. Development Program

Although the above mentioned ones are development works, a rural development project has been established by the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. The project is run by a board, 2 members are elected by church officers and 3 are elected by the Western Synod. The project has started the work in 3 stations by sowing different seeds and using fertilizer. Some volunteers of the farmers have also cooperated with the project by using fertilizers for trial in their farms. The result of the trial is not yet known, but it seems that the project will succeed.

The project at first bought one hundred quintals of fertilizers and sold to the farmers to a low price. As a result of this up to Hamle 1964, six hundred quintals of fertilizers have been bought and used by the farmers. Finally the farms have started to come and call for advice concerning their farms. The Ministry of Agriculture has cooperated with the project by sending two development workers and two cooperatives. Therefore, we extend our gratitude also to the others who have helped us.

By request from the Central Office of the ECOMY an expert in agriculture has been sent to us by the Norwegian Missionary Society. He is advising the nomades to settle and start farming in the Nile Valley. He is also studying how to improve the soil in the area. According to the report of the expert the result of his study is quite promising. When the results of the study and the experiments are known, we hope that also the medical service and advice on health matters will contribute much to the development of the area besides the settlement project.

We thank our heavenly Father who helped us in all our work, and we also extend our gratitude to the church and to the Synod workers who helped us and supported us also with finances.