

2. Functional Approach

This functional (non-institutional) approach to development service, i.e. handing over the institutions run under the ECMY, does not hint at all at reducing our contribution towards helping the Ethiopian people to help themselves. It means, from the standpoint of the ECMY, that the approach used so far is to be changed due to the policy of the Government (see Economic Policy Statement) and to correct the misunderstanding that has arisen between the church and her workers, as well as with some people who have no idea about the nature of the church. A few examples of what I call a functional approach to nation-building are seconding agriculturalists, economists, cooperative experts and engineers to the peasant associations being organized all over the country. Secondment of experts will depend on those interested in the assistance of the ECMY and on the resources available to our church.

This new approach, the non-institutional, will show that the ECMY is

- a) not running business in any form, and
- b) it will reassure anyone interested in knowing that we are not working from motives of prestige, but out of Christian love, to serve the Ethiopian people because the needs are very great.

There are people in our church who think that raising the question of handing over the institutions would be looked at from the side of the government as sabotage, and that therefore an unfavourable relationship might develop between the government and the ECMY. According to this view, the ECMY should continue to run the institutions out of fear, regardless of the demands of the situation. The Biblical understanding of service is that it flows out of Christ's love poured into the hearts of his followers. The demand of the living Jesus Christ is that "You should love God above all else and your brother as yourself" (Matt. 2:37-39).

This is the guiding principle for all forms of Christian ministry and service. It should be clear to all therefore that Christian integrity does not allow us to do Christian social service out of fear. What is not done out of faith is sin.

There is another point to be raised in connection with this issue or any issues to be discussed with the government: the ECMY should be reasonable and justify her decisions on Christian grounds. We should be aware that those leading the country understand reasonable arguments, and there is observable evidence for this contention.

The ECMY has won credibility for working not only for but with the people, and the evidence for this is that through the Yemisrach Dimts Literacy Campaign recognition was given by an international organization to the fact that she has been working with communities at the grass-roots level.

According to the government policy issued recently, peasant associations on twenty "gashas" of land - the smallest unit - are to run their own schools as part of developing their areas. This is a happy development in our country and should be supported as much as possible. For us there is no need to run our literacy schools as done in the past under the feudal structure, when the Ethiopian people were denied right, ability and knowledge in working for the betterment of their lot and their living conditions.

At present the Ethiopian people are in active process of being organized, taking their destiny into their own hands; marching forward towards handling their own affairs and deciding for themselves. Our Literacy Schools should be handed over to the farmers' associations and the subsidies given now to the YDLC should be integrated into the work of the farmers' associations. Our grants should be given to the associations. As far as I know this is in line with the original intention of our literacy programme.