

**AN EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITIES, ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH
MEKANE YESUS (EECMY) FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAM:
ITS STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, CHALLENGES, AND EXPECTATIONS**

BY

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DEDICATION

To my dear wife Amarech Digebo for her incredible support, encouragement and prayer contributed a lot for my studies.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that unless the quotations that are acknowledged, this thesis are entirely my own original work.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Addis Ababa
AUPM	American United Presbyterian Mission
BTh	Bachelor of Theology
CEEC	Conferences of Ethiopian Evangelical Churches
CS	Central Synod
CES	Central Ethiopia Synod
DMT	Department of Mission and Theology
EECF	Ethiopian Evangelical Churches Fellowship
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
EGST	Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
ETC	Evangelical Theological College
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FELM	Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FLEP	Family Life Education Program
GHM	German Herbages mission
HTS	Hossan Theological Seminary
MMD	Ministry to Members in Diaspora
HMYS	Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary
MABTS	Master of Art in Biblical and Theological Studies
MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and social Affairs
M Phil	Master of philosophy

MYTS	Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary
MYS	Mekane Yesus Seminary
MTh	Master of Theology
NCEC	Nekemte Christian Education College
NIV	New International Version
NLM	Norwegian Lutheran Mission
NT	New Testament
Oi	Oral Interview
OT	Old Testament
RFC	Revised Family Code
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SCS	South Central Synod
SWS	South West Synod
SEM	Swedish Evangelical Mission
SIM	Sudan Interior Mission
TGA	Theological Advisor group
TOT	Training of Trainers
ToT-T	Training of Trainers Trainings

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I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage and family are the most basic human institutions. Rao points out that Marriage and family, the two social institutions with biological foundations, are complementary to each other.¹ They are first institutions in the history of human being and designed by God since God created Eve Adam's perfect partner and made her his companion (Gen.1:26-28, 2:18, 21-2). Peter Coleman writes in his book *Christian attitude to marriage*; "*the gospel shows that the institution of marriage was God given...*"² This God given institution should get proper protection from the church, and society. Similarly, the constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Article 34(3) affirms protection for the institution of family as, "the family is the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state".³ Since the Church is within a given society and part of the society, it has both constitutional and biblical mandate to give protection to family and marriage. Unless family and marriage are not protected and get adequate support from the state and church in responsible manner and godly guidance, these institutions will suffer in future generations.

As a result family life and marriage ministry is unquestionable important for the life of the Church and society. As mentioned above about the church's prime focus and when we see it from different assessments, the EECMY was constituted originally a mission based association, always stressing the importance of outreach.⁴ That means its main focus has been on gospel preaching for the unreached area of the country. However, this does not mean that the issue of family and marriage has been completely out of Church's concern. Rather, it shows the EECMY "has always stressed the importance of outreach activities"⁵ which indicates that the Church has been more focused on gospel outreach work than family issues. But time and condition have forced the church to see these institutions (family and marriage) more seriously than before. So the crises facing the institution of family and marriage in the country and throughout the world are causing the church to direct her attention towards family life ministry.

Even though the church has had less concern for institutions of family and marriage as compared with her gospel outreach work, she has had family counseling ministry from the very beginning. But previously, this ministry only offers counsel in basic marriage issue.

¹ Rao: 2006:334

² Coleman:1989:91

³ Federal Negarit Gazeta of FDRE 1st year No. 1, Addis Ababa, 1995:92.

⁴ Palmu & Palmu: 2006:11ff.

⁵ Ibid.

Until the Church established FLEP, she had no organized section at the head office level to offer marriage and family education effectively and adequately. But with the intensive understanding of the importance of this institute in the church level, she recently established FLEP in 2000 G.C⁶.

It is believed that the EECMY has done much in the area of faith teaching nationwide for the country of Ethiopia over the many years from inception up to now for adult members, women, youth and children but when we compare Christian family ministry in this church, very little has been done on the important issues such as parenting, family relations, pre-and –post marital teaching and family management.

Because of the crucial importance of family and marriage ministry in the Church and society, my work has focused on evaluating roles and activates of the EECMY family life education program to determine the strong and weak side of the ministry. Based on that evaluation, possible recommendations for further ministry are presented.

If Church and society want to have blessed and good generation who feels responsible in eyes of God and Community, there is a need of family life education and proper handling of family and marriage in the Church as a central focus. Since the institution of family and marriage

*is the foundation of the society. Consequently one can say that a congregation starts from a family. Christian families are the basic units of the church. The Church is an assembly of family members.*⁷

In the light of this view, marriage in step at which the foundation of family should be given proper attention by church and all concern bodies.⁸ Because of this, the question ‘what is the EECMY doing in regard of marriage and family?’ may be the basic question I will answer in this thesis.

In addition, I will explain biblical and theological perspective concerning marriage and family with the interpretation (exegesis) of the two terms. Furthermore I will show the EECMY’s roles, activities and responsibilities on Marriage and family life. Accordingly it is possible to show and find out the way how to promote Christian family life ministry in the EECMY and address major family related issues in Ethiopian context.

⁶ Rev. Geneti Wayessa and Mrs. Abarash Tolosa, oi , Dec 12, 2011, in their Office, Addis Ababa ,Ethiopia.

⁷ Palumu & Palumu , 2006:11ff.

⁸ MOLSA, 2006:12

Thus, the theme of my thesis is to evaluate and present important roles, activities and responsibilities of the EECMY family life education program. In this case there is possible target to develop specific concerns about the importance of the family and marriage ministry throughout the congregations of the EECMY and the Ethiopian society as well. Because the family ministry which the Church has carried out from its very beginning has been limited to only its family counseling service, there must be some additional emphasis that the church should give special attention to at the different levels of Church's structures.

In this particular thesis, the EECMY's concern and activities in this particular ministry includes its attitudes towards family and marriage which are also a major part of the focus of the thesis in the process of evaluation. This involves assessing the family life education program activities and the impacts of its teaching in the life of church and society with its proper implementation within the units of the EECMY.

Thus, the basic objectives of this project are: *First, to show a brief historical overview of the EECMY. Since this paves the way to know where the focus of ministry of the Church has been regarding this particular service and when and where the role of the church was revealed in this and other parts of her ministries.* It also helps us to understand how and why this particular field of ministry began within the EECMY. As the church is the nucleus of every ministry, there is a need to know a brief history of the church to be explained including my own work based in the particular ministry on FLEP in the EECMY.

Second, in the problem area of the thesis, the problem will be described in chapter two in order to show the aim of the study, research questions, sources, and terms definitions particularly about family and marriage which are important to this study.

Third, rather than merely presenting roles, activities, and responsibilities of family life ministry in the EECMY, I will present the methodological procedures in chapter three.

Fourth, after that, I present in chapter four a brief historical background of the EECMY from its inception including a short overview of Christian education program in the EECMY, department of mission and theology (DMT) as well as family life education of the Church are included.

Fifthly, I will present the relevant activities, roles, responsibilities of family life education in the EECMY, in serving its members and congregations. As result, I will touch the impacts of the FLEP of the EECMY with observation changes seen in the lives of those who favored to

attend seminars, courses and teaching of FLEP of the EECMY. The focus of evaluation as mentioned above are targeted on the achievements gained on the program, impacts seen on the lives of the church community particularly and the Ethiopian society in general as well as during the program's existence since its establishment what were/ are the weakness and strengthen side of the FLEP of the EECMY. This helps me to get the strong and weak side of the FLEP in the EECMY and to show relevant recommendations for further promising work in area where change is needed. Moreover it also helps to keep up the good tradition of the church in this ministry in the longer run upon knowing the real roles, activities and responsibilities that the church is carrying now. Then it is possible to point out what should be done by church as left in the current ministry of the church.

As we see in the chapter five, biblical perspective of family and marriage will be presented with their biblical meanings and exegetical comments. Then after, my final observation and theological reflection will follow as conclusion.

In proceeding chapter six, the Challenges and expectations of Family life Ministry in EECMY will be presented. Within which the issue of capacity building of relevant ministries, child care, and the problem of the structure in family life education in the EECMY, and possible targets, teaching material evaluation, sustainability and expectation from the section are the portion of this chapter. Finally, in chapter seven I will present briefly final evaluation about what the church should do regarding its family and marriage, including my general observation and recommendation about the whole of my research.

II. PROBLEM

2.1 Problem and aim of the study

There are many encounters that initiated my work with this topic of family life and marriage issues. Even though writing a master thesis project for my studies as a master student is mandatory, it is not the only reason that caused me to focus in this topic.

Many factors initiated my focus on this topic. These include my work as a lawyer for seven years in the justice office of the government and also as a teacher in the theological seminary for seven years where I faced many situations which were directly related to family life and marriage issues in my life.

Second, the issue of family life and marriage is one of the hottest issues in Ethiopia in this time both in Church and society level in case of high rate of divorce and remarriage, HIV/AIDS, modernity and family conflicts and crises which tempt family and marriage. Those factors make family and marriage issues so important and show that research should be done on them for the solution to be pointed out.

Third, as a servant and a member of the EECMY, I have participated in three trainings directly related to family life and marriage which were given under the coordination of FLEP in the EECMY. These caused me to focus on this project.

As I am a married man I believe family and marriage need proper recognition, protection, guidance, attention and support from both the church and society. Besides that, *I am a man from a polygamous family* who suffered a lot in my life because of family mismanagement in the case of succession and unequal distribution of property among family members.

Thus all of these summed up in my mind and caused me to focus my project direction towards the family life education program.

Thus all summed up in my mind and caused me to focus my project direction towards the family life education program.

The issue of family life and marriage still does not get enough concern at the Church level even though it had been started in a delayed manner as it would have been started. So, I decided to evaluate and present roles, activities and responsibilities of the EECMY's family life education program and find out its strengths and weaknesses and then to recommend the possible solution for further promising ministry in its weak side. Moreover, I need to point out the strong tradition of the Church in this specific ministry that should be kept up. As far as it

is possible, I want to find possible initiating factors of family life and marriage education in this Church in the context of Church tradition and existing situations, and to recommend possible solution for those factors.

My problem is also based on evaluating the role of and creating particular awareness about family life and marriage ministry throughout congregations of EECMY and the Ethiopia society as well. In addition to that I have to work out on challenges of family life ministry and marriage in the EECMY and show possible solutions how to overcome these challenges.

The problem also consists of the elements that will show how this ministry in the EECMY has been going on; what has been Promised and what must be improved in the long run. This will open the door for me to show the activities of the EECMY's family life ministry and evaluate it in the light of biblical and theological perspectives. Thus, because as I am a theologian and lawyer, I have to point out some solution for the problems that I will find in my research.

To conclude, in this research specific objectives that to be achieved by the researcher are:-

- Strong side of the EECMY's FLEP to be found and evaluated,
- Weak side of the EECMY's FLEP to be found and evaluated,
- How to keep up and preserve the strong traditions of the Church and solution for the weak side to be recommended.

2.2 Research questions

Thus, the research question of this project can be seen as: Does the EECMY devotedly and effectively implementing its roles, activities, responsibilities in the family life and marriage ministry in its holistic theology⁹ (part of the EECMY's motto)within the existing Ethiopian religious, social, political and economic settings?

As Hayman noted “*educational research is concerned with producing information which is needed to make improvement in education.*”¹⁰ Because there is real possibility of getting promising ideas, concepts and principles from this research that can be source material for

⁹ ‘Holistic theology’ is an effort in rediscovering total human life. Apolitical life is not worthy of existence. Uninvolvement is a denial of the goodness of creation and of the reality of incarnation ... In our content what is prevalent is the basis to define economic policy, agricultural development, and foreign relation, - politics decides who should die and who should live. African theology should develop a political theology relevant to the African life...”Eide, the Swedish Evangelical mission in Ethiopia: An Analysis of the Dynamics between Mission, Church and Society from 1866 to 1991:325?? Gudina Tumsa ; “Memorandum”, August 1975: 12-13, For my understanding holistic theology is a theology of the church that involves serving the whole humanity (Body +soul).

¹⁰ Hayman,1968:3

FLEP of the EECMY, this research can help strengthen the education system of FLEP of the EECMY.

The main aim of researcher is concerned on improving the existing educational system of EECMY family and marriage life education program through his research findings. This will be addition resource for this section in order to improve what is lacking and to keep the good heritages of the church for existing and emerging generations.

It is educational research that is part of behavioral science its aim targeted to “define, understand, predict, and in some extent control human behavior”.¹¹ Thus, an educational research offers an opportunity of accessing related information for education.¹²

2.3 Sources of the research (literatures, Libraries, and others)

This work will be based on research of important writings (literatures) from local (Ethiopian) and international sources in family and marriage issues. The interviews are conducted with leaders of Church, life experienced persons from the society and government officials who are concerned about family life and marriage issues in their profession in Ethiopia. There is also possibility of using compiled data from Church office and synods .Therefore; the sources for writing of this thesis are mainly divided in to three.

1) **Published Materials:** The Bible, local books which are written in local Ethiopian languages about the Ethiopian context, and from the context of family life and marriage, internationally written books on the topic of family and marriage were utilized.

Many books related to family are found in the libraries of NLA-University College Library in Bergen, Norway, Ethiopian universities particularly faculty of Law, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST), Library of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Justice Ministry, Evangelical Theological College in Addis Ababa and Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS) and the EECMY archives .Among these materials journals, periodicals and research papers are included. These materials are available in Ethiopian Libraries as well as in NLA- University College that I used as sources for my project.

¹¹ Hayman,1968:3

¹² Ibid.

2) **Unpublished Materials:** Annual reports, minutes of Church council meetings from the EECMY, Lecturer notes and my own observations will be used properly as sources of this thesis.

3) **Oral interviews** from different persons were conducted according to their experience and ministry in the area of problem studied.

In addition to the above mentioned sources, I used internet to find out recent information which is relevant to the focus of my project work in family life education program of the EECMY.

When I begin this project, the system I emphasized or the way how to strengthen the family and marriage not only based on books published but also on unpublished materials and as well as oral interview from persons who are relevant to the area of project.

As I expected, I found the most important sources for my project were from my Ethiopian sources: in the EECMY's Archives and from interviews with the people who are directly oriented in the issue of family life and marriage, leadership, and evangelism.

Regarding the language in which my interview work was conducted, it was Amharic.¹³ This language is which most Ethiopians have access to hear and speak as it is defined in the constitution of FDRE Article 5(2), "Amharic shall be the working language of the Federal Government."¹⁴ I also made interviews in the Wolayta language which is my mother tongue and the people's language in which I conducted the interviews in my own congregation in Areka town.

2.4 Definition of the term Family.

2.4.1 Family in general

As family and marriage are regarded, they are bases of human institution. They were the first institutions in the history of human kind (Gen.1:26-28, 2:18, 21-2). Peter Coleman says "the gospel shows that the institution of marriage was God given..."¹⁵ Family is the natural and basic unit for the physical, intellectual, emotional and psychological development of offspring in human society. Due to this, family is an institution that offers knowledge of the religion,

¹³This language is used by most of Ethiopia people long while for a century (the most widely spoken language in Ethiopia and formerly the only official language).

¹⁴The Constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Federal Negarit Gazeta of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 1st year No. 1, Addis Ababa, 1995:78

¹⁵ Coleman, 1989:91

culture, tradition and norms of the society for children. Unless the institutions of family and marriage are not protected and get support and godly guidance, there is no possibility of getting good Church and generation. Therefore, family life and marriage ministry is unquestionable important for the life of the Church and society.

*The family is the most important primary group in society. It is the simplest and the most elementary form of society. It is the most basic of all social groupings. It is the first and the most immediate social environment to which a child is exposed. It is an outstanding primary group, because, it is in the family that the child develops its basic attitude.*¹⁶

When I see from different assessments the EECMY was constituted originally a mission based association which has always stressed the importance of outreach ministry.

As explained above the importance of family and marriage ministry in the Church and society, my focus is on creating particular awareness in this ministry if the Church and society want to have blessed and good generation who will feel responsible in the eyes of God and community. According to Palmu and Palmu family life education involves many various characteristics of Church work such as education in the sense of teaching which is related to the field of counseling.¹⁷

Family life ministry is an accepted title for the service of teaching in the area of counseling: premarital or marriage and family counseling. It includes different kinds of teachings for example,

*helping the grieving members of a family after the death of loved one, helping family member in the midst of serious difficulties and supporting the married couple in their marital problem.*¹⁸

When we see family in our Ethiopian context, it is a broader term consists of Father, mother, children and those related in blood with mother and father side. When it is extended one, it can sometimes also mean the unit that God wants to use in redemptive work for human life.

When we see Acts 2:42-47 and Eph.3:10, it is through the family that God works out his redemptive aim in our Lord Jesus Christ and to the world. As Edith Deen pointed out about home-family as

¹⁶ Rao, 2006:348

¹⁷ Palmu & Palmu, 2006:14

¹⁸ Ibid. p 18

a place of rest, refreshment , and protection ,place where children are born and cared for ,and where people die place where all members of family come together for mutual help and happiness.¹⁹

According to her, family is an important unity of the Church and Society comprises those who are sharing the same house food with us without having blood relation. Blood and marriage are the sources of our family system. We do have system of adoption in law making once as a part of our family.

Family is a socially approved, relatively permanent group of people who are united by blood, marriage or adoption tie and who are generally live together and cooperate economically. It has a function of reproduction and regulation of sexual relationship. It also has institutionalized means of self replacement. This institution offers care, training and protection for young generation. It has also socializing function in its way in which we become a member of a certain group or society by internalizing the norms and value of the society since it is a primary unit of socialization. It provides love, affection and emotional support for its members. It also gives legal base for the transmission of private property and economic base for producing goods and services. It is a primary institution which is responsible to socializing new members in to the culture.²⁰

2.4.2 Family in Ethiopian context

Before I define family in the context of family law in Ethiopia, I have to raise the following questions. What does family mean according to culture and law of Ethiopia? To whom and what belongs as a family? What is the significance of the family? What are the functions of the family according to culture and law in Ethiopia It is obvious that this term is defined differently in different disciplines of social sciences such as anthropology, history, and sociology since the word family is not only a legal term in its role and function in human society. My focus here is on the existing family law of Ethiopia as a particular emphasis to this essay.

¹⁹ Deen ,1963:184

²⁰ Yenenish Galata , from Lectures on Sociology, Mekane Yesus Seminary, 2001, Dec., 2011, Addis Ababa

The origin of this term ‘familia’ a Latin word indicates to the house and people in the same roof.²¹ But this definition of family indicates any person who is in the same house whether related in blood, marriage and adoption or not, it does not matter if he or she shares the roof.

According to Marcel Palniol and G.Ripert, the idea of family should be seen in to two ways:

1st. In broader sense family is seen as “a collective body of persons who are united by marriage, by filiations or by adoption.”²²

2nd. More restricted sense, in which family is seen as “the members of a family who live together in one house under the head”²³, this definition of family combines two basic elements to define family such as common residence and unity of headship.

When we see the Ethiopian family law it incorporates with the first broader sense of family definition. As it is defined in Revised Family Code of Ethiopia family law, the sources of family are consanguinity (natural filiations)²⁴ affinity (relation by marriage)²⁵ and adoption (artificial filiations).²⁶

Of course there are many ways that people see themselves as a family in Ethiopia in there relation according to their unity in religion, political and economic cooperation and neighborhood. But these unities and relation have no legal identification as family.

Whereas the significance of family noted biologically in which procreation is occurred in the way family makes society possible by producing and rearing children to replace the generation. Another significance of family is reflected in its socialization function, in which family is the role in education and care of children.²⁷ Similarly, family also plays a great role in shaping and modeling the behavior of their children.

There is not only one Ethiopian culture as expressed by Palmu and palmu as,

²¹Unity University, School of Distance and continuing Education, Course Material(lectures’ note) for Law of Family 301 p. 2, Marcel Palniol and G.Ripert, treaties on the civil law, 1939,(Translation by Louisiana state law institute), Vol.1,Part 1, 12thed, 1959.p. 385.

²² Unity University, School of Distance and continuing Education, Course Material(lectures’ note) for Law of Family 301 p. 2, Marcel Palniol and G.Ripert, treaties on the civil law, 1939,(Translation by Louisiana state law institute), Vol.1,Part 1, 12thed, 1959.p. 385

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ RFC (Article 8),, Federal Negarit Gazeta of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Extraordinary issue No. 1/2000, Addis Ababa

²⁵ Ibid. (Article 9),

²⁶ Ibid. (Article 180),

²⁷ Unity University, School of Distance and continuing Education, Course Material for Law of Family 301 p. 3, Bughair,1967.: 4

*We should remember that there is no such Ethiopia a thing called 'Ethiopian Culture' because there are a number of Ethiopia cultures. I must admit that I, as an Ethiopian, may know only my original local culture, it is impossible for me to know all the dozens of Ethiopian cultures.*²⁸

From this we can understand Ethiopia does not have common culture in defining family and marriage. However there is a common understanding of marriage and family in mind of all Ethiopian people. The family as a social institution its members are related by one's marriage or adoption and who lives together. In Ethiopia, family is 'a universal institution' and the smallest unit or building block of society. When we see family based on kind (the ideas original from lecture on sociology)²⁹:-

Nuclear family found in urban areas which includes husband, wife and unmarried children,

Extended family in rural areas and involves at least three generation relatives i.e., husband and wife as 1st generation. Children seen as 2nd generation and grand mother and father as 3rd and etc.,

Composite families seen in the family with many nuclear families live together, whereas family based on residence:

Patrilocal family – a family wife lives with the relatives of the husband

Matrilocal family – a family wife lives with mother,

When family based on marriage practice:-basically in Ethiopia only first two type are available in Christian and non Christian area such –

Polygamy- one husband with many wives,

Monogamy- marriage with one to one (a man with a woman)

Polyandry- when a wife marries many husbands in some parts of Africa.

Therefore, family is an important institution in human society as its significance being witnessed and reflected biological, social and economic cooperation. That is why family is essential. Revised Family Code of Ethiopia stressed “the nations of the world are entrusted

²⁸ Palmu & Palmu,2006:10

²⁹ Yenenish Galata, lecture notes on Sociology, Mekane Yesus Seminary, 2001, Dec., 2011, Addis Ababa.

with the duty of preserving the family and thereby the society by proclaiming the protection of the family in their laws.’³⁰ The same is true in Ethiopia as mentioned in introduction page.

When family becomes strong, it is possible to build strong society in foundation. Ethiopia has family law which regulates the moral and material rights and obligations within family relationship such as equality of sexes, due protection of the family as a unit by providing modalities for conclusion of marriage, its regulation, dissolution thereof, maintenance allowance, etc., doing away with distinction between the right for legitimate and illegitimate children, as well as the best interest of the child whenever there exists conflict of interest. The weak point is the lack of implementation due to lack of trained manpower in law and the lack of knowledge of law in community base. This indicates having codified law does not mean having the knowledge of the law. The community should get at least its basic level knowledge in many ways such as seminaries, media, tracts, and etc,

Another thing is dissolution of marriage³¹ one thing that violates Christian understanding of marriage and it also violates our long culture of restoration of marriage. It comes in to being and becomes soon process in case of equality, rights of women particularly after the proclamation of the Revised Family Code of Ethiopia which “shall come into force as 4th day of July, 2000.”³² Major reasons for dissolution of marriage as noted by D.W. Waruta, “the grounds justifying divorce included cruelty, charges of sorcery, incompatibility, quarrelling between co-wives, laziness, adultery, and in some cases, childlessness.”³³ In some and in most cases Christian marriage also shares these factors in spite of Christian are not permitting divorce (but only with few exceptional reasons like adultery or death. As Christian understanding of marriage concerned, it is defined as

*marriage is an exclusive heterosexual covenant between one man and one woman , ordained and sealed by God, preceded by a public leaving of parents consummated in sexual union, issuing in a permanent mutually supportive partnership and normally crowned by the gift of children.*³⁴

However, studies show as follows.

³⁰ Unity University, School of Distance and continuing Education, Course Material (lectures’ note) for Law of Family 301, p. 4, Family in the contemporary world, Journal of family, Vol. ix, P. 78-79

³¹ ‘The effect of dissolution should be governed by the principles governing the effect of divorce , and having regard to equity , good faith , and interest of children’ (Unity University, School of Distance and continue Education, Course Material for Law of Family 301:55)

³² RFC,(effective date), Federal Negarit Gazeta of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Extraordinary issue No. 1/2000, Addis Ababa ,Ethiopia. P. 2

³³ Waruta and Kinoti, 2000:105

³⁴ Berhanu , 2003:32

*That the Christian dogma of indissolubility of marriage even by the death of either spouse gave way to the modern concept of dissolution of marriage owing to the recognition of the matrimony as a human intuition, a bond of created by the exercise of a free act of will by a man and a woman who are responsible but fallible, individuals, who may err and blunder.*³⁵

According to Revised family Code of Ethiopia article 75(a-c), there are three grounded reasons for dissolution of marriage.³⁶

-Either death or declaration of absence of the spouses. This kind of dissolution of marriage is dissolution of marriage by the operation of the law.³⁷

-Dissolution ordered by court due to violation of one of the essential conditions³⁸ of marriage. This kind of dissolution is judicial dissolution.

-Divorce; as causes of the dissolution of marriage.

The RFC operates equivalently for all forms of marriage without any distinction regardless of its forms either as civil marriage, customary marriage or religious marriage. This is stressed in RFC article 74(2), “no distinction shall be made concerning dissolution whichever the form according to which the marriage is celebrated.”³⁹ In all causes of the above, the effect of dissolution is abided by the rules that govern the effect of divorce with the consideration of equity, good faith and interest of children.⁴⁰

2.5 Definition of the term marriage

2.5.1 Marriage is defined in general

According to Rao Marriage is one of universal social institutions which is founded by human society to control and regulate the sex life of man. I do not accept the idea of Rao in his explanation marriage as established by human society.

The founder of marriage is God himself not human being (Gen.1:27, 2:24). Besides that his way of explaining the purpose of marriage is only to control sexual life of man does not fulfill

³⁵ Unity University, School of Distance and continuing Education, Course Material (lectures' note) for Law of Family 301, p. 83, W. Friedmann, Law in changing society, 1959, p. 209.

³⁶ RFC (Article 75(a-c), Unity University, School of Distance and continuing Education, Course Material for Law of Family 301, p. 84.

³⁷ Unity University, School of Distance and continuing Education, Course Material for Law of Family 301, p. 84.

³⁸ According to RFC of Ethiopia, essential conditions are identified section 2 articles 6-16, on page 4-7.

³⁹ RFC (Article 74(2), P. 23.

⁴⁰ Unity University, School of Distance and continuing Education, Course Material for Law of Family 301, p. 55.

the exact aim of marriage. Since marriage has multiply purposes. Of course we have really access of sexual life in marriage; marriage has purpose of procreation, partnership in which man and human are enjoying in love with each other and it is the foundation on which the family is originated.

Malinowski says that marriage is a “contract for the production and maintenance of children.”⁴¹ The state law of Ethiopia reminds us that marriage as contract since marriage is contracted under the law of the state, and divorce is similarly arranged under the laws of the state.⁴² This definition of marriage reduces marriage as simple agreement in which its existence depends on the mere agreement of the couple. The definition denies the role of God in ones marriage. Since marriage is a covenant that the couple make it in fort of God for their lifelong. It is not an agreement which can be violated by couple as they like (Mal 2:14).

Rao points that “there is no definition adequately covers all types of human marriage. It has given a number of definitions and explanations.”⁴³ I accept the idea of Rao in this regard for it works country like Ethiopia that consists of diverse nation, nationality and people with varied kind of cultures and traditions among them.

Alfred McClung Lee defines, “marriage is public joining together, under socially specified regulations of a man and a woman as husband and wife.” This definition of marriage supports Ethiopian marriage which occurs in public municipality. Since the Revised Family Code of Ethiopia says,

*marriage shall be deemed to be concluded before an officer of civil status when a man and a woman have appeared before an officer civil status for the purpose concluding marriage and the office of civil status has accepted their respective consent.*⁴⁴

As D. W. Waruta defines,

*marriage as the union , permanent at least by intention , of a man and a woman for the purpose of procreation and the rearing of children and mutual assistance .*⁴⁵

The authors view concedes with traditional definition of African marriage. I support this definition since its content goes with biblical view of marriage at least in its purpose in that it

⁴¹ Rao,2009, P.327

⁴² As mentioned in Article 34:1: Marital, personal and family Rights “Men and women, without any distinction as to race, nation, nationality and religion, who have attained marriageable age as defined by law, have the right to marry and form a family. They have equal rights while entering into, during marriage and at the time divorce. Laws shall be enacted to ensure the protection of rights and interests of the child at the time of divorce.”

⁴³ Rao,2009, P.327

⁴⁴ RFC of Ethiopia Article 2

⁴⁵ Waruta and Kinoti, :2000:102

comprises of marriage as permanent, union between a man a woman, functions for procreation and child rearing. This indicates us that tradition Africa view of marriage concedes with biblical view of marriage at least in content.

To conclude this, marriage in general and in Ethiopian context in particular and according to RFC articles 1- 4,

*it is the sum total of formalities required to form a unity i.e. an alliance between the spouses since the three forms of marriage such as civil, customary, and religious marriage contained in the RFC differ only in formalities of their celebration.*⁴⁶

2.5.2 Marriage is defined in Ethiopian context

Even if Christianity is introduced to Ethiopia around the 4th century its impact widely influenced the Northern Semitic people of Ethiopia. The impact of Orthodox Christianity likely to be touched most of the Ethiopian people after the real unification of Ethiopia people by Menilek II during 19th century. Before that time most of the broad masses of Oromo people and Southern nations are bounded by their own traditional and cultural way of life. Both of those people introduced Orthodox and evangelical Christianity from the people who have different cultures and traditions. As a result both Christian sects laid their influences on marriage life of those people.⁴⁷ The Orthodox Christianity introduced the Amahara influenced Christian marriage such as wearing of Bared , “Asirtu”(special ceremony on the 10th day, after weeding) , sending cloth for bride ‘s relatives , very high bride price ,land-lord system , etc are experienced by the society of those people and other Ethiopian people during Menilek II and others after him.⁴⁸

*The so called ‘Christian wedding’ which has continued to grow in popularity has become a major social liability. With its costly and conspicuous paraphernalia- the wedding dress ;suits; flowers; rings; cakes; feasts; gifts; cards; transportation; and parties –the ‘Christian wedding’ has become more of display of status than a religious ritual.*⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Unity University, School of Distance and continuing Education, Course Material (lectures’ note) for Law of Family 301, p. 26. See also, RFC articles 1-4, Federal Negarit Gazeta of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Extraordinary issue No. 1/2000, Addis Ababa .P. 1&,The constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia article 34(Marital, Personal & Family Rights). Federal Negarit Gazeta of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Proclamation No. 1/1995, Addis Ababa. P. 92

⁴⁷ Ephrem,2000:4

⁴⁸ Ephrem,2000:4

⁴⁹ Waruta & Kinoti, 2000:109

This situation also created problem in Ethiopia. Due to this situation Youngsters are forced to marry without the authority of Church and parents in fear of it or sit without marriage and exposed to immoral life in church and society. According to D. W. Waruta for those ‘Christians’ who has no economic power to fulfill those requirements of ‘Christian wedding’, a customary marriage is a better option unless those couples may remain in their churches condemned for refusing to take the ‘sacrament of holy matrimony.’ I think Waruta is correct in his saying the church of Africa should rethink the problem of ‘Christian wedding’ today and its negative effects in the life of poor and broad masses of African youngsters who are sanctioned because of Christian wedding requirements. I recommend this system should be contextualized in the way in which fits for our people rather to put it as the law of God which cannot be flexible. Evangelical Christianity brought by western missionaries influenced in introducing putting rings on fingers, and the blessing at the altar.⁵⁰ This is also emphasized by D. W. Waruta how the value system of traditional Africa society influenced.

*From the West- new religion particularly Christianity; the process of social change within the African countries during this century; the growth of cities; the introduction of monetary economies; the advent of schools and the Western education systems, the shift from predominantly kinship systems to individualism and nuclear families.*⁵¹

He also emphasizes those factors as “drastically altered the value system of traditional African society.”⁵²

Besides that “the family issue in our country is not yet dealt with biblically. We see the cultural ingredients of every tribe or society very much dominating the Christian family while it should be other round.”⁵³ As one of my informants explained even within evangelicals, they have no similar way and kind of understanding of marriage and family.

All evangelical Christians have no similar way and understating of marriage and family in spite of all based on in their teaching of family and marriage on the same Bible. In case of that all have different understanding and interpretation in both terms. The EECF is working the evangelical churches in Ethiopia should come to similar biblical and theological way of

⁵⁰ Waruta & Kinoti, 33

⁵¹ Ibid. P.101

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Berahnu, 2003:1

understanding in marriage and family issues as they have common basis for all, Bible is their common ground.⁵⁴

In general, no law in Ethiopia defines the meaning of marriage, but the dictionary meaning seen as follows.

*Marriage is a special contract of permanent union between a man and a woman entered into in accordance with law for the establishment of conjugal and family life. It is the foundation of the family and an inviolable social institution whose nature, consequences, and incidents are governed by law.*⁵⁵

2.5.3 Arrangements of marriage in Ethiopia

As seen from different angles particularly the studies done on ‘Protect children from Abuse and Neglect’, the ways and kinds that marriage is arranged in Ethiopia are as follows⁵⁶:

-Promissory marriage- this kind of arrangement of marriage is done by oral agreement of two families to give their children.

-Child marriage- this kind of marriage arrangement is mostly done girls year under age 10 and the bride is usually placed under the custody of in-laws.

-Early adolescent marriage- the agreement of this marriage occurred between the ages of 10 and 14. As studies, it is the frequent common age for the majority of rural girls. But after the enactment of the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia and the RFC, this kind of marriage arrangement is reduced even though its implementation is still there in some parts of the country. In the same way the constitution and other provision of the country never permit illegal and inhuman practices to take place in the name of any marriage formalities.

-Adolescence marriage- mostly occurs when the bride is nearly the age of 15 years. Late marriage is considered to be after the age of 20 years.

Marriage to most Africans is a corporate agreement of the clans and families to which the two individuals belong, not simply an agreement of the individuals concerned. The clans and families play a part in the marriage agreements from

⁵⁴ Rev., Tigenesh Ayele, Oi, Nov.,12,2011,Addis Ababa

⁵⁵ L-111, Family law and law of succession, Module one (lectures’ note), Ethiopian Civil Service College, School of distance education. P.4

⁵⁶ Protect children from Abuse and Neglect’’ National Workshop Organized by the Children and Youth Affairs organization and Italian Cooperation Proceedings Dec., 2-4, 1996, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia p. P .59 (original idea is taken from Protect children from Abuse and Neglect presentation note’’ National Workshop Organized by the Children and Youth Affairs organization and Italian Cooperation Proceedings Dec., 2-4, 1996, Addis Ababa)

*preliminary stage up to the marriage proper and even during the marriage life of the couple.*⁵⁷

There are a number of reasons those marriage arrangements are performed by parents in Ethiopia. Among them the following are the major ones⁵⁸:-

-Security for the future- it is acceptable to marry children off when the two parents still young so as the children futurity is secured before they get old or die. The low life expectancy in rural Ethiopia supports this prediction and practice.⁵⁹

-Competition –Within a given community there is a competition among people to get in-laws whom expected to be in a good social status in social value with in a marriage tie. This increase the social network to get good relation with a better family in the community whom are expected great in their social status through marriage ties.

-Conformity-there is a claim to confirm to tradition and a fear to be bad name by the community. If a girl is not married off at a young age, she risks in given bad name as so called a ‘galemota.’⁶⁰

-Ensure virginity- this is more usual in the community a girl who is not virgin in her first time her marriage she is expected to be unqualified to family life. In case the right has given to husband to dissolve marriage in the tradition.

When we see the old days in totally and nowadays partially, any marriage arrangement is considered as a parent’s responsibilities and relatives along with the respective husband and wife.⁶¹

In my understanding making families completely out from involving has negative effect in marriage of young couples since it has many things to help them that involvement. I mean that the role of family also legitimate in the marriage of their children since they have great role in the lives of their children. The primacy of the spouses consent is good and valuable (approved

⁵⁷ Seblewongel, 2008:7-8.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Protect children from Abuse and Neglect’’ National Workshop Organized by the Children and Youth Affairs organization and Italian Cooperation Proceedings Dec., 2-4, 1996, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P .59

⁶⁰ ‘Galemota’. - means it is Amharic name for a name given to a girl whom did not get husband with in a limited age in the the tradition of the community. A word with a meaning to cheap, free, left over or simply not wanted for marriage, Protect children from Abuse and Neglect:1996:60

⁶¹ Seblewongel,2008:8,Teum Berhe ,’ Family life and Social Discrimination in Ethiopia Today: A moral perspective ‘ in Hailebriel Mellaku(ed.), faith and culture in Ethiopia: Towards a pastoral Approach to culture , A Symposium- Ethiopian Review of culture , Special issue , Vol. VI and VII(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia : Capuciscan Franciscan Institute, 1997,) 80

constitutional)⁶² but also family has much to support this consent. According to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church Faith, Order of Worship and Ecumenical Relations book, the Canon of the Church requires that before matrimony is effected “...parents should be consulted and their consents should be secured...”⁶³ This idea of the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia is one of 11 conditions those should be fulfilled before marriage is effected. I agree this idea as positive since family has many valuable reputations for the future of their children as they played great role in the life of their children. The Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic Constitution supports the consents of the spouses as “marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.”⁶⁴ Besides that the Revised Family Code of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia also gives concern for marital rights how the marriage can be conducted as,

*marriage may be concluded before the officer of civil status (Article 1(1)). Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-article 1 of this, marriage may be concluded in accordance with the religion or custom of the future spouses (Article 1(2)).*⁶⁵

According to above provisions of the Revised Family Code of FDRE, we understand that regardless of its form marriage has equal value in whatever forms has been applied for its conclusion such as either before an office of civil status or the formality ordered by customary law or religion. This is also emphasized on article 40 of FDRE constitution as “marriage produces the same legal effect whatever the form according to which it has been celebrated (article 40(1). No distinction shall be made as to whether the marriage has been concluded before an officer of civil status or according to the forms prescribed by religion or custom (article 40 (2)).”⁶⁶ However, the provision of RFC of FDRE give equal rights to various forms of marriage, it does not allow inhuman kind of practices which are implementing in the form of customary law, civil marriage or religion.

Marriage may be concluded via civil law or under religious or customary laws. Religious or customary laws may limit the freedom of the intended spouses through the requirements imposed such as bride-money. But the constitution cannot allow

⁶² The Constitution of FDRE article 34 (2), Federal Negarit Gazeta of FDRE 1st year Issue No. 1/1995, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.P.92

⁶³ EOTC: 1996: 43

⁶⁴ The Constitution of FDRE Article 34(2), Federal Negarit Gazeta of FDRE 1st year No. 1, Addis Ababa, 1995:92

⁶⁵ RFC Article 1(1) and (2): various form of marriage : The RFC of FDRE, Federal Negarit Gazeta Extra Ordinary Issue No. 1/2000,Proclamation No.213/2000, P. 3

⁶⁶ Article 40(1) and (2): various form of marriage Equivalent : The RFC of FDRE, Federal Negarit Gazeta Extra Ordinary Issue No. 1/2000,Proclamation No.213/2000, P.14

*inhuman practices to take place in the name of customary law and in any case the decision to have a civil marriage or otherwise would have to be with the consent of the intended spouses.*⁶⁷

In general, “marriage in Ethiopia is considered as normal, natural and expected by the society and by the church.”⁶⁸ According to Seblewongel, concerning over fundamental of what constitutes a marriage and its meaning, there is no common understanding. In Most cases in tradition and the law of the land, marriage is considered as a contract.

*Cohabitation and marriage according to tradition customs are considered as valid marriage in the state law; as such arrangements are regarded as creating a de facto contractual agreement which is equivalent to that of a marriage contract agreed before civil authorities.*⁶⁹

But the Christian understanding of marriage does not support that marriage is a contract. D.W.Waruta pinpoints, “the marriage contract not only gave the institution of marriage a measure of seriousness and dignity but also signaled ‘transfer to the husband of marital rights over his wife and parental rights over children that will be born to her.’”⁷⁰ I agree and believe as a Christian that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman but I also need to share the idea Waruta said about the essentiality of marriage contract in its provision of rights to couple and children born from them.

In Ethiopia Orthodox Church, marriage is one of the seven sacraments that the church has as noted, “Christian marriage is one of the seven sacraments which is performed in which a church by means of which the grace of the Holy Spirit is obtained.”⁷¹ Sebelewongel explained there is also non-sacramental marriage is also practicing within EOC community.⁷²

In evangelicals, marriage is a permanent and life-long union between a man and a woman even if they also have no common understanding in their teaching about marriage despite all bases their teaching on the same Bible.⁷³

⁶⁷ Fasil, 1997:138, Seblewongel: 2008: 8

⁶⁸ Seblewongel,2008:35

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Waruta and Kinoti, 2000:109

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 104,

⁷¹ (EOTC), 1996:42

⁷² Sebelwongel,2008:36

⁷³ Rev., Tiganish Ayele, oi, Nov., 12, 2012, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 A short overview about the method

According to Rao, methodology is defined as a system of rules, principles and procedures that guide scientific investigation.⁷⁴ The research on family and marriage is one of the main social researches which systematic and scientific approach is applied.⁷⁵ In case of that, this research must be based on research methodology. As this research is kind of educational research, it is “concerned with producing information which needed improvement in education.”⁷⁶ Since educational research aims in offering important information and adequate knowledge in which educational opportunity could attain more relevant stage. One of the aims of this thesis is also to show how the EECMY’s family life education program to be more improved and attain in the level expected.

According to John L. Hayman, field work that is taken outside of laboratory goes with practical life settings in the situation who the studied community is living their real life. In this regard the possibility of searching external thing is higher than the internal that is left to be found by the researcher.⁷⁷ The method is important for how the research may be carried out and how the information needed is to be obtained or found. Moreover; it “involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world.”⁷⁸ Similarly, it helps to “study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people to them.”⁷⁹ It also helps me how the records may be kept and personal observation maintained, how achievements and progress over a period of time go with correctly and efficiently.

3.2. Qualitative method

For this study or project I use qualitative method with in which includes texts and documents references, interviews, and recording and transcription of data so as to build on the past works on family and marriage issues both from abroad and local area sources. I prepare this method for it is the issues of family life and marriage which is a part studied ethnographically as the societal scientific writing of folks.⁸⁰ Since the issue of family and marriage is one of the well

⁷⁴ Rao, 2006: 57

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Hayman: 1968: 3

⁷⁷ Ibid. P.104

⁷⁸ Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009:7

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Oppela, Qualitative Compared with qualitative Interview, Lecture on 31, 03, 11, NLA-University College, Bergen, Norway.

known social realities that can be organized gathering from collective documents of past work and personal explanation of facts ,situations, and life experiences. I also chose this method as helpful to my work since my ongoing research will be built on social phenomena which are situated in the wider social and historical context.⁸¹ And in which it is based on an empirical paradigm⁸² where the data is not collected in the form I choose Qualitative method because it is carried out when one wish to understand meanings looks at, describe and understand experience ,ideas, beliefs and values.⁸³ It is the best method for me to collect theological, legal and social documents regarding family and marriage in Ethiopian context. The other reason to use this method, it opens the way, “to collect objective beliefs, judgments, experiences ,and values of individuals, and groups, combined are important and valuable to my project that need to be collected, studies, and learned through qualitative method.”⁸⁴ Furthermore, I have a plan to use qualitative interview to collect data from particular section of Family life ministry of the Church office of the EECMY and SCS in which I was come from. Besides that I need to conduct interview with concerned persons on issue in professional and life experience base on the issues of family and marriage.

3.2.1 Review of the literatures

I began my evaluation of documents in the first step reviewing documents from FLEP including reports of FLEP achievements, in order to get more insights on programs roles, responsibilities, activities, and objectives, strong and weak points which are the targets of my evaluation project.

As its implication goes with studies on previous work on the subject matter, it obviously helps the research to get more sources which are relevant to my project in my strict study on related past works of many scholars in the field of my project. It is a fact that in the process of reviewing literature the researcher should avoid unwanted repetition.

In process of reviewing literatures, I read both published and unpublished materials, for example, books, research papers, journals and documents from the archives.

To get brief overview of the Ethiopian History, I used to read “*A History of Modern Ethiopia from 1855-1991*” by Bahru Zewde. The author tries to verify a historical over view of the whole current Ethiopia particularly including the Southern part of a country that did not get

⁸¹ Oppela, Qualitative Compared with qualitative Interview, Lecture note on 31, 03, 11, NLA-University College, Bergen, Norway.

⁸² Hayman, 1968:13

⁸³ Wondaferwa, MYTS, National Colloquium-Friday(lecturer note), July 23,2010

⁸⁴ Abraham, 2006:6

enough focus or ignored by other historians who had documents on Ethiopian history with particular emphasis on North. The author's work seemed special in its explanation as the first modern history of the country series which explains how history as the consequences of social and political developments of the current Ethiopia. Then I read the book written by Johnny Bakke, "*Christian Ministry patterns and Functions within the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.*" This helped me to know how the inception of the church caused, started and facilitated by the western missionaries. He explained deeply the role of missionaries on the establishment of the EECMY and how the missionaries played their role in teaching the first local ministries in the church wise. The third literature I deeply assessed to historical overview of the EECMY was the book written by Øyvind M.Eide "*Revolution and religion in Ethiopia .Study of Church and politics with special Reference to the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus from1974-1985.*" The author significantly explains in his particular reference on the church founded in western Ethiopia including the history of this church during the time of socialist Ethiopia and how the church was persecuted in a worst situation. Besides that he tried to explain the role of the EECMY in creating political and socio-dynamical movement with the community of Ethiopia particularly on those people whom were oppressed during the time of monarchal Ethiopia. I have also assessed the book written by Arne Tolo, "*Sidama Ethiopia. The Emergence of the Mekane Yesus Church in Sidama.*" The author's focus on Sidama Ethiopia which is found in southern part of Ethiopia. As I explained above, this part of Ethiopia does not get adequate focus on Ethiopian historians who wrote about Ethiopian history in their biased way of writing the history particular focus on North. In case for their lack of concern for other peoples in South, West and East. I was impressed on author's focus in his identifying "the political, social or cultural conditions paving the way for the gospel and ... the evangelical Christian message impacted the political, social and religious developments in Sidama land, and how the Sidama people utilized the missionary movements as a vehicle for progress."⁸⁵ As I believe this impact of the evangelical message of gospel involves almost all southern people particular nations such as Woiata, Gamo, Gofa , Kebata, Hadiya, Mareko, Tambaro, Alaba, Koniso and other ethnic groups of southern nation, nationality and people are the more favored one from in undertaking of evangelism, linguistic, education and medical activities by SIM missionaries between 1928 and 1935.⁸⁶ The broad

⁸⁵ Tolo, 1998:3

⁸⁶ Lapiso, 2001:6

masses of Oromo people are also one of the favored nations among Ethiopian people by the undertaking evangelism process by western missionaries.⁸⁷

I reviewed the book written by Anna-Kaarina & Matti Palmu, “*Strengthening the Family. A trainer’s handbook for Family Ministry*” in the EECMY. As it is the first in its kind in church level as a training manual in family and marriage, it is seen as the source for the church as a teaching material today. This book is one of important source materials on FLEP in the EECMY. The author gives brief highlights on “how family ministry was developed in the EECMY starting in the year 2000.”⁸⁸ This book provides general verification on establishment of FLEP in the EECMY. I used “*Sociology, Principles of Sociology with An introduction To Social Thought*” by C. N. Shankar Rao, for its strong explanations on sociological meaning of family and marriage. The author’s way of defining marriage and family, senses important in its giving broader meaning of terms.

I also used Douglas W. Waruta and Hannah W. Kinoti, editors, “*Pastoral Care in African Christianity, Challenging Essays in Pastoral Theology.*” I used this book since it consists of large amount of issues related to marriage, family, children, and pastoral challenges facing Churches in Africa with its particular emphasis on the topics in pastoral theology within the context of contemporary Africa from the view points of different contributors.

The literatures I tried to identify are vital for my research work in giving overall highlights in the foundation of the EECMY and FLEP.

3.2.2 Interviews

As John Hayman defined, interview is “a variation of the survey method in which information is obtained from the respondent directly, that is, through face –to- face interaction.”⁸⁹ In that extent in this process of interviewing there is a need of observation which also part of descriptive research method in which cross checking the existing situation. Furthermore through observation we can “classify and record pertinent happenings according to some systematic methods”⁹⁰

Interview is essential way of gathering information for social research work like family and marriage issues for it paves ways for common idea through conversation with purpose.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Palmu & Palmu, 2006: 9

⁸⁹ Hayman, 1968: 104

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Rao, 2009: 66

According to John Hayman interview is “an effective, informal verbal or non-verbal conversation, initiated for specific purpose and focused on certain planned context areas.”⁹²

The assessment was done using both primary and secondary sources. My primary data was collected mostly from key informant interviews. Questionnaires are developed in line with the significant of the study and design in order to get relevant and efficient information from the informant. The secondary sources of my project based on different relevant researches, books, documents, journals, annual reports and magazines were reviewed to better understand the international and national perspectives of family and marriage.

As it is known that the review of literature based on reading, locating and evaluating the literatures reviewed on the possible area of the project.

3.2.3 Analysis of data

The data for this study established from as explained as below. I started on transcribing the data I collected as the audio recording which was an identification of my field work base filed daily record with respective short notes I listed during the interviews I conducted with my informants. That led me the next stage as explained by Kvale,

*Designing the validity of the knowledge produced depends on the adequacy of the design and the methods used for the subject matter and purpose of the study. From an ethical perspective, a valid research design involves beneficence –producing knowledge beneficial to the human situation while minimizing harmful consequences.*⁹³

This helps me to run the step of advancing my interview from a verbal to a written level that facilitates the interview to perfect analysis.

My roles as researchers I kept my project work with strong spirit creating intensive communication with my informants such as church leaders, pastors, evangelist and FLEP officers for I can get a wanted information from them as they were identified as prime beneficiaries and stakeholder of FLEP . This situation was identified by one of my informants as one of the strong side of FLEP is its prime target in its training was based on church leaders, pastors and evangelists since they are expected as accesses to get people of the church

⁹² Rao, 2009: 66

⁹³ Kvale, 1996:237

and community, to commend on budget of the church work and have power to enact rules and regulation on church base.⁹⁴

Using my past experience of doing interview with my informants such as church leaders, pastors, evangelists, and experts who are serving in church office level as coordinator, I have applied my past experience as researcher while I was doing my B.Th. Senior essay.

3.3 Limits and delimitation of the study

In this project work I am not planning to touch with wide theological and biblical area of family and marriage rather than only targeting on my chosen topic. Many researchers have been done on family and marriage in the light of various disciplines.

In my thesis, my targeted focus is on analyzing the activities, roles and responsibilities of the EECMY's family life education program. Then after, to point out the strong side of the program that should be kept up in the long run and weak sides which should be improved. Presenting and evaluating these things is also the objective of the research.

In case of finding informants, I have faced some difficulties due to their meeting and being over loaded in their work. Some of my informants are authorized body in synods and church offices. Some led meeting and went abroad for work purposes. But I tried to get some of my key informants those who could feed me effective information for my field work. In case of written sources I did not face such kind of problem. I have had access in most libraries in Addis Ababa. In case of some church leaders, there is also lack of transparency on their work to be evaluated. I tried to ask to hear about the ministry I am going to evaluate but very few leaders and ministries were admitted soon my invitation after long follow up. This shows the lack of transparency and interest that their works to be evaluated. It also indicates lack of further improvement of the ministry in the long run.

In general, there were many ups and downs in road I went to get such sources. The project I am doing is limited to a study of the roles, activities, strong and weak side of FLEP in the EECMY and its evaluation mainly based on the sources that I observed from my data collection, oral interviews, published and unpublished written sources.

⁹⁴ Rev. Tigenash Ayele,, oi, Nov., 12/11, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION IN EECMY

4.1. A brief historical overview of EECMY

Before I want to explain about the EECMY, I have to explain briefly about our country Ethiopia on the land in which this church laid its foundation as a national church.

*Ethiopia is an ancient country located in north-east Africa, or it is general known, the horn of Africa, so called because of the horn-shaped tip of the continent that marks off the Red sea from the Indian Ocean. It is bounded by Sudan in the west, Eretria in the north and north –east, Kenya in the south, Somalia in south-east, and Djibouti in the east. To the outside world, it has long known by the name of Abyssinia.*⁹⁵

Ethiopia is a country geographical located in the Horn of Africa with the population of about 73, 918, 505 million people of which 62. 8% Christians and the rest are predominantly Sunni Islam around 34%, traditional religion followers are around 2.6 % and others 0.6 %. Besides that Ethiopia is a country with the home of diverse nations, nationalities and peoples with their varied types of religions, languages, cultures, and traditional beliefs.⁹⁶

When we see 63 % as a Christian community in Ethiopia, most of them are Orthodox Tewahido church⁹⁷ members that lived for the last 17 centuries starting from the beginning of 4th century. According to the EOTC Faith, Order of Worship and Ecumenical Relations book, “the EOTC was officially organized in the fourth century (328 AD) after Christianity was introduced to the country in the very Apostolic era.”⁹⁸ The existence of this church for long time with its close connection to the state of past Ethiopia until the socialist government (Marist- Leninist wing) of derg⁹⁹ closed the interference of any socialization of cultural exchange in this country.

Being as a state church (EOTC) for long time in history, lived with the culture in a blended manner, the Ethiopian Orthodox church (commonly called Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido church) dominated the life of Ethiopia people with its teaching throughout centuries particularly the Northern , Central North, North-West of the country. Eide pointed this as,

⁹⁵ Bahru , 2007: 1, ‘Abyssinia’-‘This appellation apparently derived from ‘Habashat’, one of the tribes that inhabited the Ethiopian region in the pre-Christian era’(Bahru: 2007 : 1)

⁹⁶ From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. [Http://en. Wikipedia.org/](http://en. Wikipedia.org/)

⁹⁷ (EOTC), 1996: 6

⁹⁸ (EOTC), 1996:13

⁹⁹ Derg-the revolutionary government of Ethiopia during 1974-1999 and who founded themselves the political executive and collegially commanders in-chief of the Ethiopian arm forces

*Orthodox Christianity was seen as the most profound expression of the national existence of tradition Ethiopia. There were close links between dogma, politics and mission. To be orthodox, conversion meant inclusion in a supra trivial polity under an emperor.*¹⁰⁰

When we go back to the history of Ethiopian Christianity where the EECMY emerged, it was introduced during the age of apostolic period.¹⁰¹ “However, the spreading of Christianity with in this nation was about the year 300 E.C that Christianity was spread through the two Syrian brothers, Edissius and Frumentus among the people of Axumite Kingdom.”¹⁰²

According to Abraham, the attempt to originate the EECMY, goes to J.L.Krapf, one of the German Missionary whose awareness target to the people of Oromo’s in Ethiopia and finally developed a concern for mission and drew his whole attention to focus on them.¹⁰³

*He had strong conviction that winning this large ethnic group for Christ and would have an important impact in evangelizing the Horn of Africa which eventually would challenge the expansion of Islam. He said “give us the Galls (Oromo) and central Africa is ours” which became significance for the coming of evangelical mission and evangelical Church in Ethiopia.*¹⁰⁴

As Abraham mentioned, “inspired by Krapf’s vision, the Hermannsburg mission had made several expedition since 1853 to reach the Oromo but could not succeed.”¹⁰⁵

As seen above, the attempt and impact of German missionary, J.L. Krapf’s vision on evangelical movement finally caused the foundation of the EECMY.

The EECMY is one of evangelical Churches in Ethiopia established as a national Church in 1959.

*Instead of firmly establishing one united Evangelical church or a federation of Ethiopia Evangelical Churches the road to establish confessional church was set. The evolving EECMY which traces its roots via the CEEC to the “Evangelical pioneers” from the 19th century and to even earlier influences, established itself in 1959.*¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ Eide: 200:333

¹⁰¹ Abraham, 2006: 26

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid, P.27

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.28ff,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p.28

¹⁰⁶ Grenstedt, 2000:19, Tolo: 1978: 34ff., 409ff, “The meeting, which was planned in January, was convened in April 1958, and the improved proposal was presented to the meeting and discussed for a constitution. The new-

It is also “the fastest growing evangelical and charismatic Lutheran Church in Ethiopia.”¹⁰⁷ “The EECMY has been growing at least at a rate of 5-6 % every year for the last 30 years.”¹⁰⁸ However, the growth and Church’s capacity to balance her members’ need does not fit with each other because of financial constraint and man power. Its earlier inception was occurred around 1930s in Wollaga in the Oromia region .The inception was accelerated by different missionaries such as,

*the Sweden Evangelical Mission (SEM) worked at Neqamte from 1923, Nagjo from 1927, the German Herbage mission (GHM) reached Aira in 1928 and the American United Presbyterian Mission (AUPM) also working in Wollaga in Qellan awrdja since 1919.*¹⁰⁹

Besides, the first Norwegian mission arrived in 1949.¹¹⁰ The return of emperor Haile Selassie I in May 1941 after the last Italian conquer left the country is one of the factories that contributed a lot in which the evangelical churches to be grown fast even if the Ethiopian Orthodox Church became resistant for its fast spread throughout the country in its deep cooperation with the government of Ethiopia at the time. It was paved the way for the churches in the country to be free from the interference of outside influence. Particularly, the 1944 decree which enacted as the regulation of foreign mission work paved the way for the work of evangelical churches in Ethiopia.

*Indeed, these sets of evangelical, educational, medical, social, relief and literary activities, services and institutions initiated by the SEM missionaries in Eritrea during the last three decades of the 19th century will become cultural and social innovations and events of fundamental importance during the subsequent rise and growth of evangelical Christianity in the North-East African subcontinent.*¹¹¹

After the Italian forces enforced to leave the country, the emperor’s and others with him in exile intended to build “New Ethiopia” by the help of western education.¹¹² For it was expected in that time “missions had been the promoters of western education and medicine

formed church was given the name “Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.” Finally, after 25 years effort, on January 21st, 1959, the EECMY was born when the constitutional document was signed. At its formation the EECMY consisted of four synods : The Wollo-Tigre Synod, The Western Wollega Synod, The Eastern Wollaga and Shoa Synod, and The Sidama and Gamu-Gofa synod.” (Abraham : 2006:31)

¹⁰⁷ Dawit:2007:8

¹⁰⁸ Palmu & Palmu: 2006:11ff.

¹⁰⁹ Bakke, 1986:P. 116

¹¹⁰ Tolo : 1998 : 4

¹¹¹ Lapiso: 2001:4

¹¹² (MYS): 1992: 80

in Ethiopia.”¹¹³ For that reason, the emperor invited most missionaries from western world to work in Ethiopia in proclaiming the decree in 1944¹¹⁴ with some conditional approach due to the influence of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The decree shows the foreign missions can operate in ‘Open Area’¹¹⁵ in which inhabitants are predominantly none Christians, but not included by Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), these areas allowed by the decree are predominantly occupied by Muslims and traditional believers there in which preaching the gospel and soul winning permitted. Whereas, ‘Ethiopia Church areas’¹¹⁶ belongs to the EOC. This area is not permitted to work gospel preaching but missionaries can run only medical and educational work.¹¹⁷ However, the foreign missionaries were working development works such as building of schools, clinics, hospitals and so on in both areas.

*However, beginning from 1870, the SEM missionaries initiated evangelical, educational, medical, and social activities, institutions, and services such as schools, for boys, girls, adults, clinics, relief works, printing press; linguistic teaching, writing, and translation of biblical and educational literatures and books in Amharic, Tigirgna, Tigre, Kunama, and Oromo vernacular languages in the Eritria towns and villages of Massawa, Ailet, Imkullu, Geleb, Arkiko, Beleza, Asmara and Hazega.*¹¹⁸

According to Abraham, this regulation laid legal ground for the western missionaries and local evangelists, and developed the growth of evangelical church in open areas particular among traditional believers.¹¹⁹

As the evangelicals were founded by the western missionaries, Aren Tolo pinpointed as “The western missionaries were described as the most important factors in the history of the churches and missions in Africa”¹²⁰. Arne Tolo added, the disadvantageous of western missionaries identified as “Paul Jenkins is correct in stating that an African Church history

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ After the Italian Fascists’ war, concerning the missionary evangelism in Ethiopia, the Emperor Haile Silassie I August, 1944, Decree No.3 on Mission Societies introduced important policy changes. The decree divided Ethiopia into two religion zones as “Open Areas” and “Ethiopian Church Areas”. Lapiso: 2001:9-10

¹¹⁵ According to the decree definition: “Open Areas”- consists of those areas in which the inhabitants adhere predominantly non-Christians.

¹¹⁶ ‘Ethiopia Church areas’- consists of those areas in which the inhabitants adhere predominantly to the Ethiopian Church faith.

¹¹⁷ (MYS): 1992:80

¹¹⁸ Lapiso: 2001:4. Also see, Aren, Evangelical pioneers, P.152.

¹¹⁹ Abraham, 2006: 30

¹²⁰ Tolo : 1998 : 4

beginning with missionary institutions and projects will stress the foreign nature of faith and its practice.¹²¹

*Missionary societies with a diverse Lutheran background, in cooperation with Ethiopian Nationals pioneered the Evangelical enterprise among different ethnic groups of Ethiopia. Unification of most of the Evangelical Lutheran groups was achieved, and the EECMY became a national Church in 1959.*¹²²

As it is one of the fast growing and oldest evangelical Christian church which belongs to under the categories of protestant religious, it got its national recognition in 1959 while its membership were 20,000 in which its members exceeded today 5,279,822.¹²³ For this fact it is also one of the fast growing Lutheran churches in the world with its main orientation base on gospel outreach work since its foundation was as mission church. This indicates us that the Church had begun her ministry with the support of different missionaries from Sweden, German, America, Norway, Finland, Denmark and so on. This helped the Church to have good reputation in national and international base. Almost all the foundation of the Church is related to the respective missionaries. Both gospel and development ministry tied with them. But in some areas the Church's policy of self-sustainability is started. Some Synods started to ran their works by their own means financial and material resources with some limited linkages with their original partner mission churches in abroad.

When we see the name Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mehane Yesus it was taken from "its name from its first congregation in Addis Abeba, Mekane Yesus congregation, meaning the "place of Jesus."¹²⁴ . The naming 'Mekane Yesus 'as 'the dwelling place of Jesus' was by qes Badima Yalew who was one of leading and prominent figures as well as a teacher in mission school and pastor. This name was founded by this pastor and became the name of the whole future church.¹²⁵

In 1959 the foundation of the EECMY came to reality but the roots go fare back to the preaching of the gospel at Boji around 1898, in Nekemete around 1906 in western part of Ethiopia and Addis Ababa in central Ethiopia since 1898.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Eide, 2000: 54

¹²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_Evangelical_Church_Mekane_Yesus

¹²⁴ EECMY Educ. & Theol., www.eecmy.org/?hom-ceth

¹²⁵ (MYS),1992: 77

¹²⁶ (MYS),1992: 86

The Church has organized structure under central office, Synods, work areas, a gospel ministry department in which FLEP is one the sections in this department, a department of social services commission, a peace commission and a communication services.

Then also the structure¹²⁷ extends to parish, congregation and outreach area. Since 1972, the Church organizes the theme 'serving the whole person' lately the concept changed into holistic ministry which is also the Church's motto in which the Church is well known in national and international base. As we see the specific responsibilities of each department of the EECMY, the department of mission and theology carries the activities of running all the evangelical activities of the church such as gospel outreach, Christian education, sun day school and youth ministry, family life education program, diaconal and women 's section. The department of development is responsible for the service of developments the church in which most of the projects including rehabilitation, building like clinics, schools, bridges and other timely projects will be run as much necessary possible.¹²⁸

The other department which activates the work of finance, personnel and administration of the church is the department of finance and administration.

The church also newly established a society called EECMY-IMS (The EECMY-International Mission Society) in January 2007 for the purpose of "participating in the last harvest of so as to preach the gospel to be a blessing, and to prepare the neighboring countries and beyond for advent of the second coming of Christ." ¹²⁹ In Annual Report of DMT 2007 this noted as,

The year 2007 may be recognized as historic year for the EECMY. It was in this year that the church reaffirmed its role as a missionary church, with a call to proclaim the good news of salvation beyond the borders of Ethiopia. Thus, on January 21/ 2007 the church officially established a sending mission agency, known by the name "EECMY-International Mission Society" ¹³⁰

4.2. Description and role of department of mission and theology

As I tried to mention above this department of mission and theology carries all the work of gospel ministry in the church.

¹²⁷ Structural issue (which is very essential for the right administration) is one of the basic things in the EECMY, as "the world wide Lutheran Churches reflect this understanding of unity. They admit that , if there is unity in preaching , there can be a wide diversity in questions 'ceremonies' , which include liturgy, church structure, leadership patterns ,etc." (History of Christianity in Ethiopia, Mekane Yesus TEE Diploma Program, Addis Ababa, 1992: 87)

¹²⁸ Constitution of the EECMY, 1997, p.73, Addis Ababa

¹²⁹ <http://www.eecmy.org/?home=ims>

¹³⁰ EECMY, DMT, Annual Report, 2007. P. 1

According to the annual report of DMT EECMY 2010, this department has added 4 new sections such as Christian professional ministry, Christian muslim relations, comprehensive projects and faith comes by reading and ministry to members in Diaspora (MMD).¹³¹

Thus, in this time the DMT coordinates the following programs within it such as family life education, youth and children ministry, Diaconal, Evangelistic outreach, University student's ministry, Bible translations and language development, Tent making ministry, Christian education and theology, University student ministry and women ministry, Christian professional ministry, Christian muslim relations, comprehensive projects and faith comes by reading, and ministry to members in Diaspora(MMI).(EECMY DMT are the sections functioned within this department.¹³²

4.3. Christian education in the EECMY

The Church's foundation was rooted with the missionaries in its education system was mostly influenced in the heritage of the missionaries. Since the Church has no trained man power in the beginning, the education system was run by missionaries who took a position of training the local pastors in the different parts of the country where they took the position of evangelizing. When we see the specific history of the section Christian education in EECMY, it was founded in 1977 within the evangelism department of the Church and its main job is helping the Christian education. When the theological ministry was established in 1983, both sections joined in 2003.¹³³ Now the section is under department of mission and theology "with the objectives of helping God's people to grow in faith and of empowering them to be responsible followers of Jesus Christ who participate in the services of the church and society."¹³⁴

According to John L.Elias the intention of Christian teaching is to widen and deepen that human challenge, to help forward the growth and enrichment of the human fellowship, through which Jesus Christ moves ever afresh into the life of the world to redeem mankind. Cronbach points, "the importance of judging a learning process in terms of all its outcomes."

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¹³¹ EECMY DMT Annual Report of 2010: 1

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ <http://www.eecmy.org/?home=ims>

¹³⁴ EECMY DMT Report 2010:4

¹³⁵ Cronbach, 1954:67

Anthony Reddie points, "...the concept of full potential exists within the theories of motivation..."¹³⁶

The missionaries mentioned played great role in empowering the pastors from the very beginning until our day. But the problem is to balance between the members and the ministers. The membership of this Church is exceeding every year alarmingly. The needs of ministers are also alarmingly exceeding.

The need of empowering ministers demands much money. The question of budget is also the question of every time in this Church.

*The church during those years (during the time of revival) experienced a tremendous growth both in quantitative and qualitative ways. But in fact due to high growth of membership with comparatively few trained leadership and pastors; it has been difficult to achieve the qualitative growth as much as it should have been.*¹³⁷

The EECMY tried very much from the very beginning in enriching and growth of her members, ministers and society both spiritually and socially. Her role of education in different angles including family life ministry played great role for spiritual, social and economic transformation of her members and the society. Great changes were emerged in the country in many aspects of Ethiopian society such as political awareness, question of equity, respect of human rights, land for the tenants, and distribution of translated Bibles in the language of ethnic groups, the expansion of schools, hospitals and clinics.

As Arne pointed, "The EECMY Christian message influenced socio-cultural, political and religious development of Ethiopia and most of Ethiopian people used the opportunity of mission movement as a means of development."¹³⁸ Within these roles family life ministry is one of the dynamic roles that the Church played in her Christian education even if it was late beginning of the program and limited approach to all areas of Church's ministry. This ministry in Church base consists of many issues such as marriage, family, children and so no.

First, facilitating the preparation, production and distribution of theological and educational materials both for training institutions and congregational teaching. Secondly, to prepare timely documents and materials as response to the challenges and questions of the day so as to keep the Lutheran and reformed heritage as well as

¹³⁶ Reddie,2010:9

¹³⁷ Dawit, 2007:8

¹³⁸ Tolo, 1998: 4

*the core value of EECMY. Thirdly, responsible for producing contextualized materials on the vision and mission of the church.*¹³⁹

Besides, according to DMT Report of 2010, Christian education ministry is also caring for the theological education in the EECMY Bibles schools and works its level best to standardize the curricula, to improve the quality of teaching and to empower and encourage the Bible school teachers.¹⁴⁰

4.3. The EECMY's response in strengthening FLEP

As responsible church in a given society, the church must take care for building of health family. Healthy family is foundation for healthy church and society in all aspects of life.

*The family is the basic building block of every society. The family is a good idea because it is God's idea .God has provided us with instructions how the family should live together. When human being ignores God's teaching about family relationships, the family begins to fall apart, followed by society falling apart. What we see in the modern society is the result of failures in the families.*¹⁴¹

The church established FLEP in 2000 G.C. in the department of mission and theology (DMT) with the expectation of responding family and marriage based questions in a very well founded manner particular in the church and Society in general. Before 2000 there was not enough concern for family ministry in the church even if there was a program called family 'counseling service' which offers counseling service in marriage and family issue in very limited way. To make this service strong, the church sent students to South Africa from the church office and some synods but did not achieve wanted game in it.¹⁴² Then after the church gave recognition for FLPE with the understanding of its importance in church and community at the beginning of 2000 G.C. For this purpose, the church assigned as advisor two missionaries couple Rev.Matti and Sister Anna from Finland who were served long times as missionary in south central synod in Hossana. Before they join as the Coordinator of FLEP, they were offering basic marital and counselling courses throughout Synods and seminaries. In that moment the foundation of FLEP of the EECMY came in to existence. The ministry the church had been offering before hand was only based on counselling service. The

¹³⁹ EECMY, DMT, annual Report 2009, P.3

¹⁴⁰ EECMY, DMT, annual Report 2010, P.5

¹⁴¹ TAG Research Team on Marriage and family:1996:113

¹⁴² Rev. Geneti Weyessa, Oi, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa in his office in the EECMY.

founding idea of this office came after when the importance of FLEP was needed due to those missionaries education throughout the Synods and seminaries in the EECMY. Then after, it had been thought that it is impossible to arrive in teaching by using two people.

The arrangement of training leaders, evangelist and pastors planned to rich the Synods, parishes and congregations of the EECMY. In this regard the training involved throughout the Synods and other structure of the Church. Consequently the reports of the work circulated to the assemble of the Church to get recognition to FLEP in the Church level. The foundation of this office came in to being slowly by slowly.¹⁴³ Now this responsibility is carried by two couples Rev., Geneti Wayessa and Miss. Abarash Tolosa since the departure of these Finish missionary couples from Ethiopia.

4.5. Family life education program in the EECMY

As family and marriage are regarded, they are bases of human institution. They are first institution in the history of human kind (Gen.1:26-28, 2:18, 21-2).Peter Coleman says “the gospel shows that the institution of marriage was God given...”¹⁴⁴ Unless family and marriage are not protected and get support and godly guidance, there is no possibility of getting good Church and generation. Family life and marriage ministry is unquestionable important for the life of the Church and society.

When I see from different assessments the EECMY was constituted originally a mission based association, has always stressed the importance of outreach ministry.

As explained above the importance of family and marriage ministry in the Church and society, my focus is on creating particular awareness in this ministry if the Church and society want to have blessed and good generation whom feel responsible in the eyes of God and community. According to Anna-Kaarina and Matti Palmu family life education involves many various characteristics of Church work such as education in the sense of teaching which is related to the field of counseling.¹⁴⁵

Family life ministry is an accepted title for the service of teaching in the area of counseling premarital or marriage and family counseling. It includes different kinds of teachings for example, “helping the grieving members of a family after the death of loved one, helping family member in the midst of serious difficulties and supporting the married couple in their

¹⁴³ Rev. Geneti Weyessa, Oi, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa in his office in the EECMY.

¹⁴⁴ Coleman,1989: 91

¹⁴⁵ Palmu & Palmu,2006:14

marital problem.”¹⁴⁶ When we see family in our Ethiopian context, it is a broader term consists of Father, mother, children and those related in blood with mother and father side.

When it is extended one, it sometimes also comprises those who are sharing the same house, food with us without having blood relation. Blood and marriage are the sources of our family system. We do have system of adoption in law making once as a part of our family. Christian family life is a tool that God wants to use in redemptive work for human life.

When we see Acts 2:42-47 and Eph.3:10, it is through the family that God works out his redemptive aim in our Lord Jesus Christ and to the world. As Edith Deen pointed out about home-family as “ a place of rest, refreshment , and protection ,place where children are born and cared for ,and where people die place where all members of family come together for mutual help and happiness.”¹⁴⁷ According to Edith Deen, family is an important unity of the Church and Society.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Deen, 1963:184

V. ACTIVITIES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE EECMY

In the preceding section, I have tried to explain about the brief background description of the history of the EECMY and its main branches of work departments in which the church is performing its gospel, development and administrative works. In this section, I will explain about the main activities of the EECMY FLEP in detail at first its main objectives, then second, why and when the section is established, and then roles, activities and the factories that initiated the section to be established.

5.1 The objectives of FLEP of the EECMY

As I assessed the foundation documents and the view of my informants, the main objectives of FLEP of the EECMY are considered as follows (Text Approved by HMYS Board June 3, 2000)¹⁴⁸:

- It has the aim of promoting Christian family and marriage life through the method of conducting awareness raising seminaries and workshops etc;
- To offer education for church workers on family and marriage issues that involves pre-marital teaching;
- To provide knowledge to church workers on family and marriage as an opportunity to renew their partnership in marriage during a retreat –type of gathering;
- To find out responsible personnel for the work of family life ministry in the national church base;
- To gather and create important teaching materials in the area of family and marriage;
- To strengthen the family and marriage counseling activities in the church as a whole EECMY.

In general, the objective of FLEP of the EECMY is introducing the biblical and theological sound grounded teaching on the family and marriage as well as to help people to live a happy family and marriage life particular the church community and the society in general by using preventive and curative method of teaching and counseling.¹⁴⁹

5.2 Why and when family life education program started in the EECMY

In this section, I would like to explain about the inception of FLEP in the EECMY goes to trace when the issue related to marriage normally came up in the HIV/AIDS program, which

¹⁴⁸ Palmu and Palmu, 2006: 234–235

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.,Rev.,Tigenesh Ayele, oi, , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa,Ethiopia, Rev. Geneti Weyessa, oi, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa. Ethiopia, Rev. Jira Dufara Nov.,oi, 25, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

at that time carried the “preventing AIDS through strengthening Christian family” during when Anna-Karrina and Matti palmu were serving as AIDS program coordinator and theological advisor of the EECMY respectively. They were offering basic marriage courses with the course of AIDS preventing program during 1988- 1993. When those couple missionaries were intending to leave Ethiopia, they brought their request to the church office to assign someone to carry the responsibility of teaching about the issue of marriage and family life.¹⁵⁰

For the foundation of FLEP of the EECMY, there were two couple missionaries from Finland Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) who played great role in foundation of this program in the EECMY. First they were in Hossana where South Central Synod is centered its head quarter. That is the Synod in which I was born and served for many years. Those couple missionaries were Sister Anna-kaarina and Matti Palmu who initiated FLEP in the EECMY to be established. They were exemplary couple within their marital life as wife and husband and good servants in our synod (SCS) as minister and missionaries in Hossana and expanded Family and marriage teaching throughout the church starting the base from Hossana in marriage refresher courses. It was their vision to begin FLEP in the EECMY and played great role to make it into practice.¹⁵¹

As Anna and Matti noted, “the program description of the EECMY Christian family life education program (FLEP)” was approved by the HMYS¹⁵² board in June 2000.’’¹⁵³

The annual budgets and any administrative or financial procedures will be under the HMYS until the program is transferred to the central office of the EECMY. Any equipment purchased for the program shall follow the program when it is transferred to the EECMY Gospel Ministry Department.¹⁵⁴

In addition to above initiative factor, according to my informants there are the following factors became the initiative causes for the FLEP of the EECMY to be started as a section in church office.

¹⁵⁰ Palmu, and Palmu, 2006:10.

¹⁵¹ Rev., Tiganish Ayele, Oi , Nov., 12, 2012, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

¹⁵² HMYS- is one of the regional seminaries of the EECMY and found in the South central synod in Hossana town. It is in this that I had been served as instructor and dean of studies since 2005 until I left to my study leave to Norway at NLA_University College in Bergen in August 2010.

¹⁵³ Palmu & Palmu:2006:12

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.P, 234–235.

First, due to expansion of HIV/AIDS throughout the world in general and in Ethiopia particular, the Church observed that there is no need of sitting silent. To challenge this disaster that distracts the life of Church and society, the Church decided to form FLEP to teach the worseness and preventive methods of HIV/AIDS throughout Synods, parishes, and congregations.

The second main reason is the issue of divorce in the Church level. The divorce is disliked by God. Church and marriage are symbol of Christ's unity. Marriage is the symbol of Church. The Church got information from different angles of her structures that there are divorces, remarriages, and marriages out of legal limited ages such as early marriage, marriage under the influence of family, even under the influence of Church leaders out of the consent of couples. Then after the Church started teaching on the family, marriage, child care, and the general living situations in family and marriage life. Here when we see the position of the EECMY regarding divorce and remarriage, as I assessed the council decisions up on the issues of divorce and remarriage as follows: ¹⁵⁵

-The EECMY emphasis on the biblical text Mal 2:16 which says "I hate divorce; says the LORD God of Israel..." concerning divorce. The Church believes that "divorce destroys God's plan for marriage and the family." ¹⁵⁶ In this regard the EECMY also focus on our Lord's Jesus teaching on Mark's gospel on Mk. 19: 6 "so they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate." Seblewongel added about this as "God who has decreed marriage in the OT Book of Genesis and has confirmed in NT so as in the Christian marriage there is no room for divorce."¹⁵⁷ So this rejection concept of divorce is supported by the EECMY as well. The EECMY clearly stressed and reflected in her teaching the permanence of marriage.

Exceptionally, permissibility of divorce reflected in Church's decision due to the following situations: ¹⁵⁸

1. If adultery, fornication and/ or other immoral actions are committed by either of the spouses. (Matt. 5: 31-32, 19: 3-9). The church also opens the door for reconciliation of spouses in this case. The church opens the chance of reconciliation since forgiveness is one of the features of born again Christians and there is chance for the Church to teach its members

¹⁵⁵ Palmu and Palmu: 2006, p .1247, The EECMY the Statement accepted in 1992 by the EECMY Executive Committee on Marriage and related Issues. Seblewongel : 2008: 21ff.

¹⁵⁶ Seblewongel: 2008:.21ff.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, Palmu and Palmu, 2006:247

so as to experience the implementation of Gospel of grace and forgiveness.¹⁵⁹ As result, the EECMY opens the door of reconciliation if the spouses are willing to forgive each others in the matters of adultery, fornication and/ or other immoral actions are committed by either of the spouses. In this case there will be hope for restoration of marriage spoiled due to adultery, fornication and/ or other immoral action actions are committed by either of the spouses.¹⁶⁰

2. If the none believing spouse leaves (1Cor 7:10-15).¹⁶¹ Paul stresses this in saying, “But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bond in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.”(1Cor. 7:15)

3. If either of the spouses abandons the other for more than two years.¹⁶² The above two concepts reasoned for divorce are derived from Bible but the third reason is from The Revised Family Code Ethiopia. In the Revised Family Code Ethiopia article75 (b) points, “death of one of the spouses, or declaration of absence, by the court, of one of the spouses.”¹⁶³ The church teaches marriage is a lifelong covenant that only can end if one of the spouses dies. If one of the spouses dies, the question of remarriage rises. As result, the church clearly teaches the possibility of remarriage because the Bible allows people to remarry after the death of their spouses (Rom.7:3).¹⁶⁴

The third reason is the issue of homosexuality and lesbianism. These issues were there in Europe and America beforehand but in this day it entered among us and became temptation for the Church and society. In fact, in our case we heard about its existence with in our community in a very secret way among militaries those lived outside their family where there was no suitable situation for marriage as we knew in the fast time long while. But now in this day, male with male, female with female making sexes and intending to form marriage as mentioned in Rome 1:24-27,

Therefore God gave them over in sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurities for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the creator – who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts .Even their

¹⁵⁹ Seblewongel, 2008:23

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, Palmu and Palmu: 2006:247ff, The EECMY the Statement accepted in 1992 by the EECMY Executive Committee on Marriage and related Issues.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Palmu and Palmu, 2006:254, Sebelewongel, 2008:22.

¹⁶³ RFC of Ethiopia family law (Article 75(b)), Causes of Dissolution of Marriage, Federal Negarit Gazeta of FDRE Extraordinary issue No. 1/2000, Addis Ababa. P. 23

¹⁶⁴ Seblewongel, 2008:32

*women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*¹⁶⁵

So, homosexuality and lesbianism are expanded throughout in all area today. This is temptation for the church and the society¹⁶⁶

Unless the life of family kept well with good and effective teaching, it is impossible to get good Church and society in the longer run. That is why the Church established FLEP in the EECMY to resist this kind of ungodly and sinful act that family and marriage life faced.

Before FLEP in the EECMY started as a section, there is another form of ministry called 'family counselling service'. For 'family counselling service' to be advanced well, the Church sent trainers to South Africa from Church offices and from Synods. The Church also called couple Finland Lutheran Mission missionaries to facilitate this ministry assuming that the ministry attain its goal. Those missionaries are Rev., Matti Palmu and Sister Anna-Kaarina who were serving as missionary in the South Central Synod in Hossana area. Before they join to FLEP office, they were offering basic marital and counselling courses throughout Synods and seminaries stalling themselves there in Hosanna in South Central Synod. In that moment the foundation of FLEP of the EECMY came in to existence.¹⁶⁷ "In 1970-ies there was a trail to arrange 'Christian Family week', but there was no continuation in that field"¹⁶⁸

The 'family counselling service' was only based on counselling service. The founding idea of FLEP came after when the importance of FLEP was needed due to those missionaries teaching on basic marriage refresher courses along with the problems identified above throughout the Synods and seminaries of the EECMY. Then after, it had been thought that it is impossible to arrive in teaching by using two people. The arrangement of training leaders, evangelist and pastors planned to rich the Synods, parishes and congregations of the EECMY. In this regard the training involved throughout the Synods and other structure of the Church. Consequently the reports of the work circulated to assemble of the Church to get recognition to FLEP in the Church level.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ The Holy Bible, New International Version , Containing The Old Testament and The New Testament, Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids Michigan 49506,USA 1978, Romans 1:24-27,P. 1042

¹⁶⁶ Interview, Rev. Jira Dufara Nov., 25, 2011, Addis Ababa in his office.

¹⁶⁷ Rev Geneti Weyessa,Oi, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa in his office in the EECMY.

¹⁶⁸ Palmu and Palmu, 2006:234-235.

¹⁶⁹ Palmu and Palmu, 2006:234-235

*The foundation of this office came in to being slowly by slowly. As mentioned above the office founded in 2000 G.C. In this day, this ministry got great recognition as becoming part of curriculum of the Bible schools in the regional seminaries, Bible College and Mekane MYTS. According to this recognition, the FLEP became one of the courses in the Bible schools and seminaries in this day.*¹⁷⁰

To conclude this, according to my informants and materials I assessed the following factors are basically initiated the FLEP in the EECMY. Such as:-

-Intensive need of biblical and theological grounded teaching on family and marriage life particularly to church units and the Ethiopian society in general,

-Effective and adequate need of family and marriage counselling such as pre and post marital counselling, family life and marriage regular follow up, etc...

- Increased rate of divorce in the church and society, early marriage, harmful traditional practices in the church and society. Divorce has great crises in family and marriage life.

Couture notes,

*...when divorce ends this community for children, it produces existential anxiety that greatly influences the child's ability to cope and adjust to the world. Thus, divorce is more than a difficult phase in the life of child, but rather a type of wound with profound, long-term implications for well-being, adjustment, and relationships with others and with God...*¹⁷¹

I agree with Couture in her way of explaining that divorce is one of the greatest crises in family life in the area of social, political, economic and spiritual.

-Current family and marriage chaos due to globalization, urbanization and the problem of HIV/AIDS, etc.

- The influence of other situation that harm family and marriage for instance issues like the expansion of homosexuality and lesbianism and so on,

Thus, follows in this portion things that will be explained in depth are the roles and responsibilities, the activities of family life education program throughout different parts of the Synods of the EECMY and factors that initiated the program will be presented.

¹⁷⁰ Rev., Tiganish Ayele,Oi , Nov., 12, 2012, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ,Rev. Geneti Weyessa, Oi, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa ,Ethiopia.

¹⁷¹ Raddie, 2011:420

5.4 The roles and responsibilities of family life education program

In previous section we have tried to explain why and when the FLEP of the EECMY started as a section in the department of mission and theology. In this section I will assess the role performed by this section and responsibilities of FLEP of the EECMY. According to the annual report 2009, particular emphasis of FLEP of the EECMY on the current challenges of family life and marriage, the department of mission and theology wants to advocate for servants of the church units that strengthen the Christian family life and marriage according to God's design and biblical teaching. The other roles and responsibilities in which the section offering is providing training and relevant teaching materials as well as offering practical courses focused on strengthen a health family life and marriage.¹⁷² After serious understanding of the current challenging issues of family and marriage problem, the EECMY founded a FLEP in the department of mission and theology since 2000 to address family and marriage problems particular to her church units and the Ethiopian society in general.

The main role of this section is coordinating training based education on family life and marriage life. This training is given step by step. In the beginning, the training system based on the basic level training that mostly occupies basic marital courses. But now the training of basic marital courses transferred the authority to the leaders, pastors and evangelists those who found in grass root levels and got training from FLEP in the EECMY beforehand. The program is also giving TOT in going to Synods and other Church institutions.¹⁷³

The training is given for two weeks. It consists of 30 lessons, 15 Bible studies, and 22 additional lessons .Total it has 76 periods to finish the book in which the teaching comprises. The main reason in offering TOT is to transfer knowledge to make them effective so as they can teach members in Synod, Parish and congregation base. Moreover, FLEP offers training for those in Bible schools and Seminaries particularly in year of their graduation for they are ready to join their respective Synods, parishes and congregations. In addition to that FLEP of the EECMY is preparing teaching materials according to level that is planned to be taught. For instance, preparing teaching materials for children, pre-marital courses, and courses for married couples. Furthermore, FLEP of the EECMY invites other professional experts in marriage, family and other important areas of studies. As it is considered, the lessons are

¹⁷² EECM DMT Annual Report, 2009:10

¹⁷³ Rev. Geneti Weyessa,Oi, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa in his office in the EECMY.

important for all Ethiopians including Muslims, Christians and other traditional religion followers.¹⁷⁴

5.5 The activates of family life education

As some basic roles and responsibilities of FLEP explained above, here we see activities of FLEP. Even though much has been told as done by FLEP, the main major activities preformed by the program in where the training and work activities seen are pre-marital teaching, marriage teachings for married couples, tutors offered for different focused groups on marriage and family issues as well as counseling based on family and marriage are the basic one among the activities preformed by FLEP of the EECMY.

As a time and energy constraint, I have tried to evaluate the following synod area in my research with inclusion of my main evaluation of FLEP in the EECMY.

*Since 2000, the EECMY Family Ministry serves all congregations pastors, leaders' workers and individuals by providing them with training and relevant teaching materials and by offering practical courses. These provisions include teaching in different EECMY units and theological institutes, ToT, distributing various marriage and family related books as well as following up the translation of the Family Ministry handbook into the Oromo language. By the mercy and help of God, the FLEP has achieved an encouraging progress in 2011 ...*¹⁷⁵

5.5 .1.The activities of FLEP in South Central Synod (Hosanna)

The south central synod is one of the biggest synods of the EECMY centered its head quarter in Hossana in which the capital of Hadiya zonal Administrative in southern Ethiopia. The history of this synod traced to Kambat Synod as mentioned by Staffan, "The ecclesiastical situation in the Kambata/Hadiya region changed radically with the arrival of the Finnish Missionary Society and the merger of the KEC-2 into the EECMY as its fifth Synod in 1969."¹⁷⁶ Due to long debatable ethnic conflicts and tensions between two groups of people such Kambata and Hadiya, the kambata Synod enforced to renamed to South Ethiopia Central Synod (SECS) during the year 1977-1977 and South Central Synod from-1977 up to

¹⁷⁴ Rev., Endiras Essay, oi, Nov., 2, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Kes Rev.Jira Dufara, oi, Nov., 25, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Rev., Tiganish Ayele,oi , Nov., 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Rev. Geneti Weyessa,oi, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa ,Ethiopia.

¹⁷⁵ Annual Report of DMT, FLEP of the EECMY 2011, Addis Ababa ,P. 2

¹⁷⁶ Grenstedt, 2000:193

now. The ethnic tensions and conflicts of these two groups in this synod still continued and will be expected the synod to spilt into the near future.¹⁷⁷

According to the statics of for 2011, the membership of this synod is 662, 023 members.¹⁷⁸ It has 570 congregations among them 230 are preaching places.¹⁷⁹

As explained in the portion above which explains about why and when FLEP in the EECMY started, south central synod in which the inception of the program of FLEP was founded by two couple Finish missionaries on base of pre- marital and marriage refresher courses teaching around 1985 as an eye opening experience for them and in which they consider “God has given us the great gifts of marriage, we should care for this marvelous gift.”¹⁸⁰

According to the explanation of Rev., Tigenesh Ayele in her interview, FLEP was laid its foundation in south central synod in Hossana due to the vision of two couple missionaries from Finland who were serving for long years in that synod.¹⁸¹ This inception of the program in south central synod in Hossana noted by Anna-Kaarina and Rev. Matti Palmu as,

*We were to join the staff of Hossana Mekane Yesus Seminary and start the work based there. From the very beginning, however, it was made very clear, that this program would serve the whole church Mekane Yesus , and that the program was based in Hossana only temporarily, until it would be possible to get the work permit for Addis Ababa.*¹⁸²

Here what the researcher wants to focus is not the time and place of the program started but what was/were done by FLEP of the EECMY in south central synod is the point on focus.

As I am one of the servants in this synod for at least seven years since Septmeber 2005, I am also one of the beneficiaries from FLEP of the EECMY. I had been participated three times in the seminaries offered by FLEP of the EECMY at first time as ToT trainer with my wife at Debre Zeit held in during 21 July-1 August 2008. Among three times in the first and third session I was with my wife and my little daughter as a full family. The first seminar on TOT was unique and impressive for us since we were fresh family to have this kind of course for us

¹⁷⁷ Oi. Mr. Bekele Hadaro, Mr. Samuel Salkamo, Miss. Amarech Digebe, Evangelist Tagese Chemere, Mr. Dawit Dana, Dec.,28, 2011, At Areka Boloso Sore Parish in Ethiopia. The Boloso Sore parish is the only parish found in Wolita area which also wants to be with another synod due to the influence of these ethnic groups. There were many years of complain with the synods and area people due their unfair and injustice kind of handling the congregations in woliata area.

¹⁷⁸ <http://www.eecmy.org/?page=statistics>,

¹⁷⁹ EECMY DMT Annual Report 2011,EECMY statics for 2011, P. 24

¹⁸⁰ Palmu and Palmu , 2006:9

¹⁸¹ ,Rev.,Tigenesh Ayele, oi , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

¹⁸² Palmu and Palmu, 2006:12

is more essential to handle our family well. We were gained a lot from the teaching offered on the title: “Why to take care of marriage? Foundation of Marriage, What do I expect of marriage, Why marriage? Marriage and the extended family, the need to speak and listen, the obstacles of marriage, constructive agreements in marriage, emotions and etc.”¹⁸³ In this training I have got a chance of sharing experience in the form of lectures on the topic ‘traditional, ‘modern’ and Christian marriage.’. This training opened my eyes not only to my private family how to handle them properly but also gave me the insights in the issue of family and marriage to share the issue as fundamental to my respective students at Hossana Theological Seminary(HMYS) during my stays there as instructor for long time. Particularly, this training helped me to shape my students in the training at HTS in the subjects I had been teaching long years in the seminary such as Christian ethics and introduction to sociology.

As I assessed the documents of the FLEP of the EECMY, the number of participants in TOT training was 7 couples and 7 singles total 21. During this time, those who participated TOT-T training were 4. Additional numbers of trainers needed were 58 as capacity of the synod is wide according to the synod’s work area.¹⁸⁴ I have also got an access to share materials of teaching in family life for home congregation in woliata area.

As representative of SCS-HTS, the interest I developed in training initiated me to be voiced the subject matter of family life ministry to be part of our curriculum in our National Colloquium ¹⁸⁵held in HTS in July 2008 in which the issue of Family life education got great priority and became part of the curriculum of all the regional seminaries, Bible colleges and Mekane Yesus Seminary (MYS) of the EECMY. Furthermore, it is one the factories those imitated me to work this project as my master thesis.

According to my informants the teaching activities of FLEP is only limited in the synod center in Hossana and Hossana Theological seminary. Even though the area is expected as the founding of FLEP in the EECMY, the teaching was not expanded as much as possible.

In general, this synod has wide areas of service within many ethnic groups of southern Ethiopia along with its serious ethnic conflicts in its leadership problems. During my stays in

¹⁸³ From the Lectures on ToT training at Debre Zeit, July7-August 1, 2008. In the training different people shared the lectures, First, Kes Geneti Wayessa with Miss Abarash Tolosa, second, kes Matti Palmu with Sister Anna-karrina.

¹⁸⁴ FLEP of the EECMY training conducted in August 2008 in Debere Ziet, Ethiopia.

¹⁸⁵ ‘National colloquium’ includes members from all the regional seminaries and Bible College of the EECMY and MYS. This body is responsible to all the academic issues of the institutions in the EECMY. They can amend, redraft, add and repeal as well formulates the new curriculum of the theological institutions of the EECMY.

that area between 2005- 2010, the concern of leaders more focused on power struggling than outreach ministry within the feeling of ethnic conflicts and tensions spirit particular between two ethnic groups such as Kamabata and Hadiya which was also told about it from its inception up to now rather than expanding the Gospel of Jesus Christ in words and deeds in area and beyond in full manner as they are responsible and called to serve. As my informants added, the basic reasons for these ethnic conflicts and tensions are real manifestation of nepotism and ethnic discrimination particularly between the Kambata and Hadiya ethnic groups for simply narrow and self-centered willing that motivated them continually fight for positions, powers and resource control in illegal way.¹⁸⁶ Besides that those who got training from FLEP of the EECMY as ToT and ToT-T trainees are not in willing modes in offering this ministry as much as required.

5.5.2. The activities of FLEP in CES (Addis Ababa)

This synod is one the of the biggest synods that the EECMY has and before it splits into two as Addis Ababa and surrounding Mekane Yesus Church and Central Ethiopia synod in 2000 because of language conflicts created between different ethnic groups. The reason for this spilt was the feeling of the broad masses of the Oromo people who felt the worship program in Addis Ababa congregation should be conducted in Oromifa language and those who felt the worship program should be kept as before in Amharic language. The reason for this feeling was the changed system of government of Ethiopia since 1991 from unitarily to federalism. Due to long negotiation of Evangelists, partners and ecumenical organization within the country and abroad the reconciliation process occurred in January 2010.

The FLEP has conducted trainings different times in Addis Ababa city and most of evangelist and pastors are benefited from this synod due to the access they have as in the center of the country. As seen from trained instructors in church unit statics of December 2011, the number of trainers from Addis Ababa city are: ToT trainer is 34 couples and 42 singles total 110, and there is no Tot-T (training of trainers of trainers). Besides those from the central Ethiopian Synod, the number of ToT trainer is 15 couples and 9 singles total 39, and the number of ToT-T is 8.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Oi., Mr. Bekele Hadaro, Mr. Samuel Salkamo, Miss. Amarech Digebe, Evangelist Tagese Chemere, Mr. Dawit Dana, Dec.,28, 2011, At Areka Congregation in Boloso Sore Parish,in SCS. The Boloso Sore parish is the only parish found in Wolita area which also wants to be with another synod due to the influence of these ethnic groups fighting for positions, powers and resource control in illegal way. There were many years of complain with the synods and area people due their unfair and injustice kind of handling the congregations in woliata area.

¹⁸⁷ EECMY DMT Annual Report 2011:17

During Jan, 5-9, 15-16, 18-19/ 2011, the 30th TOT training was held one of the city congregations in Addis Ababa at Lideta congregation for 18 couples and 17 singles total for 53 people. Those who share the training were the main leaders of the congregation with their wives. The training was run in system of self-sustainable. With the comparison to the other synods, this synod is more privileged for it is being in the center where the central office there it got more possibility to share the trainings conducted. According to the FLEP report of 2011, this synod trained 110 instructors which make it 3rd next to Ijaji which is total 189 and Nekemte total 194 instructors.¹⁸⁸ As mentioned in report of FLEP,

*The 34th ToT: took place in Addis Ababa at Lous Harms Hostel from August 15-20/2011 for 24 Ministers of the 13 Synods, A.A. City Congregations Commission and YDCS. Participants are: 7 DMT Directors, 7 Bible Schools Teachers, 2 youth leaders, 2 congregations ministers, 3 Women work Coordinators and 2 Women from YDCS have been trained at the expenses of DMT-FLEP. The workshop was closed with speech made by the EECMY DMT Director Rev. Yonas Yigezu. All together 276 Instructors have got training on ToT level for the grass root work of the Family Ministry. The participants have learned by teaching turn by turn various sessions of the Handbook and have also prepared an action plan for their family ministry. The Facilitators of the courses were DMT-FLEP together with the Units' ToT-T Family ministry Staff. All the Training were opened and closed with speech made by the Synods Leaders.*¹⁸⁹

5.5.3. The activities of FLEP in CS (Nekemete)

The central synod is one the largest and earliest synods when we see history of the foundation and inception of the EECMY.¹⁹⁰ It is also one of the four synods that made up the national church EEMY in 1959 and it has wider impacts on emerging of the other new synods nearby with its significant spiritual and developments roles.¹⁹¹ According to EECMY statics 2011, the total membership of the synod is 788,287 with total congregations 396 among them 147 are preaching places.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ EECMY DMT Annual Report, 2011:17

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. P.16

¹⁹⁰ Dawit, 2005:9

¹⁹¹ EECMY Annual Report of DMT FLEP, 2011 P. 16

¹⁹² Ibid.

When we see the activities of FLEP of the EEMY in this synod, the number of those who got ToT training are 194 among them 76 are couples and 42 are singles. According to the annual report of DMT FLEP of 2011, the number of ToT-T is 1.¹⁹³

5.5.4. The activities of FLEP in SWS (Arba Minch)

This synod is one the 23 synods of the EECMY found in Southern Ethiopia. It comprises 304,630 members, 508 congregations among them 379 are preaching places.¹⁹⁴ The synod's work activates mostly goes within three zonal administration regions (Gamo Gofa, South Omo, and some parts in Woliata) and special districts (Komoso and Darashe). As Solomon notes

*The south west synod, having been established in 1990 is one of the youngest synods within EECMY. However, work in the area is not new. Missionaries from Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM), and Ethiopian Evangelists came to some parts of the area in the beginning of the 1950s and proclaimed the gospel in words and deeds. Before its establishment in 1990 the SWS area coverage was a part of the former south Ethiopia Synod administered its office in Awassa.*¹⁹⁵

When we see the activity of FLEP in this synod according to trained instructors in church unit statics of December 2011 of FLEP, the number of ToT (Training of Trainers) trainer is 10 couples and 4 singles total 24, and the number of Tot-T (training of trainers of trainers) is 4.¹⁹⁶

5.5.5 The activities of FLEP in SCES (Awassa)

According to Abraham, this synod is one of the establishing synods of the EEMY in 1959 as its name was Sidama and Gamo Gofa synod. As Abraham points,

*The new-formed church was given the name 'Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.' Finally, after 25 years effort, on January 21st, 1959, the EECMY was born when the constitutional document was signed. At its formation the EECMY consisted of four synods : The Wollo-Tigre Synod, The Western Wollega Synod, The Eastern Wollaga and Shoa Synod, and The Sidama and Gamu-Gofa synod.*¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Ibid. P.6

¹⁹⁴ EECMY DMT Report 2011, EECMY 2011 statics: 24

¹⁹⁵ Solomon : 2004:12, EECMY-SWS, Project request for Christian holistic training center in 1991:7

¹⁹⁶ EECMY FLEP Annual Report 2011:5

¹⁹⁷ Abraham, 2006:31

Lately it had been grown to five and even more synods now and its name goes to South Central Ethiopian Synod (SCES). When I assess the activity report of FLEP of the EECMY, trained instructors in church unit statics of December 2011 of FLEP, the number of ToT trainer is 24 couples and 20 singles total 68, and the number of Tot-T (training of trainers of trainers) is 5.¹⁹⁸

5.5.6. The activities of FLEP in Theological Institutions and Bible Schools

The EECMY of FLEP had been offering intensive family life education course to the theological institutions of the EECMY such as MYTS, HTS, Nekemete Christian Education College, Tabor Seminary and Onesmose Nisebe Seminary since 2000. In the National Colloquium of the EECMY theological institutions held in Hossana July, 2009, it was decided that family life education to be included in the curriculum of the theological institutions of the EECMY¹⁹⁹, ‘‘since 2009 the family ministry teaching is also included in the curriculum of the EECMY the regional Bible Schools as its importance was considered.²⁰⁰

*The family ministry education teaching in all four EECMY theological seminaries is going well. Since 2009, the family ministry teaching is included in the curriculum of the regional Bible schools. Sr. Ann-Kaarinna and Rev. Matti Palmu taught at Hosanna Theological Seminary from April 8-9, 2009. The participants were 35 theology diploma students (first up to third year). The same training was give at Onesimus Nesib Seminary in Aira for 37 theology II students received 40 periods teaching on premarital and marriage counseling. Finally, 56 students at Mendi Bible school attended the 40 period teaching on pre-marital and marriage life courses.’’²⁰¹
*This is targeted to get future leaders, pastors and evangelists so as to equip new family life education teachers in all level of church structures.*²⁰²*

In May 1-4, 2007, in Nekemete for 39 diploma theology students’ family ministry courses were given by Mrs. Abarash Tolosa and Rev Geneti Wayessa within 32 contact hours. In the same year, at Hossana Theological Seminary and Mekane Yesus Seminary third year degree class were taught by Rev Matti Palmu and Sistr Anna- karrian. Besides, at Onesmose Nisebe

¹⁹⁸ EECMY FLEP Annual Report, 2011:5

¹⁹⁹ National Colloquium, Report 2008, Hossana, Ethiopia

²⁰⁰ EECMY, DMT Annual Report, 2009, P.12-13

²⁰¹ EECMY, DMT Annual Report, 2009, P.12-13

²⁰² Ibid.

Seminary the family ministry course was given to all diploma theology students was given by Sister Helen and Mr. Tapio Råisåna.²⁰³

The Family ministry teaching in all four Regional Theological Seminaries and Bible Schools found in different parts of the country are going as well as expected. According to the reports of FLEP, for the graduated groups together with their wives at the end of the graduation year the course are offered. For instance, Tabor College and Central Gibe Synod Bible School are the best model to use Family ministry manual book for training of trainers (TOT) program at the end of graduation year. The facilitators were TOT-T together with CO- DMT- FLEP Staff.²⁰⁴

Besides, Another 33th ToT was held in Awassa for 23 Couples and 18 singles(64people) of Tabor Evangelical College graduates with their wives from June 13-17/2011.²⁰⁵

After 2009 as being decided by the National colloquim of the EECMY theological institutions to be included in curriculum, it is given as one the course which given as as major and elective course.

Eventhough the FLEP is the part of the curriculum of the theological institution and Bible schools of the EECMY, the family ministry courses are countinuely given as ToT training side by side inorder to make evangelists , leaders and pastors more consern and effective in the program. According to this plan, the FLEP offered trainings to Tabor Evangelica college and Central Gibe Synod Bible school are a model to use family book for TOT-T program at the end of their graduation year with the help of facilitators TOT-T together with CO-DMT-FLEP staf.²⁰⁶



²⁰³ EECMY, DMT Annual Report, 2009, P.12-13

²⁰⁴ DMT FLEP Annual Report of 2011:2ff

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ EECMY DMT FLEP Report,2011: 3

Figure 1 Tabor College TOT group²⁰⁷

(The Photo is taken from the annual report of FLEP 2011)



Figure 2 CGS Bible School TOT Couple²⁰⁸

(The Photo is taken from the report of FLEP 2011)

5.6. The activities FLEP of the EECMY in nationwide throughout Ethiopia

As I have tried to explain activities of FLEP in some synods of the EECMY, it is difficult to explain the activities of all synods and work within this limited thesis. However, in all the church FLEP offered the number of ToT trainer is 463 couples and 264 singles total 1190, and the number of Tot-T (training of trainers of trainers) is 54.²⁰⁹ According to the report FLEP,

The year 2011 is a promising achievement to reach the grass root Congregation ministers with ToT Training on Marriage and Family Life at their own Expenses. During eight months of the year intensive ToT workshop have been conducted at five centers for altogether 276 Key Ministers of EECMY and others Denomenations.²¹⁰

For the church comprises 5,859,572 members and 3,007parishes, those trainers cannot be expected enough to offer adequate family and marriage care and teaching.²¹¹

5.7. Factors that contribute to the initiation of the family life education and marriage in the EECMY

The explanations of factors those initiated the foundation FLEP in the EECMY will have the following major parts. First, I want to explain the religious base (Biblical foundation) that initiated to teach and follow up the issue of family and marriage in this church base. Second,

²⁰⁷ EECMY DMT FLEP Report,2011: 6

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. P. 24

²¹⁰ Annual Report of DMT FLEP, 2011:2ff

²¹¹ EEMY DMT Report 2011,EEMY 2011 statics: 24

the issue of harmful tradition practices in our country in which needs serious follow up and teaching to save family and marriage in the church and society. Third, the influence of social factors such as global issues and economic situations in our country and in the world. Fourth, the issue shaping the generation in the church and society, such as need of modeling, marital counseling and child care.

5.7.1 Religion factor (Biblical bases)

5.7.1. A. Introduction

In life human being, marriage has great place and the most important decision in one's life as it is lifelong act in the life couple. In this part I want to explain the biblical meaning of marriage, God's purpose in given this blessed gift in the life human being, and how family is seen and defined in the Bible. Tolo notes, "Religion has always been influenced in African society."²¹² Eide more stresses this idea as "religion played a decisive role in Ethiopian history over the centuries."²¹³

5.7.1. B. Biblical bases (OT, NT and Pauline concept) of marriage

According to Gen. 1:27,-28, marriage is defined as an institution divinely ordained relationship created by God. As we see from Gen. 2:22 "God made woman from man and brought her unto him." From this it is clear that marriage is God given gift for us. So it deserves godly handling. As Gen. 2: 24 states "man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one. The concept 'one flesh' is an ontological or inner being foundational concept which indicates a mysterious union. In this special union both sexes become one without missing their personality. Both (man and woman) of whom were created in the image of God which also indicates their likeness with their creation that represented by their spiritual, and mental nature having capacity to think, experience emotions, learn and appreciate beauty, make choices of their own, love and beloved, have relationships, analyzing the difference of right and wrong(moral value). (Acts magazine, International edition, volume 31, No. 1, page 3). In this special unity created by God both become one without missing their personalities as individuals.

As the purpose of marriage described biblically, Gen.2:18-22 shows this relation as a companionship given by God as an intimate personal relation between husband and wife for the purpose of mutual enrichment and fulfillment. Another purpose is procreation and rearing

²¹² Tolo, 1998: 6

²¹³ Eide, 2000: 21

of children as mentioned in Gen. 1:28 as “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” This purpose of marriage has great value and God’s particular concern within marriage for the preservation of the family in this world. Furthermore marriage has also a planned purpose in God’s designed sexual fulfillment of between couples (male and female). As a result marital life has intended value in serving to meet the interest of human and avoid breaking up personality and society.²¹⁴ When we see the foundation of marriage, it was established in the rules of monogamy as standard put by our Lord Jesus Christ and the early church (Matt-19: 4-6, 1Cor. 7:10). However in the current world, the challenge came from “free –lovers” who talk about the monotony of monogamy”, in their way of thinking that supports extra marital relationship as lawful and healthful.²¹⁵ We have scripture to defend their view since “grounded in creation (Mat. 19:4; every child needs his father and his mother for the full development of personality, human sexual love is essence and the stability of the family and nation depends upon the kind of union which monogamy provides.

Fidelity is also the base of Christian marriage. The final ultimate goal of marriage is love (agape-love), this love is more than mere affection of attitudes, of considering, trust, mutual helpfulness, justice and forgiveness. “This ultimate goal is the rule for discipline and spiritual growth of offspring, and the obedience of children to parents (Eph. 6:1). This is love the supreme motive and controlling spirit of the husband –wife and parent-child relationship (Col. 3:19).”²¹⁶ Even if the principles of marriage are there in all societies, marriage is not founded by human. As a Christian we believe and accept that marriage is God’s invention and instituted by God himself on the time man’s innocence before the fall. From the gospel of John 2:1-12 we can see that Jesus ‘presence at wedding of Cana approves that marriage is the mystical union between Christ and his Church since it was adored and beautified by his presence in that occurrence. This indicates us marriage is one of God’s plan in the life of human being. It is also clear that there has special call in his service and to remain single as we see from (Matt. 19:11) (“ But he said to them “Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given”, 1Cor. 7:7) (“I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another different kind”). We have the following biblical concepts as we see from Genesis 1 and 2:

²¹⁴ Zenebe, 2004: 9

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Zenebe , 2004: 10

-the first command of to human being whom God has made in his own image (his likeness) “be fruitful and increase in number (Gen.1:28). This indicates us procreation of children is God’s plan in marriage.

-Genesis 2.18 reads “It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him”. So marriage is instituted by God himself for the purpose of complement of a man and woman.

-as seen from Genesis 2:24, marriage is planned to be reciprocal commitment of self giving love which finds its natural expression in sexual union (becoming “one flesh”). The Hebrew meaning for this” ‘dabaq’ for this the idea of both passion and permanence that should characterize marriage”²¹⁷

Therefore, the needs identified above as, the concept of procreation, God planned man and woman to be helper in marriage (complement to one another), and the reciprocal commitment of self giving love in sexual union are biblical facts those enforces to teach our members in FLEP in the EECMY.As a result we have fundamental biblical bases those enforce us to teach about family and marriage.

*The higher our concept of God’s original ideal for marriage and the family, the more devastating the experience of divorce is bound to be. A marriage which began with tender love and rich expectations now lies in ruins. Marital break down is always a tragedy. It contradicts God’s will , frustrates his purpose , brings to husband and wife the acute pains of alienation , disillusion , recrimination and guilt, and precipitates in any children the marriage a crises of bewilderment, insecurity and often anger.*²¹⁸

I accept the idea mentioned by Berhanu that we have to keep teaching as responsible church to resist continually incoming wider chaos upon family and marriage today. Unless we do not do this we are on the way of failure in getting godly family and marriage. Rev. Tiganish notes,

If there are many people in the church whose marriage are spoiled and divorced, the church lacks the leader due to these crises. For then the gospel we preached and witnessed becomes meaningless and powerless due to this crises. Therefore divorce results economic, social, psychological, cultural spiritual and even more crises. First, it spoils the social relation of many people around the circle of couples. Second, it

²¹⁷ Acts, A Godly Home, Biblical guidelines for Husbands and , Wives and Parents, International Edition Volume 31 No.1, P. 5 ,Colum 1 and 2

²¹⁸ Berhanu , 2003: 31

*spoils the life of children whom were the gift of that marriage from God. It spoils the spiritual life couples. Furthermore, it is more than crises we expected to as it injures our creator who established marriage as covenant and permanent.*²¹⁹

The causes of marriage and family disorder are many in its sociological and religious bases but Berhanu²²⁰ and my informants are identified some of them as main as follows:-

-The emancipation if women changes in the pattern of employment (both parents working)

-The pressure on family life exerted by unemployment and financial anxiety,²²¹

-The provision of the civil law for easier divorce in its pretext to the equality of women and men (revised family code of FDRE is the one played great role in Ethiopia in exceeding the number of divorces in this country. Is that case RFC or misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the law?)

- According to Berhanu, the greatest single reason...is ‘‘the decline of Christian religion in west , together with the loss of commitment to a Christian understanding of the sanctity(holiness) and permanence of marriage.’’²²² As I consider this as one of the religious reasons that we have to focus in our teaching in FLEP. The incoming influence of this to the church and society of African under the coverage of socialization (Cultural exchange, globalization, in the context of urbanization and industrialization and modernity) clearly affected the family and marriage life of Africa and Ethiopia today standing to tempt our limited capacity of resisting it in our teaching as church and state as responsible body in this world.

-The alarmingly growth of non-Christian attack on traditional concepts of sex, marriage and family throughout the world. Even though the scripture sets our rule how we understand marriage and family we could not be out of influence from things affect the larger community. For that we have to work hard day and night though we cannot eradicate rather to minimize in our teaching as responsible church in a given society.²²³

²¹⁹ Rev., Tigenesh Ayele ,oi, Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa

²²⁰ Berhanu. P.31-32

²²¹ Rev., Tigenesh Ayele ,oi, Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa

, Kes Jira Dufara, oi, Nov., 25, 2011, Addis Ababa in his office

²²² Berhanu., P.32

²²³ Oi, Rev., Endiras Essay, , Nov., 2, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Rev. Jira Dufara Nov., 25, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Rev., Tiganish Ayele, , Nov., 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Kes Geneti Weyessa, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Mr. Bekele Hadaro, Mr. Samuel Salkamo, Miss. Amarech Digebe, Evangelist Tagese Chemere, Mr. Dawit Dana, Dec.,28, 2011, Areka, Ethiopia.

As our Lord Jesus quoted from Genesis 2:24, when he was requested by Pharisees about permissible ground for divorce he answered in Matt. 19:4-5 as.....Adam and Eve, the first in establishment marriage, Gen.2:24 mentioned the reason as “for this reason a man leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will be one flesh.” From this, marriage exists in God’s plan. When a man leaves his parent with the view not only to live apparent from them but to “cleaves’ to his wife, and becomes one flesh with her.” This saying of Genesis works for all incoming marriage that follows the first marriage of Adam and Eve since they did not to leave since they are the first of God’s creation as human.

According to the explanation of Genesis 2:24, the marriage union to be seen as²²⁴

-It is an exclusive relationship (a man and his wife),²²⁵Leaves his parents- social event, permanent (cleaves to his wife)

-Consummated by sexual intercourse (they will become one flesh)

According to Paul’s concept of marriage, it is seen in his response to specific questions raised in his day in 1Cor. 7:1-16:4, Paul in 1Cor 7, is reflecting his concern on marriage on the questions raised.²²⁶ There also he recommends singleness because of current crises (1Cor.7:17-24, 26), but permits Christians to marry, (1Cor. 7: 1-9).²²⁷ He is also concern of marriage that he devoted to the sanctity of marriage and sex within marriage only. Similarly, he covers the issue of singleness verses marriage and mutual obligations among the spouses in the marriage. From the perspective of Lord and his, the marriage of one man to one woman was to be for life long that only death would break the marriage bond.²²⁸ Paul underlines this as follows:

Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves for prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self control (1Cor.7:1-5).

²²⁴ Berhanu , 2003:31

²²⁵ Ibid, .31-32

²²⁶ Berhanu , 2003:31

²²⁷ Bill Goodman, NT Introduction, MYS Degree I 2000, lecture notes on NT Introduction. Block C, 2000

²²⁸ Tamene Yosep, Summary of 1Corinthians, presentation at EGET, May 8, 2003Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Paul in Ephesians, he also showed his concern of family. He reminds what should be seen in life of relationships within family and children are similar to reveal God's love, compassion, respect and care (Ephesians 5:21-6.9). Here he emphasizes that each member of family should imitate the love we received from God to each other to make family life happy in reflecting that love, respect and care and instruction (Ephesians 5:25-6.4; Col.3:18, 19). Real happiness in life comes to family in hearing the word of God and keeping it in the life of family (Luke 11:28).

5.7.2 Harmful traditions such as circumcision, domestic violence, role distinction in home? And etc.

Harmful traditions²²⁹ are customs in the community which are known to have bad effects on people's life, health and to obstruct the goals of equality, political and social rights and the processes of economic development.²³⁰

When we see the situation in Ethiopia, different studies show there are "both beneficial traditional practices (such as breast feeding, relieving women from work after delivery, providing special care and nutritious diet for a newly delivered mother) and harmful traditional practices."²³¹

As I assessed from different sources, there are different kinds of harmful traditions those are exercised in Ethiopia. The following are the major ones,²³²

-Harmful traditions in Ethiopia practice with the relation of marriage are- early marriage, payment of bride price²³³, giving kosso²³⁴ in the days of prior to marriage, Abduction, polygamy and cupping.

²²⁹ 'Traditions' are long –established patterns of actions or behaviors, often handed down within a community over many generations. These customs are based on the beliefs and values held by members of the community.' Traditions are often protected by **taboos**, which strong social prohibitions (bans) are relating to human activity or social custom based on moral judgment and religious beliefs. This means that traditions are not easy to change, because people adhere to these patterns of behavior, believing that they are the right things to do. (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Health adolescent and youth Reproductive Health, Blended learning module for the health Extension Program. P. 41)

²³⁰ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Health adolescent and youth Reproductive Health, Blended learning module for the health Extension Program. P. 45

²³¹ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Health adolescent and youth Reproductive Health, Blended learning module for the health Extension Program . P.41

²³² Protect children from Abuse and Neglect, National Workshop Organized by the Children and Youth Affairs organization and Italian Cooperation Proceedings Dec., 2-4, 1996, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia p. 51ff

²³³ How far this, the issue payment of bride price worse in the church expressed by Rev. Jira in his oral interview, "The problem, existing that we still see in level of congregation is kidnapping girls (ye Tilfya Gabicha). This problem is tempting the life of marriage in the congregation in creating soon divorce. It lacks consent of couples, prayer, and as well condemned by both church and the state level. The causes of kidnapping are finance, diawaro (Tilosh), and wedding ceremony. The request of these causes comes from both families of

-Harmful tradition implementing when child rearing is done-keeping a baby out of the sun, feeding fresh butter to a new born child, preference of male child over female and food taboos.

Harmful traditional practices that affect children- these are female genital mutilation which causes lose of blood, tetanus, and other infections that can result bad imprints on the life of children. Other harmful traditions people are practicing on children are such as uvula cutting, milk-teeth extraction, skin burning, food taboos, and etc. Studies show why people in our country practicing female genital mutilation such as reasons are: socio-cultural reasons e.g. ensuring girl's virginity and the family's honor, hygienic and aesthetic reasons to make girls hygienically clean and spiritual and religious reasons falsely making it as religious requirement and psychological reasons in which claim to control the sex drive of uncircumcised girls.²³⁵

For instance early marriage, which is one of the most common harmful tradition in Ethiopia in study documents on Federal level as explained below,

Early marriage is one of harmful traditions in Ethiopia and is a common practice in rural Ethiopia communities where it is thought to ensure virginity. Parents often wish to see their parent daughters married and to see grandchildren before they die. People also practice early marriage for traditional reasons. If a girl is not married at early age, other members of the community may think she must be too unattractive or ill – behaved to get a husband. This attitude usually causes shame to both the girl and her family. In the northern part of our country, girls as young seven are married to teenage boys or older men. Studies show that the average age at marriage in Ethiopia is around 16 years. Hence marriage happens when the young adolescent or preadolescent girl is not ready, physically and psychologically, for intercourse, pregnancy, or childbearing and rearing. As the worseness of early marriage occurred on an Ethiopian girl ,aged 11, married at age five shows long –term psychological damage caused by early marriage explained in UNFPA, state of world population,

the couples. Those who cannot offer those requests are enforcing themselves to form their marriage in kidnapping. In country side this demands eight to ten castles. This is not easy in today's living standard" (Oral Interview, Rev. Jira Dufara Nov., 25, 2011, Addis Ababa in his office)

²³⁴ 'Kosso' is a kind of plant fruit given for a purpose of removing ascarid and other worms from the stomach of human being in Ethiopia traditio.'

²³⁵ FDRE, Ministry of Health adolescent and youth Reproductive Health, Blended learning module (lecturer note) for the health Extension Program. P. 49

*she said ‘I hate early marriage . I was married at early age and my in-laws forced me to sleep with my husband and he made me suffer all night. After that, whenever day becomes night, I get worried thinking that it will be like that. This is what I hate most.’*²³⁶

As explained by Seblewongel,

*Early marriages in northern Ethiopia are traditional; parent- centered arrangements between two families and are widely prevalent. The negative consequences of early marriage for young girls include early childbearing and high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality. In Northern Ethiopia, the vast majority of people conform to this tradition in order to secure their own and their children’s future, raise their family’s status, avoid stigmatization, and prevent the disgrace of premarital sex. Yet many people no longer agree with this custom The (Ethiopian Orthodox Church) does not official encourage early marriageHowever, the beliefs and practices of a large number of rural priests were not different from those of the peasantry, over whom they exert a strong influence.*²³⁷

The legal system(change of family law and its imprints in creating loose in marital tie between wife and husband), cultural diversity(due to existing situation of Ethiopian ethnic federalism many marriage failed in case of ethnic conflicts), political change in the country brought some change among couple from different ethnic groups whom were living peaceful before. So, what should we do as responsible Christian and the church in a given society?

*Christian is a citizen of a given country and as such under the laws of that country. Because he is under the laws of the country of which he is a citizen .It is his duty to pray for the peace of that country and co-operate with his fellow citizen for its well-being. The only limitation to his co-operation or obedience to the laws of his country is if he is commended to act contrary to the law of God (Acts 5: 29).*²³⁸

Thus, our church, the EECMY through the programs she has, including FLEP teaching her followers about the position our church regarding harmful tradition in country and beyond. FLEP of the EECMY teaches some of these harmful traditions as wrong from its inception until now and made it as the part of the program teaching curriculum. In addition to that FLEP addressed what is expected from marriage partners in the role distinctions the values those

²³⁶ FDRE, Ministry of Health adolescent and youth Reproductive Health, Blended learning module (lecturer note) for the health Extension Program. P. 49

²³⁷ Seblewngel Balachew on page 9 from Haile Gabriel Dagne ‘early marriage in Northern Ethiopia’ Reproductive Health Matters, No. 4 (November, 1994 P. 37)

²³⁸ Gudina , 2003:12

should be observed by partners such as covenant, love, forgiveness, prayer, equality, oneness in heart, faithfulness, submission, transparency and etc.,

5.7.3 Economic factors

This work is done within my own Ethiopian context particular situation of family and marriage in the EECMY. In this context I want to reflect my own situation with specific reference how economic life needs serious attention within family besides to spiritual nurture for child care and other family issues. Because I believe that the researcher can write his thesis or dissertation not only from the theory or hearsay but also it is possible to reflect idea out of personal experiences from the life situation he faced. He can put his personal life as the source of his writing.

When I observed my own situation, my father was so careless to rear us properly and my mother was powerless to manage and control what she had. I can say that we were out of proper family care in my childhood time. Our older brothers are uneducated and persecuting us to successes (to possess all properties belonged us common) what we had as a family member. Our father was passed away in death when I was 9 years old. Our elder brother took all the properties to himself as he was the only successor what all we had. In that entire situation, our mother could not protect us from this illegal act attack. Neither of our relatives', brothers and sisters in father side did protection. Instead they possessed all properties of our father to their own without giving our share.

We were 8 in number in my mother side (from one father and mother) but only three of us left alive. Five of them were died in lack of proper handling, medication, and economic suffrage. We did not get any legal support either from the government body, Church and other institutions. Among us three, one of my elder brothers went to city for work search interrupting his schooling from grade 6. I was the only boy in my mother who was living with my mother with my sister whom I lost her in death with malaria.

The only chance I had was to search work as daily base laborer even if getting it was unthinkable in addition to my studies. Unless, I had no chance to live. We had no chance and knowledge to go court to ask about our right as successor of our father's property. No legal body and institutions that depended on behalf of us from this economic attack. Neither did we know where we go and ask about our rights. As we know, if there is no economic support there is no way to live, to learn, to get medication. But my question where was the Christian church at that time? What were they doing when the economic rights of children violating? As

I knew there were Christian churches in Ethiopia in all places even that time. There were church leaders, pastors and evangelists. No one raised our situation in our lack of legality.

But when time went away there is limitation of time in our legal system when you did not ask or bring charge to court in limited time your issues timely. You have a possibility of losing your right when time went away.

In that context everybody was trying to side the one in better access in economy, age and power or privilege. This is also true in today's situation even if it is contrary to law and word of God. What I mean in this case families are in attack of unfair economic distribution in our country.

The church should fight against economic unfairness within the family if they went to build better generation in the church and society. Besides their spiritual teaching, FLEP must teach how the property rights of children to be kept up on they lose their immediate family.

From my life experience most children in my country lose this right by their relatives, their elder brothers and ankles. The church should teach about the law of country how the property right of children seen in the light of existing law.

This economic unfair distribution among families practiced on my life by my own family created great injure in my mind as a person with some complexity. As I tried to identify above due to this economic unfairness I had been imposed on child tasks in my town which did not go with age required to work for long hours to get incomes to sustain my life. It was also seriously hurt my education in my early age. I agree with Anthony as he notes “we should be striving to help our children define themselves by the action of justice and mercy, forgiveness and love, strength and courage, generosity and humility and faithfulness.”²³⁹

To keep family from economic destruction, which is one of the dominant factors in the global and local interconnectedness for human society, the church must include in her teaching in family life education how to alleviate poverty through teaching economic justice among families, enhancing work ethics, fighting corruption within society and family and working hard for economic and social justice.²⁴⁰ I agree with Rev. Gudina Tumsa in his view,

...a responsible Church ministry must be to engage in the betterment of human existence wherever needed. This includes any lawful activity, from being a prophetic

²³⁹ Reddie, 2010: 427

²⁴⁰ Rev. Jira Dufara, Nov., oi, 25, 2011, Addis Ababa in his office.

voice in condemning injustice and oppression to involvement in social and community development. ²⁴¹

As I observe the socio-economic facts of particular today's Ethiopia and the world in general, it is impossible to live without economic means such as education, money, property, and other means of life adequately.

Thus, the church should strongly work for the fair distribution of economic access and economic gain without discrimination.

Through its comprehensive economic program church should also assume her prophetic status in any given society to work and advocate on behalf of the poor, the dispossessed, the marginalized and speak into the conscience of socio-economic leaders to use their resources and authority compassionately, humanly, fairly, wisely, in fear of God and honestly for the good of humanity and for the glory of God. ²⁴²

When the church does this, the family members gain a holistic empowerment for wisdom in handling economic exploitation. In this prophetic role of the church the institution of family and marriage is the most favored one. I also agree with Counture in her points to be practical to care children as responsible. What the church should do to come to the practical thing in the life of children may be the basic question that must get the answer. I agree with Counture in her points that should be done by the congregation. She notes,

“In particular, Counture encourages theology of care that addresses seven points: The individual child; the family; community institutions; government polity; cultural beliefs values and expressions; economic structures and natures.”²⁴³

Her emphasizing ideas of the above mentioned points she pinpointed “...the brokenness of all these systems Continues the brokenness of children.”²⁴⁴ Of course it may be difficult for congregations of the EECMY particular congregations in the countryside but we have to integrate these things in our teaching and caring the children. However the challenges we have forces us to search the solutions. “Educational programs that teach a spiritual gospel which ignores physical and social needs and neglects discipleship are shallow and abortive.”²⁴⁵ We never sleep to have good generation. We have to use the resources we have

²⁴¹ Gudina, 2003:118.

²⁴² EECMY Youth and children Section, Inter-generational impact, Youth awakening for God's kingdom and holistic transformation p. 9-10, EECMY Archive,2011

²⁴³ Reddie,2010:420

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Pazmino,1988 : 54

effectively. To implement practical care to our children, we have to select the problems our children have and should put them in priority list. Counture again has good points to this as,

*listen to the histories of children , better prepared ministries, toward concern for vulnerable children, offer support for parents, partner with existing community organizations, advocate for sound government policies; create cultures of peace, educate congregations regarding responsible economics and care for the created world.*²⁴⁶

I agree that the points she indentified are applicable for us since they are more practical issues for those who want to bring positive changes in the life of children.

As documents on family ministry training manual shows, a number of resource management and family budgeting trainings were given to FLEP trainers, couples and church leaders so as to create how family members manage their economy effectively.²⁴⁷

5.7.4 Global issues in family life

Globalization is a factor that affects the institution of family and marriage very seriously today. Family of Ethiopia particularly and world in general are fully exposed to evil impacts of globalization such as homosexuality, lesbianism and others. Besides, in the name of industrialization and urbanization, not only our climates are polluting but also the minds and culture of our people is also polluting. These evil impacts are transmitting throughout the country as a means of multimedia system, networks and multilayered exposes of globalization and urbanization. This attack of the value of the institution of family and marriage comes through in the form of information technology. Becoming the receipt to this harmful and massive flow of secular and religious information, the institution of family and marriage is targeted to victimize. This attack is more targeted in particular focus on youth and educated part of the community in big cities of the country and extends its dimension to country side as well. Due to modernity and urbanization, alarmingly increased freedom of youngsters with its lack of parental guidance and supervise produced a generation without true value.²⁴⁸

Mobility and the growing urbanization of modern Africa peoples have had its toll on the institution of marriage and family as in all other facts of life. Modern person is mobile, restless, on the move and chances are that the majority will move from

²⁴⁶ Pazmino,1988 : 54

²⁴⁷ Palmu and Palmu, 2006:85, From the Lectures in ToT training at Debre Zeit, July7-August 1, 2008.In the training different people shared the lectures, First, Rev Geneti Wayessa with Miss Abarash Tolosa,second, Rev.Matti Palmu with Sister Anna-karrina.

²⁴⁸ Waruta, 2000:113

*traditional habits, mainly rural environments where life is stable, supportive, and well defined into the urban areas where life is characterized by anonymity, speed, tension, harshness, squalid, glamorous noisy, combining hope for a higher future while at the same time terribly frightening and may be described as generally stressful.*²⁴⁹

As Ethiopia as a center (in its capital Addis Ababa) for African, there would have more exposure in political, , cultural and economic network .This makes the EECMY to think more to resist the incoming dangers to the institution of family and marriage more aware than before. But, the automatic implementation of police seems difficult within Christian communities who are very reluctant to accept the policy matters soon due to very slow and behavioral and characters changes, the EECMY FLEP initiated to address the teaching of the worseness of HIV/AIDS

The issue of HIV/AIDS is another and one of the basic global issues which imitated the section to work hard and be wakening within the ministry of family and marriage. It is really one of global issues challenging the whole world in general and the Sub-Sarian countries particularly. To resist and tackle that challenges the EECMY passed policy decision of getting tested before marriage to be occurred in the congregation base. The EECMY in understanding that the church is a healing community from its nature as the body of Christ called to become a healing community in order to tell the facts about HIV/AIDS to her community and to the society as well. The impacts of HIV/AIDS cause restless changes through the church and the community of the world. As noted in the WCC study document, “in 1987 the executive committee of the world council of churches called the churches to address the urgent challenges posed by the spread of HIV/AIDS throughout the world.”²⁵⁰ The existing situation and the call of such ecumenical organization enforce the church to sit ideal and to become healing community as she is called by Christ. In this regard the FLEP created training to support the AIDS control program through capacity building on pastors, evangelists, and church leaders, youth awareness.

Thus, dealing with this challenge, for FLEP of the EECMY is unquestionable. For this reason the family ministry is responsible to equip ministries to screen evil and good information that flows into country with planned targets of spoiling value of the institution of marriage and family.

²⁴⁹ Waruta, 2000:111

²⁵⁰ WCC, 1996:2

5.7.5 Need of modeling

Concerning role modeling, all parents, family members, church and society are characters in this reality.²⁵¹ The fundamental guidelines for God's order for parents found Eph. 6:4. In this text love, discipline and teaching the main elements that we have to apply on our children in the way we become role model. In the way we teach, we have to set rules and become model by being an example to be good model. According to (Prov, 23:13-14), there is also discipline our child to make them good model but it backs up teaching as the rod is the way of love and the first response not the last resort.

When we also see from (Col. 3:20& Ephs.6:1-3), God's order for children is to be obedience to the family and that is not optional.

As our church and our specific ministry FLEP in the EECMY is concerned, I have informed from my informants as the behavior of children is in contractive mode where in the families in which the trainings of FLEP touched deeply and the quality of questioning own self on family issues or related issues or problems instead of pointing to other members of the family is developing in some benefited families of EECMY FLEP program who would be model families in the future.²⁵² If the training continued throughout the congregations of the EECMY I hope there will have promising hope to create good modeled families in the future.

Thus, modeling our generation is one of the factories which initiated EECMY- FLEP to be established in order to shape the existing generation to be good citizen of the church and the society of tomorrow. "The family is not only teach children accepted and unaccepted behaviors of the society but also service as a model so that children learn from what from what they see from their family live."²⁵³

5.7.6 Need of pre-marital teaching and marriage counseling

Africa, particularly Ethiopia is hosting every incoming new attitude that can attack our values of family and marriage in the name of globalization and urbanization from western world without our capacity or with our limited capacity of holding the new social life that can challenge our marriage and family life. However, counseling goes on every time informally, through family relations, friends, peers and neighbors, elders, religious leaders and teachers.

The challenge is on the peck in this day on the issue of marriage and family that needs kind of help that would be effective and helpful to restore the existing good values of these

²⁵¹ Rune Oysten ,from the lecture, spring semester, 2011, NLA-University College Bergen

²⁵² Rev Jira Dufera Gnti, oi, Nov., 25, 2011, in his Office, Addis Ababa at Sidist Kil, Tesfaye Hordofa: 2009:10ff

²⁵³ (MOLSA), 2006:12

institutions into its normal position. The need of pastoral counseling in this period in the area of family and marriage is required more intensively than every time before. As it is explained in Pastoral care in African Christianity, “counseling is the art and skill of helping individuals and groups to understand themselves better and related to fellow human being in a mature and healthy manner.”²⁵⁴

Premarital counseling is one the means that the church to strengthen family and marriage. If there is no effective kind of premarital counseling in the church and society base, there is wide opportunity for youth to be exposed premarital sex and pregnancy. In case fear youngsters do not come to the life of marriage in fear of handling accountability of marriage. To do this the church must have a clear strategy for training her youths and those who are ready to marry in their different level of ages.

Premarital counseling presupposed for the following main major reasons that it paves effective way for marriage life:-²⁵⁵

-First, it provides idea of the wedding ceremony and can save them unwanted expenses which can create chaos in their later marriage life.²⁵⁶

*After we offered this lesson, in the congregation females and males are talking freely about their choices of marriage partner. They are refusing those they do not like to marry if influence comes from families and even church leaders. They express their consent. Because of this both the families and congregations left their influences. Their personal choices and consents took priority places. The problem, existing that we still see in level of congregation is kidnapping girls (ye Tilfya Gabicha). This problem is tempting the life of marriage in the congregation in creating soon divorce. It lacks consent of couples, prayer, and as well condemned by both church and the state level. The causes of kidnapping are finance, diawaro (Tilosh), and wedding ceremony. The request of these causes comes from both families of the couples. Those who cannot offer those requests are enforcing themselves to form their marriage in kidnapping. In country side this demands eight to ten castles. This is not easy in today's living standard.*²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ Waruta and kinoti,2000:2

²⁵⁵ Tesfaye, 2009 :31

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Rev Jira Dufera, oi Nov., 25, 2011, , Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Second, it provides the knowledge of good communication how to approach with their relatives. This is also basic in one's life as a family member to have good communication among them in order to run normal life.

Third, it gives the knowledge about sexual life. The problem of sexual is one the major problems in causing marriage to dissolve in the church and society. Tesfya notes as,

Through my past ministry, what I observed is that sexual matter is the area that has not been touched in most marriages which is one of the important things in marriage but has given the least place in the couple's life. Many marriages broke apart due to lack of handling their sexual life. Many couples do not want to expose their sexual needs due to the cultural taboo.

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Sexual incompatibility is sexual maladjustment which sometimes referred to as a etiology of marital conflicts and divorce , which in other times , however, are known not to be cause but result of problem in other marriage aspects. The sexual complaints are not ground but they are related to important areas of sexual relationships.²⁵⁹

Fourth, premarital counseling provides them knowledge to be faithful and honest in the challenge when lives going up and down due to the existing challenges.

Finally, due premarital counseling the couples have great accesses to have a life base on the word God and prayer as result the couples posses how to grow both spiritual and material in their marriage life.

Due to understanding of the importance of premarital counseling, the FLEP of the EECMY provided consecutive training in premarital courses from the very beginning of its inception up to now.

We have serious problem to run this teaching widely. Everyone needs lesson. It was not as before, since people are in to talk and to talk about marriage, sex and other issues concerning marriage and family beforehand but those taboos are not there today. Everyone gets access to speak about himself and herself as they are male sex and female as well as what needed in that difference. In previous days it was taboos to talk about marriage, sex, and their own choices about the issue. Particularly in front of families, it was forbidden. After we offered the lesson, both females and males are talking freely about their choices of marriage partner. They are refusing those they do

²⁵⁸ Tesfaye : 2009 :10ff

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

*not like to marry even if influence comes from families and church leaders. They express their consent. Their personal choices and consent took priority places.*²⁶⁰

Due to understanding the essentiality of premarital counseling for premarital preparation and life after marriage as a basic foundation for the marriage and family life, FLEP of the EECMY realized the need for premarital counseling to build health marriage and family, has been offering the ToT training for most synods representatives in Addis Ababa and in Synods centers as well.²⁶¹



Figure 2 Premarital ToT group²⁶²

(The Photo is taken from the report of FLEP 2011)

5.7.7 Conclusion

The activities, roles and responsibilities of FLEP of the EECMY concerned. Even if the church started this work with a few people and limited budget, they tried to do as mentioned above. In the process of conclusion the challenges, weak and strong side of church work in this ministry will be explained.

To conclude the factors that imitated the establishment of this section within the department of mission and theology as follows:-

-The issue of HIV/AIDS is one of the prim factors that initiated the church to begin this program. Due to the whole cast disaster of HIV/AIDS shocked the whole nation of the world in general and hurt seriously the sub-saurian countries including Ethiopia particularly. This shock full epidemic awakened the church to create awareness about this issue in the minds of her member and the society at large. So the Church has to do a lot in this program to break the silence about HIV/AIDS in her teaching by using FLEP throughout both the church and

²⁶⁰ Rev Jira Dufera ,oi, Nov., 25, 2011, in his Office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

²⁶¹ Oi, Rev Jira Dufera, Nov., 25, 2011, Addis Ababa, Rev.,Tigenesh Ayele , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa,Rev Enderis Essay,oi , Oct., 22,2011, Rev Teshale Kassa, Dec.,21,2011,Hossana, Ethiopia.

²⁶² EECMY DMT, FLEP Annual Report of 2011: 6

nation wise.²⁶³ Especially now the EECMY is strongly teaching and working on HIV/AIDS prevention program which is the main disease (incurable) to sweep out the productive group of the society. So the EECMY is teaching about how to care and stop AIDS which means stopping critical problem in family and marriage life.

-As I have responded from my informants, the second main reason for the imitation of family ministry within the EECMY is the raise of divorce both in the church and the society. However the church condemns the divorce it becomes one of the attacks of Christian family and marriage during this century more than beforehand. So the church gave due attention to the worseness of divorce in her teaching in FLEP.

Other factors those initiated the beginning of this program are the importance of counseling service in the area of family and marriage, the need of theological and biblical base teaching on the family and marriage and to fight against the incoming chaos like homosexuality, lesbianism under the coverage of social and economic situation such as urbanization, globalization and industrialization. In this day as mentioned in Rome 1, male with male, female with female making sex and intending to form marriage with similar sexes . So, homosexuality and lesbianism are expanded throughout in all area today. This is great temptation for the church and the society that we are ready to face and challenge today which is also condemned in the Bible and in our culture.²⁶⁴

In general, the church should be awakened her to be dynamic in the issue of family and marriage due to the above identified and other situations in the church and society that affect family and marriage.

²⁶³ Rev Jira Dufera,Oi, Nov., 25, 2011, in his Office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

VI. CHALLENGES AND EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY IN EECMY

It is obvious that I have explained about the activities, roles, and responsibilities of the FLEP of the EECMY in the previous section. In this section, I want to explain the challenges and expectations of FLEP of the EECMY. The assessment will cover challenges for the ministry of FLEP such as empowering pastors, evangelists and parents, cultural influences, challenge from church leaders and target group, the issues of child care, sustainability, lack of resources and structural problem in the church units. Moreover, the strong and weak sides in the activity of FLEP of the EECMY are included in this section. Furthermore, the targets and possible achievements of FLEP are also parts of the section.

6.1 Empowering the ministers

When we see the pastoral empowering of this church, it is one of challenges of FLEP. As I tried to explain about the growth of the EECMY, the membership of the EECMY is rising very fast. It is getting near to 6 million which 5,859,572.²⁶⁵ . According to current DMT report, the statics of 2011 EECMY, the number of congregations is 7,386.²⁶⁶ Within these Congregations and preaching places we do not have enough ordained pastors. The number of pastors who give service for those congregations is only 2625.²⁶⁷ Besides, most of those pastors are not well educated on strong biblical and theological well grounded teaching on family and marriage issues. For those all places, those pastors are giving services of Holy communion-funeral services, weeding-ceremonies-baptism-preaching-teaching and counseling. Furthermore they are giving these services within parish, preaching places as well as their respective congregations without salary particular in most congregations in the countryside.²⁶⁸ Since either the congregations or the parish is not paying well or nothing. As a result, they are consuming most of their time in their farming in order to sustain their families life rather than offering full time service. Due to these problems they do not have adequate time and educational capacity to offer enough service for family life ministry. Even if the EECMY has the regulation that permit the pastors and evangelist should be paid well when they are serving the church in full time. The evangelists have similar problems as the pastors.

²⁶⁵ EECMY DMT Report 2011,P 24

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Oi, Mir. Bekele Hadaro, Mir. Samuel Salkamo, Dec., 28, 2011, At Areka Ethiopia. For instance in Boloso Sore parish the evangelists have similar problems as the pastors. In the case of salary seeking few trained evangelists those we have went to other evangelical non Lutheran churches in search of salary. In most of the congregations and preaching areas the service is offering by non trained ministries.

In the case of salary seeking few trained evangelists those went away to other evangelical non Lutheran churches in search of salary.²⁶⁹

Many evangelists and pastors had depended for their living either on subsistence farming or retail business was introduced about 50 years ago. However, the subsidies have been dwindling over the years make life harder and harder for pastors and evangelists who have devoted their life to full –time ministry.²⁷⁰

In some of the congregations and preaching areas, the service is offering by non trained ministries due to lack of capacity building. The lack of adequate attention and concern from the central office and synods to congregation and preaching places to build their capacity is another challenge in empowering ministries. For instance, what my informants in Wolaytan congregation noted,

The less concern of South Central Synod for the Wolaytan Churches is also another challenge that negatively affected the growth of congregations and preaching places of the Wolaytan churches. This is due to ethnic problem. For instance, the leadership position of the Synod is mostly caught by two ethnic groups such as Kambata and Hadiya. The Synod's service is mostly focused on two ethnic areas and a few outreach areas.²⁷¹

According to the informants many congregations and preaching places were closed due to the problems mentioned. This spoiled and illegal leadership in the higher level of the church structure also poisoned the lower level of the church. As the informants added, “the tribal conflicts of the Wolaytan parish and congregation leaders are also additional challenge.”²⁷² This indicates us that the leadership in the EECMY is one of the great challenges of the FLEP in its way to build the capacity of its ministries.

There are clan divisions in congregations and preaching places as Lovise Aalen put “ the protestant idea about equality did not only challenge the Amhara rule, but also the traditional Hierarchy and difference between the commoners and artisan groups.”²⁷³

For example, in most evangelical churches in Wolaytan most members of evangelical Churches are lower classes in social stratus. But there are also few old people and most

²⁶⁹ Oi, Rev.,Tigenesh Ayele , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa,Ethiopia , Ato Bekele Hadaro, , Dec.,28, 2011, At Areka,Ethiopia.

²⁷⁰ EECMY Annual Report 2010: 2

²⁷¹ Oi, Mr. Bekele Hadaro, Mr. Samuel Salkamo , Dec., 28, 2011, Areka ,Ethiopia.

²⁷³ Aalen, 2008:104

youngsters from higher classes in that society within evangelical circles. Most of the higher classes of old people are member of EOTC. In general, this ethnic conflict in Ethiopian Church is one of the dangerous challenges for most works of church in Ethiopia starting from Church offices to the congregation.²⁷⁴

In general, factors affecting family life within the church in caring child life and empowering pastors, parents and other ministers are polygamy, class division, ethnic conflicts, false prophecy, lack of common consent among couple, structure problem within the church units, family management problem, harmful traditions, male domination, lack of educations, economic problems, the impact of environment and culture, lack of empowering women ,corruption and power struggle in Church and society

6.2 Empowering the parents

Parents are the central character in the process of strengthening family. “The adequacy and efficiency of the family functions are determined by the quality of internal family dynamics, (within family subsystems) and the external social environment a particular environment encounters.”²⁷⁵ As I have informed from my informants, some of the congregations are not able to know about even the existence of FLEP in the EECMY. They are still leading their family and marriage life in the traditional way as they usual belief and practice as before.²⁷⁶ The focus of teaching of FLEP is only in synod centers, theological and biblical institutions and in the area where there is respecting from leaders of the EECMY.²⁷⁷ This indicates us that work has not done in places where there is need for change in the grass root level. Only leaders and in some extent pastors, evangelists and workers of the EECMY have access to get education from FLEP of the EECMY.²⁷⁸

Another weak point is those who followed this training such as leaders, pastors, evangelists and workers of the EECMY in level of ToT training and ToT-T, they are not effectively passing the education with full responsibility. Those who came from Synods, parishes and congregations and got training were not seen in teaching this education as much as expected and possible. They could not be seen that way since they were doing according to the responsibility the received to do. Probably this may

²⁷⁴ Oi, Mr. Bekele Hadaro, Mr. Samuel Salkamo, Dec., 28, 2011, At Areka, Ethiopia.

²⁷⁵ (MOLSA):2006:12

²⁷⁶ Oi, Mr. Samuel Salkamo, Dec., 28, 2011, Areka, Ethiopia.

²⁷⁷ Oi, Rev., Tigenesh Ayele, Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

²⁷⁸ Oi, Rev. Esaya Enene, Dec, 17, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

be due to the cost of living in our country. People are running to sustain their personal lives in our country in this day rather than serving Church. ²⁷⁹

The main aim of training ToT and ToT-T is to empower family members with knowledge and skills how to handle the family and marriage skilfully. Parents need guidance about how to handle children, how to manage their budget, to mature in faith in Christ. Since “parenting is toughest and most important job.”²⁸⁰ All the concerned bodies in the issue of family and marriage should make sure that “parents have access to the tools and support they need to be successful.”²⁸¹ To empower family, there is a need of adequate parent education, home visitation, and enough care and support groups in order to empower family. Only few congregations which are in big cities and synod centre have adequate knowledge about how to use family life ministry within the EECMY and only those congregations are trying to offer training for their members. This indicates that there is lack of knowledge on the service and importance of the ministry of family life education within most of the congregations of the EECMY.²⁸²

Thus, families should be empowered in family support activities, knowledge, and skills so as possible to face significant challenges in the life of family and marriage.

6.3 Cultural impacts

According to C.N.Shankar,

*culture is a very broad term that includes in itself all our walks of life, our mode of behavior, our philosophies and ethics, our morals and manners, our customs and traditions, our religious, political, economic and other type of activities.*²⁸³

I agree with Shankar in his way of defining culture as all what a human society uniquely possesses.

When we see our case in Ethiopia, Ethiopia is a home of diverse nations, nationalities and peoples with their owned varied type of religion, languages, cultures and traditional beliefs as mentioned before. I believe that these differences that we have provide many cultures that influences us a Christian living at a particular historical and cultural context to contextualize our teaching, preaching, leading and counseling ministry in the way in which helps to our

²⁷⁹Oi, Rev Jira Dufera ,Oct.,25,11, Addis Ababa,Ethiopia.

²⁸⁰(MOLSA), 2006:13

²⁸¹Ibid.

²⁸²Oi, Rev.Tesfaye Hordofa, 25/11/2011, Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, Addis Ababa,

²⁸³Rao:2009:189

diverse community. This indicates us we are in need of a great challenge of contextualizing our way of teaching cultural values rather than imposing our community on teaching what is there in the west, we have to rethink to bring to community and church what fits to our people if we bring new teaching to them. As this fact pointed by Grant and Meltzer (1990), “families are influenced by the cultural values and societal pressures in their communities”²⁸⁴

As we see from most of my informants I encountered interview about FLEP, all tried to tell me that they faced the problem of contextualizing culture in the teaching of FLEP. They tried to tell me that the teaching seems new and contrary to the cultures that they have before. When we offer to people a new style of teaching, it seems odd to accept. Of course our church has done many things as Eide pointed

*The ‘Word of God’ was translated into several vernacular languages, large numbers of people were educated and democratic practices were introduced within the involving new Church organization.*²⁸⁵

This is of course true but does not mean that all things are in accesses as the cultural value we have in Ethiopian.

In general, all most all the respondents usual cited cultural pressure as resistance to run FLEP as much as wanted. So we have to work hard to bring our teaching in FLEP in our cultural context. The cultures we have and challenges as opportunity to work hard. For this I agree what D.W. Waruta noted, “...the church must minister to the African family in the context of the African world.”²⁸⁶

6.4 Challenges from the Church leaders

Even though the first focus of the training of FLEP was on most of the leaders of the EECMY, most of the leaders of the EECMY lacked wanted initiatives on the program and they are not committed to go ahead as much as wanted according to most of my informants. The respondents added that the leaders have no proper attention to the program and created obstacle to enforce the members in which the leaders lack attention. One of my informants pointed as an advantageous that the prime focus of the teaching of FLEP was on Leaders since leaders have accesses in commending the budget, formulating rules and regulation. In

²⁸⁴(MOLSA), 2006:15

²⁸⁵Eide, 2000:12

²⁸⁶Waruta and Kinoti, 2000:118

general they can be model role for the members. But the opposite happened in case of FLEP, They became resistance instead of facilitator.²⁸⁷

The FLEP to achieve its target the leaders need to be convinced so as they should be devoted to the program. Furthermore, the leaders should lead, preach, and teach the importance of the program in case the members accept it as it is essential. The reasons for their repeal as new to the program is noted by the respondents as there is repeal to the program to accept it as a part of the existing programs of the EECMY as well as a part of their life.

6.5 Challenge from the target group

According to my respondents, the teaching of FLEP of the EECMY is first targeted to married couples (including leaders, pastors, Evangelists, teachers, and members from the center of synods) , and engaged couples and others, from those group there is challenge to participate in the FLEP in case aged people do not give attention to the program since they consider that there is nothing new so as they could learn from FLEP because they lived long life in their marriage as they believe they knew a lot from their life experience.²⁸⁸

6.6 Resources (lack of material resources and information, books, libraries, etc.)

Families of the EECMY are not lucky to get enough information about effective and guiding principles either from the Church or from the government side. Furthermore, most of the Ethiopian families in country side are illiterate. This more widens the problems we have in line with family and marriage. Even in urban areas of Ethiopia there is no adequate access to get materials on the issue of family and marriage except some institutions working for academic purpose, non-governmental organizations in rare case. This fuels the problems more.

6.7 The issue of child care in family life

As I believe the issue of child care is one of the broadest issue that the family ministry has. It is a decisive and generation modeling issue. Studies show, Child rearing is the task of upbringing and ensuring the wellbeing of children. It is one of the crucial responsibilities of parents which requires the commitment, and devotion of time, energy, and resources for the wellbeing of the child.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷Oi, Rev.,Tigenesh Ayele , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa

²⁸⁸Oi, Rev.,Teshale Kassa , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa

²⁸⁹(MOLSA), 2006:23

This also requires a set of competence and skills of guiding, shaping, and stimulating children on the side of the parents or care givers as well as situation of family particularly the healthy relationships between husband and wife.²⁹⁰

Children as the part of family and God given gifts, they need instruction to change their life. “The essential parental relationship creates a sense of community, and a child’s being is developed and reflected in this community.”²⁹¹ They grow into the customs and beliefs of the Church when they are handled in the family that are handling them properly in the Church's education .That is why teaching children is important to the Church in order to build good family in Church and society. In most of EECMY congregation in case of our parish in South Central Synod, this is not functioning effectively because of many factors which affect the teaching tradition of the Church. Among them lack of man power, offering effective education to children according to their age base, lack of concern to children, high number of children with in one family, and limited capacity of congregations in economic, material and manpower.

Furthermore, the world is getting worse and wicked than before. That is why children need family care that keeps them from things that harm their physical, spiritual and moral life. The EECMY is trying in child and youth work under the department of mission and theology based on mission to create a culture which nurtures the child, youth and young adults to be active in living faith in Jesus Christ.²⁹²

So, the factors as mentioned above, as we know the education level of most ministers in congregation are low. They cannot offer adequate education. Moreover, they have no adequate knowledge to manage the balance as this fact is noted in journal of Christian education and Christian belief by Anthony noted as

*how to manage to balance practical advice tidbits from developmental psychology, and, theological insights that are real and usable in any Christian home.*²⁹³

According to D. W. Waruta

*family life Education must not be limited to the number of children a family should have but also on the value of children and how best to provide for them not only adequate physical nurture but also emotional and spiritual well- being.*²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰Ibid.

²⁹¹Raddie, 2011: 421

²⁹²<http://www.eecmy.org/?home=cyd>

²⁹³Raddie, 2010: 428

To correct this base it is not easy to the local congregations which have lack of financial and educational Capacity. To make all critical thinkers who can answer thing from different angles, it demands money, time and effective training institutions. Because of the policy of self-sustainability in Church office level, most of the congregations are not offering a chance of teaching their ministers from synods and supporting partners as before. Only few congregations that are capacitated in financial power can do this where their setting mostly in town and some places in country side.

As the age base of children concerned, Christian education is to be given in different ways and groups in their groups as age, maturity and understanding.²⁹⁵ In most countryside congregations for instance in our parish Sunday programs and area programs which could only fit with adults are given together with children. I can say this as a creating psychological confusion to the children. In that teaching most of time things that only goes with matured people might have been raised. This indicates lack of coordination in Christian education. When I say in capacity of places, I mean that the congregations have no enough rooms to host children in separate way. In some places evangelists and pastors are giving education to children near trees due to room problems.

Another problem is there are many children in many families due do polygamy and lack of family planning.

To be exemplary model is also one of the problems. If we need children to be good citizen we have to show them good things in our life since our life is one of their best teachers. Beside that Bible studies, prayers, blessings, and worship has power to shape their life in to good way. They also should see and hear when we proclaim good news for it helps them to be good witnesses for the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

To sum up this idea, for our children the family life is clearly the focal point, the source of their learning. What they share, see and hear from their families sharpen their whole life. The prayer, song and blessings they receive from their families, will be tied with their life. Since they are felling more quickly than adults, they can easily test our honest, kindness and badness can be copied by them. In that extent all thing automatically copied by their mind. So we should take care to be good model in our life if and only if we need good generation in the future. Therefore, *what the family means to children, the life whole congregation inquires.*²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴Waruta and Kinoti, 2000 :117

²⁹⁵(MYS), 2000:.34

²⁹⁶Ibid. p. 44

There is also a need to be model to be followed by the pastors, evangelists, and leaders and other ministries in the Church that can shape the life of the children. The perfect model of godly pastor or other ministries who cares perfectly can manage people for being lost from the Church and society is also has great value for our children's future.

The children must be disciplined in the way as the word of God teaches. The ways to discipline children must be systematic and balanced so as not to spoil their psychology and spirit. More strict kind of disciplining must be avoided for it irritates the children and spoils their mind for longer run. Strict kind of disciplining also creates lack of self-confidence as apostle Paul said in (Colossians 3:21).I agree with Anthony when he says,

One will produce morally obedient child, the other will produce a spiritual child in case identifying three possible outcomes of parenting: the child who will be transformed by God's spirit; the child who will live in open rebellion; or the child who will claim to be Christian but live a double life and hide sin.²⁹⁷

In our case, we have both three types of children in our church. The third type who are trying to live and to claim as both Christian and hide sin trying to double are more in number. So we have to work hard to make our children to identify themselves as a real Christian and responsible citizen to the church and society.

When we talk of family and marriage, the issue of child care is one of the main and central concepts within those institutions. The responsibility to handle the proper raise and train the children is under the shoulder of the family (Gen.1:27, Deut.6:6, 7; Prov.22:6:Eph.6:1-4). Handling children demands much time and attention. We have to share time for caring our children especially when they are young. To raise and train children in the ways of Lord is a serious work for building of proper generation and Church. Children to be godly and productive adults, they need care, love, feeding nurturing and training and discipline. Families must handle their children according to biblical teaching along with other basic social principles.

Similarly, the children to be trained, taught, and nurtured (Deut. 4:9; 6:6, 7; Prov.22:6, Eph.6:4).They should sanctify to God through worship and prayer (Job. 1:5; Luk.2:22, 23).They should involve in worship times (Josh 8:35; Neh.12:43; Luk.2:2 41-46) but the context should be maintained in preaching, teaching and other spiritual nurturing which are intended to offer to them. Children have to-restrain from evil (1Sam 3:13; 1Tim3: 4, 12) and

²⁹⁷ Raddie, 2000:427

chasten /discipline (Prov.13:24; 22:15; 29:15.17; Heb 12:6).There is also need of love (Prov13:24; Titus2:4), forgiveness to them (Luk15:20-24, Eph.4:32).and provide a godly model (2Chr 26:4; 2Tim1:5).

We have to work developing positive relationships that have a direct and lasting impact on lives of children in their thinking, developing their mental and psychological growth.

Marriage and family are highly dependent on grace, forgiveness, and participation in the believing community that manifests agape and actively seeks to enlarge its boundaries. But the idea of agape which includes equality, freedom, and justice must be fully appreciated as providing a strong moral underpinning for family life and therefore as providing a powerful locus that should inform the spiritual and moral tone of the Christian family.²⁹⁸

One thing that I need to point here is families, pastors and evangelist, the care of Christian nurture of children should get attention. As Anthony notes,

*an understanding of the ways in which human societies construe values and establish truth can be assist in explaining how we use particular biblical narratives as a means to establish cultural norms for practices in nurturing children.*²⁹⁹

Anthony continues saying,

*create frame works for determining how the Bible is read and what can be learned from its many narratives, including how these affect our understanding of and relationship to children.*³⁰⁰

Anthony brings to his warning in identifying Genesis 22 narratives as follows:-

If we allow ourselves the honesty of questioning the Genesis test, we must consider the alacrity with which Abraham appears willing to offer up his son as a sacrifice to God. The frightening aspect of this test is the way in which it is used in much adult Christian education work as a prime exemplar of human obedience. In effect, the text is used as a theological and spiritual test case for sacrificial self–denial in Christian theology. This text is clearly one of the least child–friendly narratives in the Bible. The fact that it is often avoided when working with children testifying to the dangerous precedents it sets concerning the apparent disposability of children at the whim of God. The danger of this kind of text is compounded when one considers the constructs

²⁹⁸Post ,2000:66

²⁹⁹Raddie, 2010 :171

³⁰⁰Ibid.,p.182

*that many people carry with them, often subconsciously, when they approach biblical texts. In my earlier analysis of a group of Black Christian adults, I identified that many had constructed that asserted the necessity of bringing children to faith. This sense of urgency leads to action that denies the autonomy of children. The assumption is that children are not important agents in their own rights, but are vessels into which Christian instructors even indoctrination, can be poured.*³⁰¹

I accept Anthony's idea since the rights of children should be kept. I believe that we have to be obedient to God in our life. But our direct application of text like Genesis 22 to children must take care in way of biblical narratives. When we teach them, we have to know how to implement and contextualize the biblical texts like Genesis 22. For instance there is misunderstanding of this kind of texts in the congregations' particular in congregations in country side where there are no well trained pastors and evangelists.

Anthony added noting, from idea of the groundbreaking research of Ronald Goldman in developmental psychology led to a whole sale reassessment of the role of the Bible in the Christian education of children and young people.³⁰² Goldman contended that the Bible is an adult book, unsuited to the nurture and developmental needs of children.³⁰³ He argued "that it is impossible to teach the Bible as to children much before indolence, and that we must look for another approach which offers a more realistic alternative to our present ills."³⁰⁴

He asks about Genesis 22 "...Can these actions really be that of a loving God..?"³⁰⁵

I have my personal share from my life experience within my families here about my brother's son Wushu and my daughter Kaweayane, their appearance in the church and home. Here are examples from my personal observance of those children:-

Story I

Wushu is my elder brother's son who was living with me when I was at HTS. He went to Hossana mekane Yesus congregation to share Sunday youth afternoon program. He saw there while the program was full of motives with young people whom are worshipping in charismatic movement. He came to home and trying to practice what he saw in the congregation in day time. In that moment, he broke his right hand when

³⁰¹ Raddie, 2010 :171

³⁰² Raddie, 2010 :177ff

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

I came from the town. I got him in the bed. I asked people at home. All told me that he was broken his hand upon showing what he saw in the congregation day time. What I need to say here is: We have to be so serious in handling our children when we are teaching, preaching, and praying. Besides we have to prepare the worship program which fits to with their mental development level. We have to screen which are good and not good to them. In most of our conferences in Ethiopia which is really intended to adult man almost most children are sharing that program in hoping that to make them spiritual. The same is true almost in most of rural area congregation. There is no separate program for children. Few congregations in urban area have Sunday classes.

Story II

This story is about my little daughter kaweyanne Minota whose age is 4.5 year now. I and her mother (my wife) were quarreled in the day time when we were in one of the shops in Addis Ababa in our planned interest of purchasing goods from the shop. The reason for our quarreling was price of goods. Her mother enforced me to buy in high cost but I refused to do it since I did not have enough money in my pocket in that time. I could not convince her that I had no money. Really we were in not normal situation in day time. But when the night came we were collected to pray for our usual program. Our daughter was with us when I tried to lead that program reading from text. I said that we (I and my wife) were not in good situation in this day so that is not good in eyes of God. Our daughter, Kaweyane stood and said stop talking and sat down since you stood to pray but not to talk about quarreling. I concluded from here saying: The children do not want to hear about bad thing in their early age. So we have to be careful when we talk about something before our children. Our preaching, teaching and saying, all should be in consideration of the understanding of our children.

Story III

Prayer of my daughter Kaweyane, how we were good models for her and her acts of prayer gets our attention. As a young family we were praying very strictly when we got our first daughter kaweyane. She was with us most of the time when we were praying. When we pray we laid down all our bodies on the ground. She was observing our act of praying from her 6 months. She started laying her body on ground from the age of six months. Then after when we say 'Wosana' meaning let us pray in Wolaytan tongue, she laid her body on the ground. This indicates that it is possible to shape children

even from their early age. It is possible to bring them to good model starting from that age. She is still imitating that occurrence when we say 'Wosana'.

What I observed from this, that "...the important of judging learning process in terms of all its outcomes."³⁰⁶

What I need to add is, in Ethiopia, when public conference is conducted by one of the evangelical churches in that times the teachings or the preaching's and all other preparation of that conference is targeted to adults. In that extent those children who go to that conference get confusion in case of the teaching or preaching of denominations, people go with their children to share the program. As I absorbed in most of those teachings or the preaching' neither in the capacity base nor includes their age level. In most Ethiopian conferences, there is prophetic message of healing, but in most cases people are not healed after that prophecy. Children are there when the talk of prophetic message is passing in that conference.

Story IV

When I was in Hosanna, and went to with my brother's son Wushu to the conference prepared by the Ethiopian Evangelical Fellowships in the beginning of February, 2008. There, I and Wushu heard, a prophetic message of healing of one of handicapped boy in Hosanna town who is always begging in the town. After a conference passed, I was also with Wushu and we saw him still handicapped. This little boy asked me "what happened about this boy whom was told as healed by God in that conference but he is still not walking normal?" I wondered and confused in saying of Wushu in case of taking un matured children in to public conference which directly targeted to adults. How it creates confusion in their future belief in power of God. We as adult know that there are false prophets. But children do not consider this in their mind. This situation is not only reflected in minds of children but also in the minds of adult people.

The problems face due to prophecy is causing spiritual problems in people's life and faith in many ways. To solve these problems there were many seminars, workshops, courses and trainings held at different times and levels of the church as an attempt of alleviating these problems by itself an evidence of how dangerous the situation is getting from time to time.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ Cronbach, 1954:67

³⁰⁷ Dawit, 2007:33

So we should take care and consider for our children even when we go to public spiritual and social teaching places. We have to know either the teaching or the preaching fits to them or not. As we know in the world of film, there is demarcation of age level to see or watch the film. That is why seeing that film affects the mind of none matured children is protested. The same should be applied to keep the mind of our children to know the teaching which fits to their mind and life in both spiritual and social world.

When we see the Book of Deuteronomy, it clearly shows us that children should be taught to love, obey and fear the Lord God (Deut.6:1-3; 11:18-21; 31:12-13). But this also should be in the context of life and are to assemble with adults to learn the things of God.³⁰⁸

The NT approach indicated by our Lord Jesus' prayer and acknowledgment about what is revealed to children that are hidden from adults (in Mathew 10:25-26) shows us that children are the model to enter into the kingdom of God (Mathew18:2-3).³⁰⁹As seen in the gospel of Mark, when the disciples try to refuse bringing children to Jesus, Jesus told to them stop interfering and saying let the children come to me and in public gesture that typical for Jewish male of that day Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them (Mark 10:13-16).This does not mean that out of context. When they faced and saw the ministry of Jesus they would see divine reality in that time which comparatively different than seen above as prophecy in public place. The matter is the content of teaching and its divine reality that can be printed in the mind of our children. My warning is this reality and its context to our children. Children need health spiritual teaching for their life and mind to be truly a faith community.

*Prophecy with promise of getting a child to Barren women,To a barren woman prophecy of getting a child in one year length of time was given many times but failed to become true most of the time. May be only 1 out of 10 is truly fulfilled according to the promise. There have been many prophecies given promising a child to couples who could not have a child. It was doubling the pain of such family when it fails to take place as promised by the prophets.*³¹⁰

As the issues of child care as again and again serious, since it is base for the family we have and we will have. It is also work of creating generation of Church, states and societies of today and coming as good or bad. So we have to think and work to fight backward cultural

³⁰⁸Raddie, 2010.:281

³⁰⁹Ibid.

³¹⁰Dawit , 2007:., 36

attitudes and practices affecting the well-being of our children particular in the church and general in the community.

6.8 Structure problem

The structure problem in FLEP means, there is no responsible body in the church structures of synods, parishes and congregation. Here I want to get asking the question like ‘is there coordination problem in the structures of the church such as in synods, parishes and congregations? Or is it only found in central office level?’ Then what the church, Synods and parishes are doing concerning the ministry to be further promising? Or, there is coordination in all or some levels in all or some parts of Church structure? The question helps us to search the problem of lack of coordination. And how far it hurt the growth of FLEP in the EECMY? From my experience of my existence in south central synod level, there is no coordinating office in synod, parishes, congregations and preaching places of south central synod concerning FLEP. It is already understood that the work is laid down on the shoulder of MTD of the each and every synod. But other ministry sections in this department are known and properly working their identified service. This is only in the level of understood that the work is there in the DMT. For instance outreach, women, youths and children section are the sections which are already known and properly in action in Synod level

For instance, the informants I encountered in my birth place shared their view of FLEP. All of them told me that the existence FLEP in the EECMY heard from me at the time of oral interview. Everything is in the circle of synod centers rather than congregations where the grass root and need is there. People I encountered in Hossana in my interview, they shared me their idea on the program and they knew about FLEP in the EECMY. As I absorbed the teaching is only centered where the synods are there and where the synods authorized officers are there. They people in my area added that we are forgotten since no body concerns our area because we do not belong to ethnic group whom are in position power in synod level.³¹¹ No trainings, no visitors, no development work and so on. The structure I mean here both the power and the office structure. Besides, there is no office for this ministry in synod level, parish level as well as in congregation level. But few congregations which are near to synod office and found in big cities have to get services as much as possible. Rev.Tigenesh pinpointed as,

³¹¹Oi, Mr.Bekele Hadaro, Mr. Samuel Salkamo, Dec., 28, 2011, At Areka ,Ethiopia.

The focus of teaching is towards to limited area of the country where the budget is allocated. In case the teaching does not cover most areas of country even where harmful traditions are practicing more deeply. Besides that, FLEP teaching focus is only in the areas where the synods are centered and they EECMY has the highest respect and particular focus not in sense of work importance but in case of biased leadership.³¹²

To conclude that, the program is not offering the teaching and concern in all rounded way. Only one office with limited man power and budget cannot run this huge work and responsibility to the congregations of the EECMY which are around 7,386.³¹³ Even to offer only training adequately for all these congregations of the church, FLEP office has no enough man power with sufficient knowledge of family and marriage life as expert in profession. Since family and marriage are surrendered in many worst situations in this day (e.g.: homosexuality, lesbianism, HIV/AIDs, Modernity and etc.), each and every congregation needs family and marriage counseling in professional base. The office of FLEP of the EECMY has no organized structure in levels of synods, parishes and congregations of the EECMY. There are no offices which coordinate this important work for the life of church and society. Moreover, the synods of the EECMY do not accept this ministry of family and marriage as independent manner within their offices to run the work as important to reach parishes and congregations in this ministry. So, FLEP has no power to arrive all areas of the church adequately and effectively.’’³¹⁴

Thus, I want to recommend the need of decentralization of the structure of FLEP of the EECMY. Within the devolution of the responsibility of the service to the lower structure of the church offices implementation of FLEP and related issues of family and marriage should shift to a large extent in the place where the members and wanted services are there from the central offices to the synods, parishes, and congregations. The application of FLEP in the EECMY in the central office is simply single system which cannot be adequately contextualized the culture and need of this church that comprises multiple nations, nationality and peoples. This will open a chance and a base for meaningful participation by synods, parishes, and congregation. Similarly, it will reduce constant dependency of economic and man power on FLEP of the EECMY.

³¹²Oi, Rev.,Tigenesh Ayele , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa.

³¹³EECMY DMT Report 2011: 24

³¹⁴Oi, Rev, Endiras Essaye,Addis Ababa,MYS, Oct, 2,2011, oi, Rev Essaya Emene, Addis Abab,Gugena Tumissa Memmral Gust House,Mekanessa, 17/12/2011. oi, Rev, Teshale Kassa, Hossan Theological Seminary,31/12/2011.

6.9 Strong side of FLEP

Those couples who are coordinating FLEP in the EECMY in office level always go to the synods, parishes, congregations and Bible schools and seminaries of the EECMY to offer training on the family life education. Even if they are a few with the respective of the wideness of work areas of the Church, they are trying to do their activities as much as they can. Another strong side FLEP is opening the office in the Church level due to understanding the need of family life education in the Church. These are the strong side of FLEP of the EECMY.³¹⁵

The first thing I observed is the number of divorce within this Church is reduced. We did not see while they were divorcing. This number is reduced and very rare in this day. We also did not see people who came to congregation in case of problems in their marriage. Couples are free to talk about their sexual life, personal life and others after they got this lesson. Before hand it seemed sin talking about sex even between husband and wife. They are discussing every issue of their life together due their training offered from FLEP.³¹⁶

I argue Rev. Jira in his comment as this is general. In case this might be true, only in the area where the training of FLEP usual offered and strict follow up is there. There are peripheral place in which even those do not know completely the existence of FLEP ministry in the church level.³¹⁷ The first informant is from the centre in the place where the training of FLEP is offering well and regular whereas the second is from the congregation of country side and peripheral from the place where the training of FLEP is not completely offered. This indicates us that the training of FLEP on the top and central level is well and in the country side and peripheral area we usual call congregations and preaching area of country side is less and the work has not done well and adequately.

The impacts of this training is very high in both Church and society level. The fist change we automatically seen is the change on the lives of trainers and in their family and marriage life. They always offer their personal witness up on our daily encounter.³¹⁸ The training created openness between wife and husband. They got freedom to discuss their personal life after they

³¹⁵Oi, Rev.Tesfaye Hordofa, 25/11/2011, EGST, Addis Ababa.

³¹⁶Oi, Rev Jira Dufera,,Nov., 25, 2011, in his Office, Addis Ababa .

³¹⁷Oi, Mr. Samuel Salkamo, Dec.,28, 2011, At Areka ,Ethiopia.

³¹⁷(MOLSA), 2006:12

³¹⁸Rev. Geneti Weyessa, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa in his office in the EECMY.

received training.³¹⁹ *According to our tradition it is taboos to discuss about sexual relation even between wife and husband. This harmful tradition was broken up on our teaching.*³²⁰ That is why our TOT trainers are recommending this lesson to offer for confirmation classes, Bible schools, seminaries and youngsters as well. (Ibid.)

*Before we learn this education, we were living different kind of life. As a couple we were not discussing any issue in our life. We lacked psychological confidence in our life and thinking differently. But we are free now due to FLEP. This education healed our life and our community in different angles. In this day, we are not only offering lesson but also sharing the life we gained from FLEP. We also observed those who got this training striving to implement it. There are many significant changes those we see and observe. In general, what I want to say is this program brought great changes in the family and marriage life of the EECMY in this critical time.*³²¹

The attempt to build health family and church was initiated by FLEP. Meanwhile in the limited extended, the ministry tried to impact the EECMY and the Ethiopian society. The plan of the ministry is promising in having to transform family related issues and problems. Moreover; the training offered to leaders, pastors and institutions of the EECMY brought changes in the personal lives as well as in the limited level in the grass root level of the church structure and the Ethiopian society.³²²

Furthermore; opening of office in the church level since 2000, allocation of budget for this purpose and inclusion of the program in the curriculum of Bible schools and theological seminaries of the EECMY, show the concern of the church to have health family and marriage in the life church and society level. Similarly, preparation and distribution of teaching materials for this purpose is also seen as one of the strong sides of this ministry.³²³

The involvement of the EECMY Units on the Family Ministry is promising and proved sustainable. The expenses of the local Congregations and the synods are estimated to be about 186,000.00ETB. By now 1186 persons of the EECMY-Units have participated in Training of Trainers workshops for Family Ministry. Through these courses the Family Ministry activities have expanded to all Church units and

³¹⁹Oi, Rev, Tesfaye hordofa, 25/1172011,EGST, Addis Ababa,.

³²⁰Oi, Rev Jira Dufera, Nov., 25, 2011, in his Office, Addis Ababa,Ethiopia.

³²¹Oi, Miss Abarash Tolosa, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa in his office in the EECMY

³²²Oi, Rev Jira, Nov., 25, 2011, in his Office, Addis Ababa ,Ethiopia.

³²³Oi, Rev.,Tigenesh Ayele , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

*Ethiopian society.*³²⁴

The focus of the ministry in its starting level on leaders, evangelists and pastors appreciated in case when the leaders and other ministries accepted this ministry it has got administrative and authorities' acceptance since they are decisive bodies to make it known. Through power it is possible to command on money, resource, recognition and other accesses even though the leaders did not play their roles as expected as mentioned before about their resistance for this ministry.³²⁵

6.10 Weak side of FLEP of the EECMY

The weak side of FLEP of the EECMY: the work has no enough budgets, adequate trained man power in the respective field of family and marriage. Due to lack of enough budget and man power problem, FLEP could not run its plans, projects, decisions, polices and strategies effectively. Second, the synods do not accept this work as their own. This is the main weak point.³²⁶ In addition to that during the last 14 years of programs existence, none of the synod has assigned the responsible person who coordinates family life ministry in the synod level.

*This ministry is very wide in case that we have wide country and big Church. As its significance, this ministry should be put on the priority list for touches the lives of all servants and Church members. In Church base this ministry does not get enough focus as its importance. As its work wideness and load it has no enough budget and training centre. Its training should be advanced in all sides of counselling and Christian education. Taking this ministry as one course will not hit its target because it is broader issue.*³²⁷

Another weak point identified by informant is its teaching method which is only singly way of teaching that is only seminar oriented teaching. The teaching should involve through media, tracts, dialogues, in which it can touch other denominations and nation wise.³²⁸ That is the ministry has lack of nation wideness and sharing experience from others as a nationwide church and ministry.

Thus, this program has the problem of adequate budget, trained man power, contextualization, experience share from others and reliable sources in order to touch all area of the church ministry and achieve its goal.

³²⁴EECMY DMT Report 2011:11ff

³²⁵Ibid.

³²⁶EECMY DMT Report 2011:11ff

³²⁷Oi, Rev. Geneti Weyessa, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa in his office in the EECMY.

³²⁸Oi, Rev., Tigenesh Ayele , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa.

6.11 Sustainability³²⁹

Dependence on support of the mission organization is one of the great problems of the EECMY. *Total dependency on external resources rarely generates self-sustainability improvements, efficiency or quality of life.*³³⁰ Due to this dependence, most of the congregations are waiting the support from partner organization to the work of the church. This situation addresses by Arne Tolo as

*the EECMY Christian message influenced socio-cultural, political and religious development of Ethiopia and most of Ethiopian people used the opportunity of mission movement as a means of development.*³³¹

This impact will be on the EECMY and its origin and development related to socio-political condition of the country.³³² This impact of mission up on the EECMY developed economic dependence on foreign mission organization instead of being self sustainable. Most congregations of the EECMY are waiting the hand of mission organization for the works of Church even if they can do it by themselves.

As we know and hear everywhere today in the world, the world is at the time of economic instability and financial uncertainty. This tension affected the work of the church as well as a whole and FLEP of the EECMY particular.

The sustainability issue needs to generate strategic plan for the works of the family Ministry. Incorporating the Family Ministry Program in EECMY structures from Head Office Level to theological institutions, congregational level and staffing it with necessary personnel is highly needed. Since the EECMY-Women's Ministry Coordination Office, Children and Youth Ministry, Diaconal ministry and Family Ministry sharing major objectives, a closer collaboration and network of these four ministries are great values for better efficiency and cost effectiveness toward the development of family Life Institute.³³³

The issue of sustainability is marked as one of the challenges of the FLEP of the EECMY.

The financial resources for the huge Family Ministry are rather limited. FLEM has been the only supporter this great challenges of the family and marriage of our

³²⁹‘Sustainability’ is defined...’...that can keep or maintained: (e.g. sustainable economic growth...’ (H. Hornby, Oxford Dictionary of current English, 1995:1205) or (...to keep up or keep going as an action or process (Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of English language,1994 :1433.), Solomon:2004:23

³³⁰ Solomon: 2004:23

³³¹Tolo, 1998 ,P.8

³³²Ibid.

³³³Annual Report of FLEP of the EECMY, 2011: 5

*society. The annual earmarked is including staff salaries and training expenses. Professionals on this field; traveling to the Church units with teaching materials but no car owned by the program is at times very challenging.*³³⁴

As mentioned in the EECMY, DMT Report, 2010, “the current financial constrains that the EECMY is facing has made the living condition of many pastors and evangelists even worse- to the level that some could not even provide daily bread for their families.”³³⁵

6.12 Expectations

Most of the congregations except those found peripheral area know about the importance of the FLEP. All the leaders and evangelists of the Church do know its essentiality in the Church and society. The main problems we have in our country are financial problem, trained man power and coordination of resources. *These problems become an obstacle in all areas of work in Church and society level.*³³⁶ To arrange servants without finance is impossible. Learning and teaching without finance is impossible even if they have great will to this program. Preparing themselves in matters of finance is a crucial issue. At the same time, without trained man power to fulfil expectation is also impossible. Even when we need those who give training from head office, there is a need of finance that purpose of conducting training. We have serious problem to run this teaching widely. Everyone needs lesson. It was not as before, since people are in to talk and to talk about marriage, sex and other issues concerning marriage and family, things beforehand those seen as taboos are not there today. Everyone gets access to speak about himself and herself as male and female as well as what needed in that difference. In previous day it was taboos to talk about marriage, sex, and their own choices about the issue. Particularly in front of family it was forbidden. After we offered this lesson, in the congregation females and males are talking freely about their choices of marriage partner in the area where FLEP was offered. They are refusing those they do not like to marry if influence comes from families and church leaders. They express their consent. Their personal choices and consent took priority places.³³⁷ So the expectation from both the church and congregation is high. The congregations need training. Whereas, the church needs finance from the congregation to run trainings, seminaries that will be offered by FLEP. This meets in very rare condition. Few congregations are getting trainings to self sustainable.³³⁸

³³⁴Ibid. P.4

³³⁵EECMY DMT Report 2010 P.2, Colum 1.

³³⁶Oi, Rev Jira Dufera, Nov., 25, 2011, in his Office, Addis Ababa ,Ethiopia.

³³⁷Oi, Rev Jira Dufera, Nov., 25, 2011, in his Office, Addis Ababa ,Ethiopia.

³³⁸Oi, Rev. Geneti Weyessa, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa in his office in the EECMY

6.13 Targets and the possible achievements of the family life ministry

As I have informed the church has long strategic plan to make FLEP strong in order to organize Diaconian, family ministry, Christian professionals and university student ministry under the coordination of family life ministry. The expected structure under FLEP can be seen as (Diaconal -Christian professionals- university student ministry).³³⁹.

*Strategic plan in 2011 DMT-FLEP has been more focused on a draft work of the Strategic plan of the Family Life Institute together with MYS and DMT taskforce committee which formed this year and follow up of this ministry is ongoing. To respond to the tremendous challenge of strengthening the Family Ministry as Family Life Institute. Furthermore additional Training of Trainers (ToT) courses are needed, for the synods' Youth Leaders; HIV/AIDS Co-coordinators; Theological teachers. The vision is to establish Christian family life education as an essential and part of regular teaching in all levels of EECMY church and grass root Congregations.*³⁴⁰

The church has a plan to make Family ministry to be constant ministry of the church in its level of the structure and in all congregations of the EECMY. To make this real, we have to have the institute that has planned to open. When this family life institute opens, it will make this institute as congregational based institute in order to train particular ministries from congregations for the purpose making them responsible in the issues of family and marriage. We hope this will bring the wanted changes in church and society in the future regarding this ministry. The institute which is planned to be established will be the institute of capacity building for congregations of the EECMY, particularly to FLEP of the EECMY.

*We have also plans that help us to spread lesson such preaching, teaching and using Medias in the longer run. We have another plan that we started the so called 'Intentional Discipleship'' which also part of our plan to run this ministry fast. On the issue of 'Intentional Discipleship', the book will be preparing and will be soon on use. This is the plan of the Church as a whole and the section of FLEP of the EECMY. Furthermore, in the near future, we have a plan to offer family and marriage education in degree level in Mekane Yesus Seminary.*³⁴¹

Thus, it proves us the EECMY has good strategic plan that leads the program to achieve FLEP goals.

³³⁹Ibid.

³⁴⁰DMT ,FLEP Annual Report of 2011, P. 4

³⁴¹Oi, Rev, Geneti Weyessa, Dec 12, 2011, Addis Ababa in his office in the EECMY.

VII. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Personal reflections

The first time I got family life and marriage education course was in 2004 at MYTS while I was 3rd year student at MYTS .The interest was seriously created in my mind in that occasion. Then after I had been teaching at Hossana Theological Seminary the subject that is more related to the issue of marriage and family which is called Christian Ethics for six years since 2004. Besides that I have participated three consecutive seminaries which were conducted by the FLEP of the EECMY. In those seminaries there were many issues raised which are important to the development of family and marriage life such as how to create happy family, how to create responsibility on the issue of family and marriage are among the themes raised as the issues of discussion.

The representative of most of synods in the meeting rose about the need of the program and how to develop the programs according to its importance. Then after I had been thinking about the program and how to develop this program and asking myself what shall I do for the program. Before 2008 this program was not the part of curriculum in diploma program in regional seminaries and Bible College of the EECMY. Nor as part of the curriculum of MYS but seen as simply part of counseling course. As I was one of the staffs in regional seminaries and member of the national colloquium which was held in HTS in July 2009, raised that the issue of this program to be part of our curriculum and to be given as independent course by itself since 2009.

The national colloquium members came from MYS and all regional seminaries and Bible College accepted the idea the program to be part of the curriculum and to be taught as one independent subject. This interest came in my mind while I was as student at MYS. I did not leave this interest only in interest level but keep thinking to do one thing in my life. When I came to NLA-University College, up on my studies in the second semester in spring 2011 I have got parts of family and marriage course in Christian education. In that course family issue is the part which created additional impressive interest in my mind and the one of the factors initiated me to write this paper.

I wonder my personal life with- in my immediate family. Before we delivered our daughter, I and my wife were thinking how to enjoy ourselves in our marriage. But that situation was soon changed when we got our daughter. All our focuses changed to our daughter. In reality, I

can say we forgot ourselves. I am asking myself, does this mean family care or child care. Or lack of both? It is not only our problem.

Most people in our country are acting like us while they deliver children, their focuses shift to their children. My question here is who should get concern first? And who should put on the priority list? I believe and accept children should get adequate care. That does not mean that we should forget ourselves when we get children. In our context many things come upside down when we get children. For instance, economic situation is one of the problems that we face first. For this culture also it plays its share in bringing economic crises on child deliver.

Lack of proper handling each other between wife and husband includes material, psychological, and spiritual handling among the spouses after they born children. So what should be the solution for this? What the church should do and search solution for this problem? How one care for others in systematic way without hurting their children, economy, and spiritual life? We have to ask ourselves these questions and give answers. What does it mean family happiness? In when and in what condition one gives concern for each other, before marriage, in the marriage, after having children, or in all condition? We have to answer also these questions carefully and seriously if we are aware of the intuitions of family and marriage.

As this work is done in the context of Ethiopia situation of marriage and family in the EECMY, I need to identify some aspects of my personal life as subcomponents and personal reflection. Besides that considering myself as contextualized theologian, I have to locate myself a person life sharing and researcher of the existing situation of my country and church.

Alongside in my religious context that I grew up and ethnic identity in southern nation of the country where the Wolaytian nations are found, I was introduced the concept of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity in which my understanding of God, law and society was developed.

I understood how deeply this Christian tradition shows my job as a lawyer and theologian as Christian teacher. In case I believe children's right of property and their share to their families property as a means of succession (Economic right as a successor their families' property) should be affirmed. This is as I believe as a lawyer and theologian. This is one of the foundations of the family and marriages in a given society that can family at least settle their life in good condition and reduce family disagreement. As a result, it increases stability in family life, justice and fair distribution of property among family members.

This also helps to know *factors that allow for the evaluation of the status of the families with in Christian tradition, theology, and moral thought.*³⁴² For instance our civil law which lasted for more than 50 years gives right for unborn child as,

*If a child is conceived to the deceased before his death, but not yet born. In that situation, the law permits a right to succeed to the unborn child. To implement this right the viability of the child must be approved. In that condition the child must be born alive and must live a minimum of 48 hours. Before this situation fulfills, the partition will be suspended.*³⁴³

The reason that I brought this legal provision to show we have laws and regulations that give right for children who are in mothers' womb but the legal knowledge of its implementation is less concerned in state and community base. Thus, it is not the lack of laws and regulations but lack of implementation and knowhow in community base is the one that causes in spoiling family happiness in Ethiopia. The concern is lacked in both community and state level. In this situation, there are some green lights in government level even it is not as much as required. The government is striving to offer some basic knowledge of law in training and media level in this day. The church is not awakened in as such much. For this reason most of our children lost their right of succession as the law permits to them.

When I return on the activities, almost the main activities performed by the program since 2000 were explained in chapter V. The program addressed expectation of spouses in the marriage more biblical oriented way. Furthermore terms like love, faithfulness in marriage, transparency, management of family budget are among them. Most of the focuses of teachings were biblical oriented and for limited area and persons. Besides that contents like happy and healthy family, peace, forgiveness and reconciliation, the problem of extended family, child care are parts of the teachings.³⁴⁴

7.2 Evaluation on teaching materials

The teaching material that FLEP uses as hand book for training purpose entitled 'How to strengthen the Family?' is considered good since it is first in its type in this church level. This book consists of basic things in family and marriage issues particularly focusing biblical based teachings. In this sense it is adequate in its content issues for basic trainings to which it

³⁴²Post, 2000:66

³⁴³Civil Code of Ethiopia, Articles. 4(1-3), 1959, Negarit Gazeta, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,.

³⁴⁴Palmu and Palmu, 2006:6ff

has been leveled. For leaders, evangelists and pastors of the EECMY, the book is the first one and useful for the church as resource. In addressing biblical issues concerning modernity and related facts like homosexuality and lesbianism the book has good biblical messages. To say this as our country Ethiopia has different cultures, different ways of handling children, family and marriage. Foundation of our cultural system was different. If we expect this book as the book was prepared in the standard of the whole country and all levels of people according to their age, education and cultural identity, it is difficult to say the book is adequate.³⁴⁵

As mentioned above this country has diversified kind of languages, religions and cultures in which each and every citizen needs teaching material in their own language translation and more or less teaching goes with the context also another problem. The languages in which this book is translated as mentioned only two big languages in which broad masses of Ethiopian people are speaking such as Amharic and Ormfa. Most congregations of the EECMY in countryside use their own regional languages except churches in urban area that use Amharic language in most places. This is also one of the weak points that we see in regard of teaching materials.

According to most of my respondents, a teacher's hand book for family ministry in the EECMY i.e. entitled 'How to strengthen the Family?' is considered as relevant particularly to people already in marriage life.³⁴⁶ Besides that the book is targeted to those people who are learned and ruling levels.³⁴⁷ Here, the question is what about youngsters and those who are not tied in marriage? So need of contextualization in order to make it in the way it touches all kinds of people. Thus, the materials in the book need to be contextualized and prepared taking in to consider perspectives of all levels of people and translated at least in the languages mostly used by the people who have different languages in the church and society.

7.3 What the Church do for the family and marriage?

It is obvious that every marriage and family share of failures and successes as well as ups and downs. But we Christians should show difference in our way of living since we called to be the salt and the light of the world (Matt.5:13-14).

First of all the church should be free from biased kind of work in its all aspects of services as well as God's yes mission to the world³⁴⁸ and God's no mission to the world.³⁴⁹ The church

³⁴⁵Oi, Rev.,Tigenesh Ayele , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Interview with Rev Tesya Hordofa Nov,22/2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia., Interview with Rev.Esayas Emene Dec,15, 2012 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

³⁴⁶Oi, Rev.,Tigenesh Ayele ,Nov, 12, 2011, ,Addis Ababa.

³⁴⁷Ibid.

³⁴⁸'God's yes mission to the world'- expressed in the church's engagement with the realities of injustice, oppression, poverty, discrimination, and violence- that is the church's missionary engagement with word's says “

must avoid every kind of corruption and must be good model within a given society. In many cases, I think, it has the other way round. Similarly, we must learn giving abundantly rather than simply always eager to receiving.

The church can play great role in all aspects of human life in a given society if she feels responsible for her concerned matters. In the regard of family and marriage, the church can play larger extent in direct approach she has with the comparison of any human institution we have as I believe. She has the greatest opportunity in dealing with family and marriage to improve and help the life standard and quality of the family in this world since she can hear more motives of family that other institutions cannot.

The Church is the sign of God's presence and an object of faith. At the same time the church is an institutionalized form of religion, a political forceful to be voice to the institutions of family and marriage. This can be done in practice if she uses the resources she has more effectively and systematically.

The church can do the following for the family and marriage³⁵⁰

- offers classes for young contemplating marriage, for parents at the childbearing, and 'launching stage' when the children are going out to make homes of their own

- the church can teach the Christian view of sex, marriage, and family

- the church can do this through home and church-centered literature³⁵¹ as well as using media.

- the church can emphasize the biblical teaching on marriage and family in sermons prepared, established a premarital counseling service for young people and can offer forums and classes dealing with such problems, since the quality life in home determines future society that includes future churches, leaders in church and society as a whole.

But how/ what the church can do may be one of the basic questions. How can the church be resourceful to answer the incoming problem? In case of pastoral ministry, being sustainable in creating financial resources, capacity building of the ministries, leadership

God's desire is to transform the world and bring all things into His kingdom." By Rene E. Johnson, lecturer notes on Missiology and Church Growth, Degree IV, Blocks A&B, 2002-2003, MYS, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

³⁴⁹God's no mission to the world' -expressed in the church's alternative character. God's reign is more than human progress; it is a voice opposing the way of the world. The Church is called to solidarity with the world (God's yes), but it is also called to not blend with social and political movements (God's no), becoming identified with them. (Ibid.)

³⁵⁰Zenebe, 2004:15

³⁵¹Ibid.

adjustment particularly the church in African with in multiply ethnic groups of people, working together as an accountable, searching ways of solution together for common and specific problems of society and church. To be ready to resist any false teaching that can attack the existing and emerging families, the church need to be conscious in her acting and leading her members. For my specific thesis I want to identify what the church does for the family and marriage I have the following points to be considered from my observation from different angles.

-She should educate servants so as they can give strong theological and biblical defense for incoming problems which may be social, spiritual, legal, and economical.

- The church should be self sustainable in economic situation to facilitate the work ahead rather than to see the hand of other to be dependent.

As the lecture from Christian education as identified what ‘the Church for the family’,

*The church can strengthen the family and marriage in telling what they do, giving family mission in which helps the family and marriage problems. She can reach those families, marriages and children which are unreached. Similarly she can build strong youth program that creates awareness in their proper growth in positive mentality within church and society.*³⁵²

The church of Ethiopia lacks contextualization in their teaching. The reason for this they lack of adequate education in different kind of disciples such as Psychology, sociology, Biology, Economics, law and etc. These all disciplines are important for family and marriage development in one or other side. Furthermore; they have lack of theological and biblical understating of the rights of women, children

. Most pastors and evangelists in congregation of countryside concern human rights as the rights given from the government. But the rights identified in the law of government are the rights given by God. They do not know about these rights as biblical and theological. “The concepts of human rights such as equality, freedom, and participation are close to the concept of Christian faith. They are elements of the characteristics of children of God.”³⁵³ We have to fill these gaps in our teachings, preaching, and leading. They can create difference in the teaching of church and state. In this case, there is no mistake in the laws of the government.

³⁵²Rune Oystese, from lecture note, spring semester 2011,NLA-University college, Bergen Norway

³⁵³Minota,2003:3

The government is working the rights and equality of women, children to minimize cultural understating of women and their oppression.³⁵⁴

So the church needs qualified pastors, evangelists, and leaders in this day those who can teach the current situation of marriage and family and who can challenge the coming resistance from modern humanistic world. That is why I mean the need of contextualization. Rev.Gudina Tumsa points, “responsible church ministry in a given cultural, social, and political setting can be defined by the interpretation of the Gospel in to action situation of the church concerned.”³⁵⁵

According to my personal understanding and observation, the church in Ethiopia is weak in proper handling of family and marriage. There are no equal handlings of family member. As a result, family lost its unity and common goals within the members. Competition among denominations to convert family members separately to make their member becomes an obstacle to family strength.

Let me explain my own case, when I became Lutheran, some of my families were Orthodoxies. Within my families, my being Lutheran created great chaos within family’s unity. Things I drink and eat other members of my family never eat and drink. They saw me as cursed man among family member one who changed religion. The congregation I became a member considered the rest of my family as non spiritual and obsolete thinkers. In that regard we lost common goal and unity. They congregation I became a member did not try to tell the fact of my conversation to Lutheran rather than condemning my family as rigid and conservative. Besides that most congregations in Ethiopia have lack of concern for old people. They have more focus on youngsters. This created classes in the church and opens door for creating sects within the church as old people as conservative, non charismatic. This also goes to family since family comprises old and young within it. Of course, to be member of any denomination and being conservative and charismatic is the right of individual. But within one family having different kind of religion creates lack of family unity, family mission statement which leads them to common goal that strengthen family. .

The church is the elected one from God as 1Pet 2:9 shows “But you are a chosen people, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

³⁵⁴Oi, Rev Tigenesh Ayele, Nov., 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

³⁵⁵ Gudina ,2003:116

The church teaches that marriage is essential to Christians mainly for it is part of God's plan for human being (Gen.2:20-24).The word of God tells us that marriage is one of good gifts of God for human being. This God's good gift should be handled and used according to the plan of God (Prov.18:22).

As explained in the previous section, most Christian denominations or churches have different views and understanding in family and marriage as well as things related with these institutions such as marriage, divorce, remarriage and sexual relationship.³⁵⁶

Thus, we need to check our way of handling family members in unified way to make family strong and happy in our involvement as a God's agent, elected and called out of darkness into marvelous light(1Pet2:9).

7.4 Budget and man power allocation

The need of allocating sufficient financial resources, training aid materials, and skilled man power are unquestionable required to the FLEP of the EECMY in order to accomplish its objective properly in all level of the church structures.³⁵⁷ According to most of my informants, the FLEP fails in allocating these things sufficiently in all levels of the church structure.

7.5 General observation and recommendations

My stay at justice Bureau in different areas of country as public prosecutor and at Hossana as an instructor of theology in Seminary and law in law school paved the way to observe how far family and marriage life is important and should get care and attention. Furthermore, the consecutive trainings I got under the coordination of EECMY created imprints in my mind to focus in it to observe and to evaluate how far family and marriage education is important particularly in the Church and society in general. However, most of Ethiopian marriage and family situation is cultural; I value them much when I compare with modern trend of marriage and family today. When we see according the word of God, the Ethiopian situation more or less goes with God's word. This makes Ethiopian family and marriage situation to concede with the word of God since Ethiopian Churches and family law of Ethiopia does not accept homosexual marriage.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶Oi, Rev Tigenesh Ayele, Nov., 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Also see, Palmu & Palmu.:2006:218ff.

³⁵⁷Oi, Rev Jira Dufera, Nov., 25, 2011, Addis Ababa,Ethiopia,Interview with Rev., Tigenesh Ayele , Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,Interview with Rev Enderis Essay Oct., 22,2011,Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Interview with Rev, Tesfaye hordofa,25/1172011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopian, Interview with Rev Teshale Kassa, Dec.,21,2011,Hossan,Ethiopia.

³⁵⁸ Nigarit Gazeta,The constitution of FDRE,1st year No.1, article34(1),Addis Ababa,Ethiopia.

Even though so many things were told to me as they have done from FLEP, the informants I found in group discussion in south Central synod in Boloso Sore parish told me that they do not know about the work of the program at all in church and as only heard from me in my interviews. This indicates that the program never touched all the working places of the church. Besides that the synods were not assigned to teach in the grass root level their respective trainers in FLEP. As Rev., Tigenesh Ayele stressed in interview time,

The focus of FLEP is only targeted towards to limited area of the country where the budget is allocated for that program it could not cover most areas in our country. They only centered their service where the synod's offices are centered. Furthermore the training from FLEP are repeatedly offered to area where respecting from the church officers given or else the area where they came from. Thus, the FLEP teaching focus is only in synod centers and on the areas where the EECMY has the highest respecting in case of expectation as the origin of the church leaders.³⁵⁹

Rev. Jira added those people sent from synods, seminaries and Bible schools who had received training from FLEP as TOT and ToT-T trainers were not seen as they were effectively passing the lesson to the grass root level. They did not feel as responsible person in both church and society level. Furthermore, there is lack of follow up from their respective synods and church office. This shows that there is lack of proper attention for the ministry as such essential.³⁶⁰ I want to share the common idea with D. W. Waruta, as he says “the growing freedom of the young people and the weakening of parental guidance and authority have created a generation without genuine value system.”³⁶¹

In the name of freedom and modernity, the young people exposed for countless dangers in Africa those who have less consideration of their value system and influenced to western modernity. Their marital life is also failed with this influence. In order to screen the bad and good, there is a need of contextualization unless immersing themselves to the life styles that they do not know well or they cannot resist soon. This is one of the dangers that most of my informants were identified as the problem of young people in Ethiopia. Due to this, there are great family crises in Ethiopia today. There are many crises due to this influence.³⁶² Firstly, economic crises are one of them. Most parents of Ethiopia cannot manage their children's

³⁵⁹Oi, Rev Tigenesh Ayele, Nov., 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

³⁶⁰ Oi, Rev Jira Dufera, Nov., 25, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

³⁶¹Waruta and. Kinoti,2000: 113

³⁶²Oi, Rev Tigenesh Ayele, Nov., 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

interest due to their low income. The living, wearing and eating styles are mostly copied from the western world that Ethiopian family cannot afford to their children.

Second, the social crises which can be seen is loss of the value system that should be transmitted to the next generation as good heritage. Health social interactions and relations among parent and children are spoiled due to this influence.

The third one is spiritual crises. The spiritual identify of the church is seriously attacked by existing situation of modernity. The church must be the salt and light for the world. Everything seen in the church to be good model for the others whom to expect the church is as an exemplary to the faith community. Both the church and family cannot control the young whom were spoiled their mind with the incoming chaos from the modernity. Fourth, there is also psychological crises that can be in the life of both the parents and children due to inconvenience of all these.

The research question of this project can be seen as: Does the EECMY devotedly and effectively implementing its roles, activities, responsibilities in the family life and marriage ministry in its holistic theology (of which is Church's motto)within the existing Ethiopian religious, social, political and economic settings?

The researcher has 'no' and 'yes' answer for this problem question from his research work. For 'no' answer the researcher gives the following reason as bases for his research.

Problem of ethnic based biased leadership in the EECMY,

The concern came to the program not originally from church itself but by the influence of those FELM couple missionaries and their budget support makes the program still dependant by support from outside,

-Lack of trained man power and budget in center and peripheral,

-Focusing only on respected area as mentioned above.³⁶³

-Focus only on budget located area rather than where the need is there,

-Structure problem which is only in center with few man powers.

We have started giving emphasis on family ministry in our congregations. It is amazing how many people are now recommending that we (the evangelists and wife) would concentrate more on this area. We are grateful that our congregation has

³⁶³Oi, Rev. Tigenesh Ayele, Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

*accepted our suggestion to make family ministry, which has been neglected and forgotten, as one area of our service.*³⁶⁴

The above saying of the evangelist shows that the church had no concern for this ministry if it had not been started by those couple missionaries from FELM and as it was the result of their vision.³⁶⁵

By ‘yes’, I believe and recommend the church of Ethiopia should serve the institutions of family and marriage in the context of Ethiopian environment rather than loading on the western traditions up on Ethiopian people in which they cannot cope with it soon, or must contextualize with things fit and go with our Ethiopian culture to restore and bring wanted changes. I agree to D. W. Waruta, in his critique of Christian church as “the Christian church has not succeeded in strengthening families and it can be argued that to some extent, it has been part of the problem and not the solution.”³⁶⁶ As I mentioned before things seen the Evangelicals including EECMY situation such as running western mode of wedding, trying to train the copy past model without contextualizing what was prepared to west, rejecting most Ethiopian values.

In Most cases, Ethiopia family has problem in having common mission statement concerning family issue. Mission statement leads to common goal for strengthening family. The reasons for this are many. Particularly in the area I had born, male domination, differences in ethnic group, difference in religion, age, economic competition within family, polygamy, lack of economic resources, economic corruption within family, lack of education and lack of adequate counseling from the church and governments are some of the major reason for this. This lack of family mission statement leads the family not to have common purpose, goal in case they cannot unit the resources they have such as effort, many, energy to create strong family. Furthermore, they cannot play their shares of roles as a family member and this kind of family which lacks family mission statement have no way to evaluate and to decision making roles as family members. This is also common in most families of the EECMY. Probably few families might have mission statement due to the accesses they have in education and spiritual guidance. Thus, the church should work hard and teach the family to have common mission statement that leads family to common goals, makes them to unity

³⁶⁴Palmu & Palmu,2006:13

³⁶⁵Oi, Rev., Tigenish Ayele, Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

³⁶⁶Waruta and Kinoti,2000:115

their efforts, energy, knowledge, social and spiritual reputation, economy in order to build strong family.

In addressing its activities, FLEP of the EECMY should work more. What I absorbed from the interviews of my informant activities of FLEP program in center and peripheral is different.³⁶⁷ Most of the informants identified those activities in centre better than activities in peripheral areas.³⁶⁸ This indicates that FLEP of the EECMY has unequal distribution of ministry in all of the church's structure. As a result, the focus of the ministry is not all rounded and touch all areas of church structures. As I tried to mention before, activities are only limited to the center where the synods offices are there. For these, unequal distribution of family life ministry, different reasons is mentioned. For instance lack of budget, man power, material resources, conflicts in the leadership, and lack of concern from church's side for the ministry and lack of offices in the different structures of the church are some of them.³⁶⁹ The Establishing offices for FLEP in all structures of the EECMY seemed one of the solutions to run well the program of FLEP throughout.

-Opening office in the Church office level is appreciated by all and shows the church's positive concern for family life and marriage. Its weak side reflected in it has no offices in other structures of the Church expect head office level. This is due to the section has no adequate budget to ran its work independently. If the offices established everywhere it is easy to reach all parts of Church ministry area.³⁷⁰

This idea is recommended by all informants those I encountered them in my interview time. The only informant who opposed this idea is the coordinator of FLEP of the EECMY Rev. Geneti Wayessa. His attitude to this idea is rather than establishing the office in structural level he prepares to integrate the program as part of the existing sections of DMT such as Diaconal, youth and Sunday school, Christian education, women section and family ministry as well.³⁷¹ I argue Rev Geneti in his opposing the establishment of the offices in the grass root levels, synods and parishes. I argue the office coordinator FLEP of the EECMY since the work of family and marriage needs professional person and its own offices in which the work

³⁶⁷ Rev Jira Dufera , Nov. oi, 25, 2011, Addis Ababa,Ethiopia. oi, Rev Tigenesh Ayele, Nov., 12, , Ababa,Ethiopia , Kes Geneti Weyessa and Miss Abarash Tolosa, Dec 12, 2011 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

³⁶⁸ Oi, Rev, Endiras Essaye, Oct, 2,2011,Addis Ababa,Ethiopia, Interview with Rev Essaya Emene, , , 17/12/2011 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, oi, Rev, Teshale 31/12/2011, Kassa,Hossan, Ethiopia .

³⁶⁹ Oi, Rev Jira Dufera, Nov., 25, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Rev Tigenesh Ayele, , Nov., 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

³⁷⁰ Rev Tigenesh Ayele, oi, Nov., 12, 2011, Addis Ababa. Ethiopia.

³⁷¹ Oi, Mr. Bekele Hadaro, Mr. Samuel Salkamo, Miss Amarech Digebe, Evangelist Tagese Chemere, Mr. Dawit Dana, Dec.,28, 2011, At Areka ,Ethiopia.

of family and marriage to be performed in all levels of the Church rather than blending it with other programs. Besides that the newly establishing offices have to be strengthening with the necessary manpower, equipment and educational materials which are prepared in the context of the society and biblical and theological grounded teaching of family and marriage. To create awareness against anti family and marriage life such as HIV/AIDS, practices of harmful traditions and attack of modernity and globalization on marriage and family.

There is also a need of cooperation to work together as gatekeepers in the community as religious leaders, with relevant bodies in the community such as teachers, elders, and other workers whom are near to community due to their work character. To do this, there is also need of getting training commonly to create common view and understanding in strengthening family and marriage. This should be done in all levels of the society particularly in the grass root level where the mass is there.

-The training is only focused on leaders, pastors, and evangelist on only synod center areas.

-The congregations of the EECMY have no clear cut knowledge about the use of FLEP. This indicates the ministry has problem on know how awareness work.³⁷²

Finally, activity in the church office level is promising and should be kept. The activities in synod level are only focused on synod center area. However; activities of in the grass root level we usual call congregation level is not such much promising and needs more change and progress. As result, strong work needed in the congregation level. Besides that there is unquestionable need of trained man power and allocation of adequate budget for the work according to this research. It is impossible to bring wanted change and achieve its goal effectively and adequately within this huge church by using limited budget and only two assigned workers in the church office level. Even if integration of the program is planned, it is not expected that work is going be done well. The organizing of offices in the different structures of the church helps for separation of powers and responsibility which increases the opportunity to arrive the grass root of the church structure. Since this program should be done independently with its particular professional personnel and allocated budget. Teaching material preparation is also another important thing that is recommended. The existing materials should be used as one of the sources but contextualized materials should be prepared and to be available in the languages of all people in the way they can understand

³⁷² Tesfaye Hordofa, Oi, Nov., 25, 2011, EGST, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

easily. The new teaching material should reflect and comprise of the good heritages of the people, government policies on marriage and family and as well as important international issues on the institution of marriage and family. The focus of teaching should also be targeted to where the need is there rather than only emphasizing in the places near the synod centers and attention of the leaders.

Thus, this study show us that the need to bring wanted changes and to achieve the goal of FLEP, we need to work a lot.

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II. ORAL INTERVIEW

My informants are church leaders, pastors, evangelist and FLEP officers for I can get wanted information from them as they were identified as prime beneficiaries and stakeholder of FLEP in the EECMY.

The lists of persons I have interview during my field work.

1. Abarash Tolosa (Miss.), Worker at EECMY FLEP, Dec, 12, 2011, in FLEP office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
2. Amarech Digebe(Miss.), Dec., 28, 2011, Areka Congregation, Ethiopia.
3. Bekele Hadaro(Mr.),Parish leader of Boloso Sore, SCS, Dec., 28, 2011, Areka, Congregation, Ethiopia.
4. Betelem Hawariya, Congregation choir member, Dec., 28, 2011, Areka, Ethiopia.
5. Dawit Dana (Mr.), congregation leader Dec., 28, 2011, Areka, Ethiopia.
6. Dawit Desta(Mr.), Congregation leader, Dec., 28, 2011, Areka, Ethiopia.
7. Elias Basoa(Rev.),Nov., 25,2011,Amaro Synod ex-vice president , EGST, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
8. Enderis Essay (Rev.) lecturer at MYTS, Oct., 22, 2011, in his office at MYTS, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

9. Esayas Emene(Rev.),President of South West Synod, Dec, 15, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
10. Genete Wayessa (Rev.), Coordinator of FLEP in the EECMY Dec, 12, 2011, in FLEP office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
11. Heto Dube (Rev.), DMT Director South Ethiopia Synod, Dec, 2, 2011, Hagere Mariam, Ethiopia.
12. Isreal Hawariya, Congregation choir member, Dec., 28, 2011, Areka, Congregation, Ethiopia.
13. Jira Dufera (Rev.), Coordinator of Diaconal ministry in Central Ethiopian Synod,EECMY , Nov., 25, 2011, in his Office at Sidist Kilo, Addis Ababa.
14. Mirete Hawariya, Congregation choir leader Dec., 28, 2011, Areka, Ethiopia.
15. Mulugeta Melaku(Rev.), President of North Ethiopia Central Synod, Dec, 17, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
16. Samuel Salkamo(Mr.), leader Dec., 28, 2011, at Areka, Congregation Ethiopia.
17. Teshale Kassa(Rev.), Congregation pastor, Dec., 21, 2011, in his house in Hossan, Ethiopia.
18. Tagese Chemere(Evangelist), Dec., 28, 2011, Areka Congregation, Ethiopia.
19. Tesfaye Hordofa(Rev.), Nov., 25, 2011, EGST, Addis Ababa,Ethiopia.
20. Tigenesh Ayele(Rev.) , Coordinator of Women Ministry in EECF and pastor at Jamo Congregation, Nov, 12, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
21. Yisak Yohaness (Evangelist), leader Dawa Parish in South Ethiopia Synod, Dec, 11,2011, Hagemariam, Ethiopia.

III. REPORTS AND COUNCIL MINUTES

1. EECMY DMT Annual Reports,2007
2. EECMY DMT Annual Reports,2009
3. EECMY DMT Annual Reports 2010
4. E EECMY DMT Annual Reports,2011
5. Summary Reports of FLEP of the EECMY, 2011
6. EECMY FLEP Foundation Documents

7. Protect children from Abuse and Neglect'' National Workshop Organized by the Children and Youth Affairs organization and Italian Cooperation Proceedings Dec., 2-4, 1996, Addis Ababa)
8. EECMY Youth and children Section, Inter-generational impact, Youth awakening for God's kingdom and holistic transformation p. 9-10, EECMY Archive,2011
9. Lapiso G.Dilebo (2001) *The contribution of Evangelism to the Economical and social development of nations,and nationalities in Ethiopia*, Musicological and linguistic Institute in Memory of Onesimos Nasib and Aster Ganno, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

IV. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does the EECY see the existing situation of family and marriage life today?
2. Could you explain the main reasons that initiated the establishment of FLEP in the EECMY? Could you also explain when and why the section is opened in the EECMY? In which department of the church office is included and why?
3. Can you explain the strong and weak points of FLEP in EECMY?
4. Could you expound the roles of FLEP in EECMY in solving ongoing problems of family and marriage in EECMY?
5. How do feel and see about the answer from the congregations in your involvement in FLEP?
6. Would you please express about any resolution in regard to FLEP in the Church base?
7. What are the roles of FLEP in the EECMY?
8. How or by whom FLEP is financed?
9. What are the challenges of this section in its total activities?
10. What are the EECMY's future plans in regard to FLEP?
11. What do we mean by family in our Church tradition? In our cultural context?
12. Please would you explain the material, social and economic basis and function of families in Church contexts?
13. What improvement would you recommend for family life education program?
14. When and Why Family life education program started in the EECMY?
15. How religion is embedded in family?
16. What are the religion functions of the families? (Particularly Christianity?)
17. Is (are) there thing(s) that you see as anti- family today?
18. What are the expectations of synods, Church units, districts, parishes and congregations from EECMY FLEP? What are the responses of EECMY FLEP for those expectations?
19. What new things happened in the current situation family and marriage life EECMY members? What are the causes of new happening?
20. Does the Church pay so little or much to the minister or expert of EECMY FLEP workers?
21. Is there trained man power problem in EECMY FLEP? If yes what measures are taken by Church to solve the problem?
22. Has the divorce rate rise or fallen in the Church today? Or yes or not at all in case of divorce? What are the reasons for that? What is the Church's response for that?
23. Are there oppressions of women in Christian family of EECMY? If so, what are root causes of this oppression? What is the Church working about it in EECMY level?
24. What are odd things coming to Church in regard of family and marriage?

25. Is there sufficient information available concerning family and marriage in the Church? Is there material on Church like magazines, tract tables or in general publication about FLEP? What resources are available in your Church community to help FLEP?
26. Is your Sunday school's curriculum is promising for children? Is it clear what people are to do if they suspect that children are kept well and trained a Christian ways of up growing?
27. What are ways in which sexuality is considered as a positive gift in your community of faith? Is the Church a place where in which parents are free to discuss their awkwardness in talking to children about sexuality? If yes what are taught about sexuality?
28. Have you conducted training for Churches and units? (For FLEP officer of EECMY), Here some search of statically information, the number trainings given, reports about the training brought, the number of changed situation because of training ,possible trainings expected, The method of assessment that trainings bring changes in Church community ,things seen as taboos in church base and community as well, The expected needs of trainings and etc., .
29. What are the family crises? A) In case of their personal life? B) In case of Child care? C) In case cultural and societal problems? D) If others?
30. Do you suggest that FLEP has succeeded its main aims? In what condition? And why? What are some suggestions you have for FLEP?
31. What improvement would you recommend for family life education program?
32. Would you please express about any resolution in regard to FLEP in the Church base?