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The Theology of Fenedata Youth, the Flowers and the Fruits of Today in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

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THE THEOLOGY OF FENEDATA YOUTH,
THE FLOWERS AND THE FRUITS OF TODAY
IN THE ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH
MEKANE YESUS

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

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CHAPTER ONE
THE CURRENT STATUS

Introduction

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is the fastest growing Lutheran church in the world. The EECMY was established as a national church in Ethiopia in 1959.¹ Most of the EECMY members are children and youth. In the EECMY, most of the congregations and synods have youth ministry office and programs, but the problem of the EECMY youth ministry is that it is not serving fenedata youth. In the Ethiopian community, calling youth with the idiom fenedata become a common word for the last ten to fifteen years.

In the community, fenedata is not a proper word but the people use this word when they want to show the negative connotation of youth behavior. Sometimes, the people who are called fenedata could be a child, a youth or an adult based on their behavior. The behavior which is seen as a fenedata is related with the behavior youth or other group are showing which is uncommon with the majority of the people in their context. In the community not all youth, but some youth are fenedata.

In the church community, using the description fenedata is not a church word to call the church youth. Rather, when the youth stop coming to church or if someone asks the other person why he or she is not coming to the church, we say it is because she/he

¹ For further reading about the EECMY, Fekadu Gurmessa, Trans and Ed, by Ezkiel Gebissa *Evangelical Faith Movement in Ethiopia*, (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press, 2009)

has become fenedata. When youth have disagreements with their family members and show adolescent character, we say that he or she is fenedata that is why they are showing this kind of character. When the youth fall in love with someone and stop coming to school and drop their college studies, we say that he or she stops education and has an affair with someone because he or she is fenedata.

In this thesis, I will use fenedata to describe youth 13-21 years of age in the church and outside of the church. The reason why, I want specifically use this group of youth is because they are the ones mostly exposed for the fenedata the characteristics and behaviors according to others evaluations and expressions. The youth are called fenedata because people think that youth who are at this stage have warm passion or interest for life different from adults. The appropriate meaning of fenedata in English would be “explosion” or “blooming.”² I am therefore interpreting fenedata youth as having passion for life. The explosion comes from the passion they have inside. This passion comes from the feelings, the needs and the longing they have inside. However, the church community sees their passion as a cause for destruction. According to Creasy Dean, “passion is the symptom of adolescence, but it is also a symptom of being human.”³ According Abraham

² Traditionally in the church community and outside of the church the fenedata is not a proper word but the people use this word when they want to show the negative connotation of youth behavior. Their actions and speech are different from other members of the community or the church, so they are called fenedata. The word fenedata comes from the Amharic word mefendate. We use this word to expresses the blooming of the flowers and explosion of bombs and carbonation for wine or alcoholic drinks. But mostly youth who are between 13-21 are the ones who are mostly called fenedata related to their adolescent behavior. Nowadays in the church, when the youth stop coming to church or if someone asks the other person why he or she is not coming to the church, we say it is because she/he has become fenedata . According to this thesis, the fenedata are a sub-group of youth between the age of 13-21. The appropriate meaning of fenedata in English would be “explosion” or “blooming.” The youth are called fenedata because people think that youth who are at this stage have warm passion or interest for life in a way different than adults.

³ Kenda Creasy Dean, *Practicing Passion* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004),10.

Heschel, “God himself is passionate or has passion: Pathos in all its forms reveals the extreme pertinence of man to God, His world- directness, attentiveness, and concern. God “looks at” the world and is affected by what happens in it; man is the object of his care and judgment.”⁴ The passion of the fenedata youth should be address by the youth ministry of the EECMY.

The question of the EECMY youth ministry is how youth ministry in the EECMY can serve these fenedata youth. The answer is that the EEMCY needs a fenedata youth ministry which comes from our theological beliefs and praxis. Therefore, in this thesis, I will argue that the EECMY youth ministry should be a ministry for the fenedata youth to serve their present by being present and being-oriented.⁵ Creasy Dean calls this being-oriented youth ministry fidelity, “the power of being.” She argues that the fidelity of youth ministry comes from the faith community, because God’s fidelity comes from his Trinitarian nature. Therefore, in this thesis, my normative understanding of youth theology comes from Paul’s theology of Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Based on our normative faith our practice should be turn to theology to minister fenedita youth where they are. Based on the theology the praxis, I want to recommend is coffee ministry to have present and being oriented youth ministry in the EECMY. In this paper, I will argue that the EECMY needs the theology of fenedata youth, to have present- and being-oriented youth ministry. The theology of Paul’s Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology will help us to have a ministry of fenedata youth which pays attention to the

⁴ Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York, NY: Harperperennia IPublisher, 1962), 618.

⁵ Being and present oriented fenedita youth ministry means relational and incarnational ministry. In this paper, when I use the word being and present oriented fenedata ministry, it means serving them where they are in the midst of their crisis.

passion of youth in the present by being with and anticipating the future of God by living together as a community of believers. In Ethiopia, people are very relational. They might not be able to support by giving money, but they can give their time and love. So where does this action-and future-oriented youth ministry come from? I am saying this comes because of social, economic, and physical, problems of the country and the community. Having theology will help us to come back to our Ethiopian identity and to base our fenedata youth ministry and practice on what we believe.

This paper will be organized by first describing the fenedata and the fruits of today according to the understanding of youth in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. In the first part of this chapter, I will therefore describe the current status of youth ministry in the EECMY. First I will describe and interpret youth ministry in the EECMY, and then I will discuss the life of the Fenedata youth, in the Ethiopian Context Compared to American Teens. The second part of this paper will be the need for theology for the EECMY Fenedat Ministry, it will be organized our view of Christ has an impact on the Fenedata the ministry, the ministry of the Fenedata Serving God's present and anticipating God's future, and all are Partakers with Christ. The third part will be recommending possibilities. First, it will discuss integrating theology to the EECMY Fenedata Ministry and then I will recommend praxis coffee house and coffee ceremony ministry.

The Life of the Fenedata Youth in the Ethiopian Context Compared to American Teens

The Ethiopian economic, social and political situation has an impact on the fenedata youth ministry of the EECMY. According Muche, et al. most of the Ethiopian

population, around 85%, live in the rural areas and agriculture is their main income for survival. Ethiopia has been suffering because of drought and famine for many years. At present, around 5.3 million people are in need of food. Muche, et al. continue, arguing there is a possibility for Ethiopia to solve poverty but it lacks infrastructure and information to share the resources from one place to the other.⁶ On the other hand, according to country IHS,

The government predicts an average real GDP growth of 11.0% to 14.9% in its current five-year plan that runs to June 2015, underlining that the focus of fiscal and monetary policy will remain on supporting growth rather than suppressing inflation. Under the regime of former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who died in August 2012, the government placed a strong emphasis on infrastructure projects, most notably major hydropower dams, as key features for economic growth, with the 5,250-megawatt Grand Ethiopian Renaissance dam as the most grandiose scheme at an estimated cost of approximately USD 5 billion. Nevertheless, IHS GlobalInsight is expecting a slowing of economic growth on the back of a less-conducive external environment and the need for a more balanced policy mix to address the recurring problems of high inflation and the widening current-account deficit.⁷

This is the contemporary Ethiopia. If you were to come and see, Ethiopia looks a country beginning growth just now. There is a lot of building and road construction everywhere. The country is expecting to see development and growth in the future.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is serving in a country that has all these social and economic problems and future expectations. According to the EECMY's 2009 census, the EECMY had 6,644 established congregations and 2,818 preaching places in 21 synods, one area work and one parish (Galana Abaya). There are

⁶ Quoted in Network of Ethiopian Scholars, "Ethiopian e-Journal for Research and Innovation Foresight," *Special Issue on Food and Nutrition Security*, 4, No.1 (2012): 1. www.nesglobal.org,

⁷ IHS, Country Intelligence Ethiopia. "Ethiopia Country Monitor" Last updated On Nov 13, 2012. (accessed February 6, 2013), 1. www.globalinsight.com

2,061 pastors, 2,728 evangelists and some 300,000 volunteers persons actively involved in the mission work of the church. The EECMY has 5,279,822 baptized and 2,465,637 communicant members. This growth has made the EECMY the largest Lutheran church in the world.⁸ Ethiopia is the most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the 2007 census, the distribution of the Ethiopian population is 45% between the age 0-14 and 51.9 percent between the age 15-64. The age group division is between childhood and those working. This shows us that fenadata youth in Ethiopia are among the working age group between 15-64.⁹ According to my interpretation the fenadata youth are between 13-21 s that most of the fenadata youth are part of the working age group in Ethiopia.

According to Robert Epstein, American teens are infantilized and the most distressed part of American society. He mentions the problem of American teens as a parent, citizen, and teacher, saying that most teens look angry, scary and confused and the extension of childhood is the main reason for the problem of teens in America.¹⁰ There are a lot of restrictions for American teens so that childhood is extended into the twenties and thirties. Most American teens' problems come from this unnatural or extended childhood. Suicide, depression, sexually transmitted disease, academic incompetence, and the busy schedule of parents are challenges for American teens.¹¹ The extension of childhood comes from the rules and the regulations created by the system. The teens have

⁸ EECMY, "History," Last updated 2009. Accessed July, 2011. www.eecmy.org.

⁹ Population Council, Ethiopia Young Adults Survey a Study in Seven Region Population Ethiopia, 2010, accessed January 20, 2013 ,1. www.popcouncil.org.

¹⁰ Roberet Epstein, *Teens 2.0* (Frenso, CA: Quill Driver Books, 2010), XXV.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

a lot of options and opportunities for education, work, and skill training, so there are a lot of restrictions to accomplish different commitments in life. This really is different from the Ethiopian context.

The challenges of Ethiopian fenedata youth different from those of Americans. Put briefly, for Ethiopians, the problems of Ethiopian fenedatas is being urged to adulthood or to the future. Most of their life they are pushed to be adults while they are teens. We can see this from the challenges they are facing. A survey of Ethiopian young adults conducted in 2010 by a non-governmental organization called *Population Council*, done in seven regions of Ethiopia, investigated the challenges and problems youth are facing in rural and urban parts of Ethiopia finding that Ethiopian adolescents face particular challenges, including limited access to schooling, early unwanted marriages, lack of parental presence, unsafe and exploitive work roles and coercive sexual relations. Ethiopian boys face other risks and vulnerabilities. Boys and men are socially expected to be leaders of the family as providers and protectors. In Ethiopia, there are a lot of economic problems and challenges that effect living. All these expose boys to violence.¹²

American teens' problems are caused by different rules and regulations that extend their childhood. This culture of extending adolescent has an impact in American Evangelical Churches. When Creasy Dean explains this issue, she argues that

Unless Christian theology retains a central place for the passion of Christ – and unless the Christian community engages youth in practice that identify with Jesus's suffering love -youth looking for something "to die for" will, inevitably look elsewhere. In the absence of a Christian vocabulary of passion, youth will

¹² Population Council, Ethiopia Young Adults Survey a Study in Seven Region Population Ethiopia, 2010, accessed January 20, 2013, ii-iii.
<http://www.popcouncil.org>.
www.popcouncil.org.

turn to the broader society to interpret their passion for them, where consumer culture is only too happy to oblige.¹³

Dean is criticizing the mentality or thinking of American churches. If the church doesn't address the passion of youth, they will go somewhere to meet their need. There are a lot of options around them, which Creasy Dean calls "consumer culture."¹⁴ Thomas E. Bergler calls this the *juvenilization of American Christianity*. "Juvenilization is the process by which the religious beliefs, practices, and developmental characteristics of adolescents become accepted as appropriate for Christians of all ages. It begins with praiseworthy goal of adapting the faith to appeal to the young. But it sometimes ends badly, with both youth and adults embracing immature version of the faith."¹⁵

In the Ethiopian context, the fenedatas are being pushed to adulthood before they finish their teens because they are the hope for the church, the family and the community. The boys should start their life early to protect their family. Girls should get married early because they should get economical support from their husbands. In the Ethiopian community, the fenedatas don't have a place because they should bypass their adolescence quickly so that they can help themselves and their family members. This is the main cause for extension of childhood in the Ethiopian context. If we don't respect and invest in the present state of youth, how can we expect fruits? Mostly in the Ethiopia youth live with their parents for many years, because they can't find or create a job. The future-oriented, culture, policy, and ministry of our government, church and community

¹³ Kenda Creasy Dean, *Practicing Passion*, 52-53.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁵ Thomas E. Bergler, *The Juvenilization Of American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eadrmans Publishing company, 2012), 4.

are the main causes of extended childhood. This is really amazing because in the American context the extension comes from having options while in Ethiopia the adulthood was rushed from lack of options by giving emphasis for the future. Comparing between the American teens and the Ethiopian youth is incompatible. But it has its own impact in its own context. In both of the context, youth doesn't have value now at the present that is cause of the extension adolescent and being pushed for the future youth. Their present needs, feelings, interests, way thinking don't have value in our eyes now at the present. As a church and country we are waiting the future without seeing and serving their present now. This understanding has an impact for the ministry of youth in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

Based on the research I did last summer, for most of the EECMY leaders, the meaning of youth ministry is preparing youth for the future of the church. As I mentioned above, there are a lot of economic problems and challenges in Ethiopia so that the ministry of the church doesn't pay attention to the present of the youth, but rather, it emphasizes the future of the youth so that they can be a hope for the church and the community. I am not saying that youth do not need growth or maturity, but I am saying that we are serving or ministering to youth without serving and valuing their present, because we believe that they can solve the challenges we are facing today as a church and community. In Ethiopia the people use donkeys to carry things. Therefore, there is a common saying that when the mother donkey gives birth to her foal, she says that her burden will be easier because her foal will grow up and take her burden. This means our burden will be easier because of our children. This is the perspective of the families and the community about children and youth. Mostly, the families don't give birth, because

they have enough to share; rather, they give birth to make their burden easier by the future of their children.

When we come to the action-or doing-oriented ministry, the church leaders mostly do things to fulfill their future goal in the life of youth without understanding youth. According to my research, for most church leaders and youth ministers, youth ministry is good if the EECMY leaders pay attention to the youth ministry and if there are budgets, trained youth leaders, and youth gathering rooms. The problem is the same for the family, community and the church. They don't provide enough now in the present for the fenedatas or adolescents as a family, a church or a community, but we expect a lot from their future. As we have seen above, because of the economic situation, life is not convenient for many youth in Ethiopia.

In the questionnaires, most leaders mentioned that they need support for their youth ministry at the synod and congregation level from the central youth ministry organizing office. Even in the central office of the EECMY, women, youth and children's ministry don't have an adequate budget. Only three percent of the church budget is for children and youth. In contrast, the investment office of the church has 27 percent of the budget. In the EECMY structure, the power is from the congregation to the central office. The EECMY 16th general assembly decided that the EECMY congregations should contribute 10 percent of their income to the synod office and the synod's office will send 10 percent of the collections to the central office of the church. While we have this decision and structure, most congregations spend thousands for the church building and musical instruments, and when it comes to youth ministry they don't have enough budget and expect support from abroad or the central office of the church. When I was working

in the central office of the EECMY, my coworkers and I were writing projects to get a budget and salary for our section ministry.

This research supports my argument, which says that youth ministry is action-and future-oriented in the EECMY, Since most of the church leaders say youth ministry is good based on what they can do for youth and for most church leaders youth ministry means preparing leaders for tomorrows' church and country or working on the coming generation. Moreover, youth ministry is what they invest, program, plan to change the life of the fenedata youth. Most of our programs are not relational, rather they are dictating in the life of the fenedata youth to gain what we want to see and achieve.¹⁶ In the next chapter of this thesis, we will discuss the normative theology to make the EECMY fenedata ministry being- and present-oriented.

¹⁶ For more information you can see my description and the result of the research on the EECMY youth ministry which was conducted by in August 2012 with the EECMY leaders and youth ministers.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NEED FOR THEOLOGY

Introduction

In this part of the thesis, I will argue that to have present-and -being oriented fenedata ministry we need a theology. My normative theology comes from the theology of Paul. Paul composed a lot of letters for his contemporary situation and problems. Therefore, I will use three major theological themes from his letters to support my argument: Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. These are interrelated and dependent, because the church is the sign for God's saving plan to the world through embodying the power of resurrection by expecting God's future salvation for his creation.¹ The section will be organized according to our view of Christ having an impact on the fenedata ministry, the ministry of the fenedata serving God's present and anticipating God's future, and all being partakers with Christ.

Our View of Christ has an Impact on Fenedata Ministry

Christ's ministry was being-oriented, he fulfilled his mission and ministry by his being and we are called to be his brothers and imitators of his ministry and life to fulfill God's mission. Last year, I was serving in the Minnesota Mekane Yesus congregation and one Saturday afternoon I was leading bible study for the youth group. Our reading

¹ Richard B. Hays, *The Moral vision of the New Testament*, (HarperSanFrancisco: HarperCollins publisher, 1996), 196-199.

was from 1 Timothy 1:12-15. One of the questions I prepared for the bible study was “Who is Christ for me today?” One of the youth replied that Christ is an invisible friend for us. I always remember her response, “invisible friend.” In Matt. 16:13-14, Jesus asked his disciples. What the people and the disciples said about him. Peter replied “You are the Messiah, the son of the living God.” Jesus built his church on this word. This is the question we have to ask of our life and ministry all the time. This is the question the EECMY should base her fenedata youth ministry. Who is Christ for the EECMY and what is the impact of our Christology for our praxis and ministry?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer asked the same question in the first week of his lecture at the Berlin theological seminary in 1933: “Who is Christ for Us?” For Bonhoeffer, the beginning of Christology is God-human. Bonhoeffer argued that the historical Jesus Christ is present as crucified and risen at the same time. His question was how the human or historical Christ will be with us, and how God could exist in time. The answer is that Jesus is human and God. That means God in timeless eternity is not God. Jesus Christ time-bound is not Jesus Christ. The present God who is present in time and space is hidden in the form of flesh (Rom 3: 3.)The ministry and the mission of God was revealed in Jesus Christ’s being in flesh and time as the same time. The ministry of God was not action and future oriented. God became human in human time to accomplish his mission to the whole world. This is not historical fact God is present in the sacraments and word to continue his saving purpose. We are taking Christ blood and flesh so that it is true, we are what we eat. Our ministry should be sacramental being with and to others to serve

them by being where they are.² Christ's ministry is relational, present and being oriented. Our ministry should be based on this Christological understanding. Being present in time and space was required for God to accomplish his mission and ministry what about us? of course, this required for us to minister the fenedata youth where they are. Paul's Christology tells us for the Christian participating in the death and resurrection of Christ is natural. Being and present oriented ministry and life style is not what we are expecting, rather, it is with us in our nature we have received in our Baptism.

For Paul, Christ's death and resurrection was important. In 1Cor 1:15:3-4 and Gal 1:4, Christ died and rose for the sins to bring new life and resurrection. As Christ's death and resurrection is important for Paul's Christology, we are baptized into the death and the resurrection of Christ, are justified, and become one in and with Christ Jesus (Rom 12:5, 3:24, Col 2:12, Rom 3:24, Eph 4:5, Rom 6:4).³ Who is Christ for Paul? As James D.G. Junn describes Paul, Jesus the messiah was anointed by God, and through Christ all of God's promise, salvation and eschatology are fulfilled.⁴ Jesus has different roles in Paul's writings: as sacrifice of the Passover lamb (1Cor 5:7), God's gift for humans sin (Rom 8:3), sacrifice of atonement (Rom 3:25), Christ became sin to our sin 2cor 5:21), the suffering servant (Phil 2:7-8).⁵

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Who is Christ for Us?* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 42-44.

³ Simon J. Gathercole, "Paul's Christology", in *Paul*, Ed. Stephen Westerholm, 180.

⁴ L.W Hurtado, "Paul's Christology" in *St. Paul*, Ed. James D. G Dunn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 191.

⁵ Michael Gorman, *Reading Paul*, 82.

As Paul mentioned in (1Cor 1:23-24), cross is not only the work of Jesus it is the revelation of God himself. When Paul says in 1Cor 1:24, God defeated the power of death and sin in His weakness. This act and revelation became a stumbling block for human beings because we measure power in strength. Christ's ministry which emphasizes being at the present of human beings was and is a stumbling block for many people in the world. Our fenedata ministry lacks being with our fenedata youth because being with people is a foolishness ministry even in the in life and ministry of Jesus. Having savior who has died is stumbling block for many, but this is the way God revealed his saving ministry. The same is true for being and present oriented ministry, we like to be action oriented to achieve our goals. But God didn't achieve his saving plan by action but he did it by being human.

Who is Christ for Africans? For Africans, "Christ has come up with different paradigms for Christ: victor or chief, suffering Christ, Christ as a healer, liberator, Christ in kinship, our ancestor, and even Christ as our guest."⁶ According to Henry Johanne Mugabe, for Africans life is holistic and there is no difference between spiritual and secular life. There is a saying that "our world is like a drum and if you beat one part, everything vibrates."⁷ From this point of view, it is hard for Africans to divide Christ's person from his work. Christ cares for the whole person. The incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ are interpreted from a holistic understanding in the African context. As Mugabe explained Mibiti's view of Christology:

⁶ Mugabe, Henry Johannes. "Christology in an African context" *Review & Expositor* 88, no. 4 (September 1, 1991): 343-44.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 344.

the concept of kinship is predominant in African traditional life. To be fully human, one must be incorporated into the community by “rites of passage”: birth, imitation into adulthood marriage death and transition into the world of ancestors. Mibiti says that it is against this back-ground that African are specially draw to the birth, baptism, and death of Jesus because these events show Jesus as complete person who has gone through all the necessary rites of passage. Africans have a special interest in the genealogy in Mathew 1: 1-17 and Luke 3:23-38.8

I am saying that for Ethiopians, being and present oriented ministry is not only theological, but it is cultural. Moreover, as we have seen in the above, for Paul and Bonheoffer and African theologians, Christ’s action and being are interrelated. Being in Christ and with him is the center of their Christology. God himself revealed himself in the cross of Christ to reconcile us to himself. Christ is the model of the being and present-oriented ministry. He became human and be with and to the people until the death of the cross. This is the ministry we need today for the EECMY fenedata youth ministry. Being with the youth as Jesus did to suffer and die with them with all of their current challenges and problems.

**The Ministry of the Fenedata Youth Serving God’s Present
and Anticipating God’s Future**

In the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, youth ministry is future-oriented. Youth are the hope for the future of the church and the community. There are a lot of political, social, and economic problems in Ethiopia and they have an impact for future-oriented fenedata youth ministry. I am not arguing that we don’t need to have purpose for our youth ministry, but we are living in the fulfilled-and- not-yet time. Our ministry is not about us, it is about God, because we are living in the time of God. We have to give value to the present of youth because the youth are living between these two

⁸Ibid., 344-345.

times. In this part of the paper, I therefore claim that youth ministry should be present-oriented by anticipating the hope of resurrection and the new life in Christ.

For Africans time has a different meaning from the western world. A. B.T Byaruhanga-Akiiki, is an African theologian who studies the understanding of time in the Bantu people of Africa. The Bantu are the people who live in the Eastern and Southern parts of Africa. Even though Ethiopia has some Semitic tribes, most of the tribes have similar culture with the Bantu and the Semitic culture is influenced by the culture of these people. As he mentions, time for Africans is not mathematical. Rather, it is a mental reality.

The Bantu define time according to the good events in the day, the month and the year. God has power on the present and future. The future is real based on the events happening now at the present. As Akikiiki claims, the Bantu way of thinking related to time has been affected by some aspects of church history aspects and missionary mentalities. Some of these aspects are the Greek philosophy of dualistic mentality and the missionaries' thinking, which deemphasized the Africans' way of thinking. Moreover, he claims that the African understanding of time is similar for both the Old and New Testament. The Old Testament describes time in events that happened in the life of Israel for God's saving mission to the creation. The same is true for the New Testament, in which time was described in the events made by Christ for the salvation of all creation.⁹ For the Bantu, the present and the future is controlled by God. God has a place for every event happening in their life. I am saying that for Africans' understanding of time is really significant to have present and being oriented ministry. For Africans time is

⁹ A.B. T Byaruhanga-Akiiki, "The Philosophy and Theology of Time in Africa: The Bantu Case." *Afer* 22, no. 6: 357-369.

not mathematical or future oriented. Rather, it is the present reality. So this significant understanding to have present and being oriented fenedata youth ministry in the EECMY.

Similarly, according to Moltmann, “future is not just something or other to do with Christianity. It is the essential element of faith which is specifically Christian: the keynote of all its hymns, the dawn coloring of the new day in which everything is bathed.”¹⁰ Moltmann continues his argument about the future, stating the future for Christianity is not expecting only the future, but it means faith and consummation of the history of the present.¹¹ Moltmann continues explaining about the causes of hopelessness, which are *praesumptio* and the *desperation*. The *praesumptio* means we are at the center of our hope and *desperation* means living without hope. But when we start to live and proclaim the hope of God, our present will be against the power of evil and destruction.¹² Moltmann understanding of hope supported my need and inquiry for present oriented ministry for the fenedata youth in the EECMY. Our hope is the present reality which we are living in and waiting for. Without participating with God’s present plan for the fenedata youth our ministry is not God’s, because God is the center of our present. God revealed his everlasting hope in his son Jesus Christ and as a new creation to live with that we are participating in the ministry of God. The apostle Paul clearly describes in his writings about the fulfillment of our hope in Jesus Christ.

For Paul, the future is revealed in Christ and in the new creation of Christ.

According to Michael J. Gorman,

¹⁰ Jurgen Moltmann, *In the End- The Beginning*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 86.

¹¹ Ibid., 88-89.

¹² Ibid., 94.

Christ was sent in “the fullness of time” (Gal. 4:4); the reference is not to some imaginary “perfect timing” due to the existence of the Pax Romana and its benefits, but to the time of God, the eschatological (end-times) moment promised by the prophet but hitherto not experienced. For Paul, the time of Christ is the time when “the ends of the ages have come” on us (1 cor.10:11). More accurately translated, this text refers to the “overlaps” of the ages, when the promised age to come has reached back into the present evil age. This overlapping of the present and the future was inaugurated by the death of Christ, which can therefore be termed an eschatological or apocalyptic event.¹³

Gorman explains that in Paul’s theology of the future the resurrection is the center of his theology. As it is written in Rom 6:8, we are participating with the resurrection of Christ just now at the present. For Paul, resurrection is not future- oriented, but present-oriented. Christians as a resurrected people are living away from sin and evil, but to God and his righteousness.¹⁴ For Paul, all creation is waiting and groaning for the full revelation of Christ, according to Rom 8:22-23. As Richard B. Hays mentioned, in 1 Cor 10:11 the church is the community of believers where the time to come is met: “These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come.”¹⁵

Moreover, Michal Gorman said there are many ways the hope was explained in the New Testament and in Paul’s letters, including resurrection, redemption, righteousness, eternal life, being in the presence of the Lord, being heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, and glory. The most important text was Rom 8:17: “in fact we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified him.” Therefore, for Paul, the new creation is

¹³ Micheal J. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 105.

¹⁴ Micheal. J. Gorman, *Reading Paul*, 106.

¹⁵ Ricard B. Hays, *cruciformity*, 198.

participating in the death of Christ so that, as Christ is risen, resurrection is natural for those who died with Christ; we can't differentiate between the resurrection and the death of Christ, we are experiencing dying and rising in Christ.¹⁶ At the present, we are experiencing the hope which is coming in the future.

For Paul, Africans' and Moltmann's point of view, our future and hope is the reality of the present. The fenedata youth are also living in the yet-and-not yet reality physically and spiritually and as Christians we all are living in the same reality. Based on this cultural, theological understanding of time having present oriented fenedata youth ministry is unquestionable for the EECMY. Because theologically we are saying that our future hope in Christ is present now. We are living in the yet- and- not yet reality. We are living our hope and waiting for the fulfillment. The fenedata youth are also living in the same reality. They are not adult or children. They are in between, so it is ok for them to leave between the yet- and- not yet reality. Similarly, it is natural for the Christians to live in the yet- and- not yet reality and to sever the present of the fenedata youth while we are the fulfillment of our future hope.

All Are Partakers with Christ

In the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, youth ministry doesn't address the flowers of today and fruits of tomorrow. I am arguing that the fenedata youth, are the flowers and the fruits of today, because we all, the members of the body of Christ and are partakers with and in Christ. Our theology of church has impact for our theology of the fenedata youth, if we believe in the community life of the church our fenedata

¹⁶ Ibid., 322.

youth ministry will be, present and being-oriented.¹⁷ and that is the way God revealed himself to his creation. For Luther, the church is:

It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacrament are administered according to the gospel. For this is enough for the true unity of the Christian church that there the gospel is preached harmoniously. According to a pure understating and the sacrament are administered in conformity with the divine word. It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that uniform ceremonies, instituted by human beings, be observed everywhere. As Paul says in Ephesians 4(:4-5) There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.¹⁸

According to Luther, the church is the place where the sacraments are demonstrated and the pure teaching of the gospel preached. The sacrament and the word are the being or the presence of Christ for us so that if the church is the place where Christ is present, the church itself is a sacrament for others. According to Henri de Lubac, the medieval theologian, Christ is God's sacrament and the church is the sacrament of Christ. That means the church is not only carrying Christ's work, but the church is the continuation of Christ's work.¹⁹

According to Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Paul's ecclesiology is subsidiary to his soteriology—not the other way round. Both soteriology and ecclesiology in an apocalyptic gospel: a radical intervention by God to rescue humanity from its enslavement."²⁰ The

¹⁷ Being oriented ministry means relational and incarnational ministry. In this paper, when I use the word being oriented being relational for the fenedata youth or being where they are in the midst of their crisis.

¹⁸ AC in BC, (Augsburg Confession Article VII:1-4, margin number 42).

¹⁹ Avery Dulles, S.J, *The Models of the Church* (Grand City, NY: Doubleday & Company INC, 1974), 58.

²⁰ Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, (Louisville, KY: John Knox press, 2007),147.

ecclesiology is the community of believers who came together by the power of God. There is no church without the saving action of God. In Rom 12:1-2, Paul urges the Christian community to present their body as a living and holy sacrament to God. In 1 Cor 12: 4, Paul describes his view of church to the Corinthians, “Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” Paul use different metaphors to show his view of church one of those is Body of Christ. In the 1 Cor 1:14-31, he clearly describes the church as the body. The body consist many members, all belonging to one body. And Paul also use the word one another in most of his writing to greet, pray, kiss, worship and gather together, edify as “one another” (2Cr 13:12, Gal 5:13, Gal 5:15, Gal 5:26, Eph 4:2 , Eph 4:32 , Col 3:13 , Col 3:16 ,1Th 4:9, 1Th 4:18, Tts 3:3).

Africans’ and Paul’s view of the church have similarities. Africans’ are communal in their lifestyle and the spiritual gifts are the main activities in African churches; according to Lemarquand explained Samuel Abornunrin’s idea of church in African context, the church in Corinth’s and the church in Africa has similarity. The spirit of passion, healing, speaking in tongues and other spiritual activities are common in African churches as in the Corinthians’ church.²¹

The theology of church is interrelated with our theology of Christology and eschatology. Christ is the manifestation of God’s will, but God’s plan is both fulfilled and not yet fulfilled. There is no church without Christ or the church as a community of believers living to accomplish the mission at the present and anticipating the fulfillment. Fenedata youth are the full members of the body of Christ. They are part of God’s

²¹ Grant Lemarquand, *African Reading of Paul*, 496.

salvation, hope and love in Jesus Christ. We are not preparing them to be part of this body but they are already there. According to Paul's view of church, the youth are not only receivers, but they are partakers for the growth and the development of the body of Christ. For Luther, the church is not structured, rather it is in the church where Christ is in the sacraments and his word. So as a Lutheran church having relational and being oriented ministry is natural for the EECMY. So having being and sacramental youth ministry is demonstrating to live what we believe.

CHAPTER THREE

POSSIBILITIES

Introduction

The praxis should base on our normative beliefs. My argument is that our practice and ministry should come from our theology of Christology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology having an impact on our ministry of fenedata youth. Our challenge in the EECMY fenedata or youth ministry is that youth ministry is action and future oriented. This comes from forgetting that youth ministry is God's ministry and we are participating in God's ministry. I am arguing that, we need a turn in youth ministry which Andrew Root and Creasy Dean call "the theological turn in youth ministry" God does theology by being with us in the specific time and moment in our life. He is present- and being oriented God. When we turn to theology in our context in different situations our practice and ministries will serve God's the passion and heart. Our consciousness and life will serve God's passion by being at the present of the fenedata youth as God does and anticipating the fulfillment of God's kingdom as a community of believers

Coffee Ministry as the Praxis to Have Being and Present Oriented

Fenedata Youth Ministry in the EECMY

The practices, I want recommend for the EECMY fenedata youth ministry are coffee house and coffee ceremony fenedata youth ministry. The first one is going to coffee house and the other is inviting the fenedata youth to the coffee ceremony.

According to the Wikipedia, the history of the coffee is related with Ethiopians. There is a legend story related to Kaldi who was goat herder on the mountains of Ethiopians. He found the coffee tree while he was searching his goat. Coffee and Ethiopia has a lot of relationship.¹ Twenty five percent of the Ethiopian population economy depends on coffee production. From the total Ethiopian export thirty four percent Ethiopian exports is coffee. Ethiopia is one of the largest coffee producer in the world and its leading role in Africa. Half of the produced coffee consumed in the country. This can clearly tell us the historical, economic, cultural, and social importance coffee to the Ethiopians. Most of our life is related with coffee. The coffee consumption of the Ethiopians is half of the production of the country while it is the leading coffee producer in the African continent and at the seventh in the world.²

This has impact on the life of the fenedata youth on one way or the other. We can use this opportunity to make our ministry relevant to our context. In the normative part of my thesis, I argued that our ministry for the fenedata should base on the theology of Christology, Eschatology and Ecclesiology. God revealed mission to the world in Christ Jesus who was willing to obey his father to the death of the cross while he was equal with God. This is our model to have relational and being oriented fenedata youth ministry, because God became human by being where we are. So that we have to go where the fenedata are in order to have this being oriented youth ministry. Mostly, the youth are our

¹ Wikipedia, "Coffee production in Ethiopia" last updated on 14 March 2013 at 12:15, accessed March 18, 2013, wikipedia.org/wiki/

² Wikipedia, "Economics" last updated on 14 March 2013 at 12:15, accessed March 18, 2013, wikipedia.org/wiki/

favorites, if they are coming to the church or the youth who are looks strong according to our evaluation and programs.

My recommendations could be applied in the different contexts of Ethiopia. Some of the fenedata are living in the rural area where there are no the coffee houses. The other are living in the cities and towns, they like to spend most of their time at the coffee shop. My argument is to have being and present oriented fenedata youth ministry, we should go to the coffee house to serve and minister them where they are. In the cities, the fenedata youth like to stay most of their time in the coffee houses. They share their life or have fun or discuss about their future life with their girlfriend and boyfriend or with just a friend. Mostly the Ethiopians in the rural area share their challenges and success around the coffee ceremony table. But the fenedata youth and the children are not welcoming to that gathering. If we invite them to the place where we share our being, our ministry will be being and present oriented.

Most of the EECMY congregations found in the coffee producing regions this means coffee ministry is relevant for the EECMY congregations. The coffee ceremony of the Ethiopians takes more than an hour. The people from the church or from the neighbors gather together and have coffee while they are discussing about political, church, social and economic situation around the country and the church. But the fenedata youth are not welcome to this gathering because we think that they don't need to know what we are discussing or talking.

I am not arguing that we should tell the fenedata youth what they are not supposed to know but I am saying if we want to have being and present oriented youth ministry the coffee ceremony is the place we can do and practice theology with the

fenedata youth. In the cities and the rural areas the congregations may open coffee houses or cafeterias to attract youth and to meet with them in order to reach where they are.

Coffee is all about Ethiopians so we can use it to do theology in the middle of our fenedata youth by being where they are discussing and sharing their present burden around the coffee ceremony in the midst of their life.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I argued that the problem of the EECMY fenedata ministry is not serving the passion of youth, because it is action- and future-oriented. My normative theological understanding to present-and-being oriented ministry comes from our theology of Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. I argued that if we turn to theology our ministry will be present-and-being oriented. I did suggest coffee ministry to have present and being oriented youth ministry and pragmatic practice for the EECMY because practice comes from our faith and it is different from place-to-place and from time-to-time. Our task is discerning and knowing what God wants to do now in the life of fenedata and participating with ministry to accomplish this.

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