

February 24th, 2018

Dear friends and family of the *Concordia Center for the Family*,

When God asked us to **go—go** and make disciples of all nations and **go** to Africa—we hesitated. There were many things to be considered along with many opportunities and events taking place during that time frame right here in America. You see, we have been asked by President Terry Cripe of the LCMS Ohio District to **go** with him to Ethiopia to lead a three week intensive training in Family Ministry. He had received an invitation from Rev. Geneti Wayessa, Family Ministry Coordinator in Ethiopia, to bring a team of instructors to help train the pastors, teachers, and Church leaders. Here is what the invitation said:

“The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EEMCY), also called Mekane Yesus Church, is a Lutheran denomination in Ethiopia. The Church was constituted as the national church in 1959 with 20,000 members in partnership with The LCMS. We have grown to 8.3 million in membership and, as a result, we are the largest Lutheran church body in the world. The last 10 years have been a new era as the Biblical and Theological Foundation of the Church’s teaching on marriage and family life has started to shine among the church community. A wide door of marriage and family life has been opened by the Lord of the harvest to promote the EECMY Family Ministry Program to an advanced level. The EECMY Family Ministry Department kindly invites you to come to Ethiopia with Rev. Zegeye Hambessa to teach and share your experience to our Church leaders, pastors, and teachers.”

Go to Ethiopia? But we’re teaching classes and the trip would take place right in the middle of the semester. **Go**? But it’s over Easter. **Go**? Speak in three different cities and to over 400 people? **Go**?

The Spirit was moving in the hearts of those influential to us—our wives, family, pastors, staff, board, dean, and the administrator of Concordia University, and all said, yes, **GO!** What an open opportunity to influence so many, many homes for the sake of the Gospel. Isn’t that what the *Concordia Center for the Family* (CCF) is all about?

God’s directive seems very clear. We are convinced God is calling us to **go** and to partner with our fellow Lutheran Christians to teach about family ministry and develop a long term family ministry training partnership between the LCMS, CCF, and the EECMY. We will be in Addis Ababa, Nekemte, and Awassa, Ethiopia, speaking to 400 pastors, teachers, and Church leaders.

The team that we have established to present on behalf of the *Concordia Center for the Family* includes:

Dr. Ben Freudenburg, CCF Director and Professor of Family Life at Concordia University in Ann Arbor, MI.

Brian Horning, CCF Training Team Leader and Director of Family Ministry at St. John Lutheran Church in Decatur, IN.

Rev. Dr. Scott Sommerfeld, CCF Donor Relations Team Leader and Interim Pastor at Trinity Lutheran in Utica, MI.

But what about the cost? First and foremost the Concordia Center for the Family is asking for your **prayers** to cover this mission in God’s name. Secondly, we are asking for your **financial support** to assist us in going to Ethiopia.

CCF continues to carry out its commitments to: the Mid-South District’s Family Ministry Initiative; our proposal to Compassion Thailand to walk with them and train their staff for family ministry; support for Family Life students here at Concordia University Ann Arbor; and our family ministry training taking place across America, Southeast Asia, and India.

So, we’re **going! Would you please prayerfully consider supporting us on this new journey?**

Yours In Christ,



Ben Freudenburg

Director, *Concordia Center for the Family*

