

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Bethel Synods Coordination Office (BSCO)



2006 Brief Report—Submitted to Presbyterian Partners
April 2007

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Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures for ever (Ps 106:1)

It is with a deep sense of gratitude to the Lord that we share this report all who have been sharing in ministry with BSCO and all of the Bethel Synods. The Lord continues to surprise his servants in many ways—his providence and graciousness have brought us thus far.

We are also thankful to all who have joyfully and faithfully shared with us their resources so that God's kingdom may advance in this corner of the world. We hope and pray that we, together, continue to grow and advance in glorifying the Lord through participating in God's mission.

The year 2006 (part of 2007 as well) has been a year of many successes, excitement, and challenges—although ups and downs have inevitably been experienced in the journey. It is a year in which the Bethel Synods have reaffirmed their covenant of partnering with each other in the proclamation of the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In September 2006, leaders of the Bethel Synods courageously and boldly declared that BSCO's ministry has to “ go beyond the routines” and beyond its traditional boundaries—officially stated at the inaugural event of the new coordinator. This is only a vision and determination to jointly stand together in the service of the Lord, and to do so in a more efficient ways than has been before; and all is to happen with sincere loyalty and faithfulness to the national denomination (EECMY). It is all to mean that the horizon of our ministries will have to expand and grow both in quality and quantity. We therefore continue to seek prayers and assistance of our partners, as always. Let us together join in God's mission of making a difference in this world. As you read this report may your heart glorify the Lord.

Introduction:

First, we want to admit that this report is not very well written, for a variety of reasons. As it appears, the report may only be enough to provide information pertinent to ministries of BSCO and the Bethel Synods—and it is by no means exhaustive. An attempt has been made to make the report inclusive of all the major projects and programs that are being carried out in the synods but as it sometimes happens, there is a possibility of oversight. And readers may also come across unclear information or statement. We would therefore kindly request that you contact BSCO administration for any questions that might arise from the report. Reports of the Synods appear as they were originally submitted to BSCO—all we did was to improve the settings and compile them all in one volume. As can be noticed this report is not limited to only those programs and projects sponsored by Presbyterians—there are a lot of programs that are financed by various agencies others than Presbyterians.

The report has two parts: - the first part highlights Bethel Synods Coordination Office activities and its overall involvement in ministry; and the second part presents activities of the five Bethel Synods that have been performed during 2006 (1st quarter of 2007 in some cases). May you be blessed as you read this report.

Part I

Bethel Synods Coordination Office (BSCO) and its Units.

1. B SCO Administration.

In September 2006 leaders of the five Bethel Synods and staff welcomed Mr Yonas Yigezu to the office of Coordinator of the Bethel Synods Coordination Office. Having recently completed studies at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, VA, Yonas will soon become an ordained Pastor. Previously Yonas Worked in the Illubabor Bethel Synod as Executive Secretary, and later as synod President. His experience working at the Synod level and three years in the USA getting to know Americans will serve him well as he undertakes the management of the office.

Under the new leadership, there have been some changes. Some who have been to the Bethel Synods Office have noticed some of the more obvious changes, such as the renovation of the office building. Other changes in management have been implemented as well.



Participants of the New Coordinator's Inaugural ceremony.



Bethel Synods Presidents/BSCO Administration Committee.

1st line right to left – Rev. Teferi Berkessa, president of WWBS; Yonas Yigezu, BSCO Coordinator; Rev. Yadeta Krita, President of IBS ; 2nd line right to left: Petros Tsanu, President of SWBS; Ojod Miru, president of EGBS ; Rev. Mathew Doleak, President of WGBS.

Staff of BSCO

Asnakech Ragaasaa continues to handle the responsibilities of an administrative assistant as well as cashier and secretarial duties for the Bethel Synods Coordination Office.

Debitu Tefera is the Senior Accountant; she handles in a back office most of the time handling the accounts for the Bethel Synods as well as the Bethel Mekane Yesus School (the Girls' School on the Lower compound).

Gamachu Galmecha is in charge of logistic services; he is also responsible for acquisition of supplies for the office as well as the Synods. In addition he is in charge of vehicles. He is in charge of maintaining all the vehicles belonging to the Bethel Synods Office; he is also one who arranges their use. Anyone needing to use a Bethel Synod vehicle should get in touch with Ato Gemechu.

Alemu Wodajo is the BSCO General maintenance man. He is in charge of keeping the buildings maintained— fixing broken water pipes, repairing phones and electric lines when possible. He continues to be our main driver and chauffeur, making airport runs and taking visitors to the places they need or want to go while in Addis.

Taye Firisa manages the store room, where stuff is kept prior to shipping off to the various synods for work purposes

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Structural Changes.

If you have visited Bethel Synods Coordination Office recently, you will have noticed that the office set up is changed. In order to get to the Coordinator, you first must see Asnakech. The renovation resulted in a place to sit and wait your turn, too. We are in the process of finding appropriate pictures and photos to decorate the walls.

All the water pipes are now being replaced. Some of the pipes are as old as the original buildings causing periodic problems with water pressure in the guesthouses. When the work is finished you will see green pipes along the outside of the walls. It is not so beautiful, but much more practical for maintenance.

The walls of the downstairs rooms in the guesthouse are being insulated to try to make them more pleasant to stay in. In addition, the downstairs lounge of the lower is being renovated to be used for meetings and other uses. At the upper guesthouse, new toilet & shower facilities are being added to accommodate the large number of guests using that house.

Improvements are being made to the residence for girls studying in Addis Ababa. The Bethel Mekane Yesus School is going ahead in completing the second and the third floor above the new chapel. One floor will be used for offices and the other for a residence for volunteers teaching at the school.

With new management comes the excitement of new practices and ideas for improvement. We hope to continue to make changes and improvements over the next few years.



2. Bethel Synods Guesthouse staff.

Bahirini Gichille is the new manager of the Bethel Synods Guesthouse, having started at BSCO on April 1, 2007. She is working with Rachel Weller to learn the ins and outs of this unique place, but it won't take long before she will be fully in control of all that goes in the Guesthouse.

Daniel Mulubrhan - Laundry general upkeep, cook when needed.

Zewde Mekonnen – House keeping Lower Guesthouse.

Elfinesh Abate – House Keeping Upper and Lower Guesthouse

Tigist Wodajo – House keeping, cooking Upper Guesthouse.

Important Information for Prospective guests.

As we make improvements, the Bethel Synods Guesthouse will become a more popular place to stay while visiting Addis. It will

be increasingly important to make reservations. Bahirini will be handling everything. She will be taking all reservations and collecting all the room fees and other fees associated with your stay.

To make reservation:

Write or call Mrs Bahirini

E-mail: bsgh@ethionet.et

Phone: 011-275-4726

You may also copy Rachel Weller in case the guesthouse e-mail is not working: r4weller@earthlink.net. Everything for the guesthouse will be handled at the guesthouse from now on. There is no need to contact Yonas or Asnakech to make room reservations or payments.

The guesthouse accommodating capacity needs upgrading given the current scarcity of lodging facilities in the city as a whole. This will inevitably necessitate construction of additional buildings that meet Addis Ababa's standards. The guesthouse will in the near future resume meal services for guests that stay at the guesthouse. In addition, arrangements are underway to provide space for seminars, workshops and small gatherings.



Bethel Synods Guesthouse

3. BETHEL MEKANE YESUS SCHOOL

Bethel Mekane Yesus School was established by the Presbyterian Church Missionaries who were in south Sudan and had the vision to reach the people of Sayo area (Dembi Dollo) with Gospel and other services. The medical team leader Dr. Thomas Lambe entered the country through Gambella as he got message about the influenza irruption and settled in Dembi Dollo by establishing a medical station with a learning center in 1918. Later on extended his stations at Gore and Addis Ababa.

Then in Addis Ababa-Gullale area, one hospital was built and attracted many sick people in the city. It was then, in August 1924, in the compound of the hospital, that the

presently Bethel Mekane Yesus school began to teach girls and continued without any interruption even during the Italian invasion up to present time.

In all this, the school had unique history in having more than one names during the past regimes. At establishment it was called Anny Comp Bell School. After that, began to be known as American Mission Girls' School. Again, during the Derg government renamed as Yehiwot Berhan School the Amharic language phrase literally meaning Light for Life School from its actual service. After that, as to relate to the proper historical background and ownership reasons, finally renamed as Bethel Mekane Yesus School (BMYS).

This renowned girls' school is now 83 years old, with a fascinating history of serving the marginalized part of the society in the country. August 2004 was its 80th grand anniversary celebration.

Of all, the base of the school is the Word of God and renowned in producing reliable citizens serving on various capacities in the countries of the world.

At present, the school has got clear vision to reach, missions to accomplish and objectives to achieve. Accordingly, always endeavors to provide quality education beginning from kindergarten all through 12th grades in order to feed the Universities in the country as well as abroad. Currently, the school has got 1090 student population.

2. The strategic plan of the school

VISION:

Create and run the basic center for female educational excellence.

MISSIONS:

Working, above all else, in the fear of God and coordinating its human, material and financial resources as well as putting overall related conditions into account, the school targets to: -

- expand its current services on sustainable bases to nurture the growth of young girls as initiators and agents of change in society with provision of vital modern education hand in hand with the requisite spiritual grooming and turn out model responsible students for higher-level educational institutions.
- cater services tuned to and enriched with research findings while paying due regard to existing conditions and the needs of its students and their parents alike.
- plan and provide standardized high-quality education geared toward producing all-round, highly motivated and morally upright students.
- make available basic knowledge that its students build upon at higher institutions of learning so that, after graduating from them, they will assume positions of responsibility in society and contribute significantly to its welfare etc.

GOALS:

- work for female educational excellence.
- contribute towards alleviation of spiritual sufferings.
- support the initiatives of justice, peace, equality and the development of civic education etc.

OBJECTIVES:

- improve its services.
- create conducive teaching-learning environment.
- achieve highly competitive results in all national examinations.

3. The positive impacts of the school on the beneficiaries

a) Spiritual moral strength-

- The morning chapel program held everyday from Monday through Friday out of school schedule for half an hour nurtures young girls from kindergarten through 12th grades.
- Most of the children take Gospel to their homes, relatives and other friends, thereby bringing changes in their spiritual lives.
- Some of the students and teachers of this school have gone to the full-time ministry to serve the Lord.
- Many evangelist, pastors and reverends have got God fearing wives from this school-being model-Christian women in the society etc.

b) The competitive academic results achieved all through the history of the school, placed the beneficiaries to higher posts in various capacities. Thus, creating moral satisfaction and hope to the families.



School Compound- lunch time fellowship



Daily Chapel in progress



Class activities

4. Problems and challenges of the school

- The school buildings are very old, without any basic renovation for a long time.
- There is not enough budget for completing the newly extended chapel-hall.
- Furniture for the chapel hall is needed.
- Budget for upgrading the level of the school as well as creating branches for the school.
- New desks and blackboards are needed to facilitate the learning environment.
- A new source of budget must be guaranteed, in order to construct and run the two branches of the school in plan.
- Science laboratories are not to the proper standard-size with the number of students, equipment, instruments etc.
- Library-shortage of budget to purchase basic materials.
- Sport material:- Other than the regular activity, the school is a member of the International Community Schools in the city. Our school is the least in having the necessary equipment and a huge amount of money is needed to build a gymnasium.
- Clinic-service in the school compound.
- Native English language teachers who will serve as volunteers.
- Other volunteer teachers with skills to serve in laboratories and workshops etc.
- Man power training program is very crucial for the management staff and others

5. Conclusion

Bethel Mekane Yesus School is a very historical school in addressing the educational needs of females with long years of service.

Its future development depends upon its capacity to withstand the Educational Development levels in the country as well as in other countries. Now, as it renewed its strategic plan of development, very large collaborated efforts are needed from the partner churches.

We pray for fruitful partnership.

II . Financial situation of BSCO.

Thanks to Presbyteries, Churches and individual friends whose financial support carried BSCO through the year 2006. Closing of our accounts at the end of the year indicated a marginal surplus, just enough to pay the staff salaries for the first quarter of the year. We therefore cannot help it but continue to seek support from our partners. As some may recall, following the suspension of permanent partner grant, BSCO has been operating in a situation of uncertainties in regard to finances. Our challenge today is to get out of such uncertainties, though immediate solution is unthinkable.

1. Capacity Building Program.

Capacity Building is among the most critical challenges for all of the Bethel Synod. Following the appointment of the new Coordinator, the Synod leaders, at their joint meeting decided that the coordinator's main role should be assisting the synods in the areas of capacity building. Capacity building in this sense encompasses a whole range of issues but leadership development stands as the most critical need currently. We are therefore engaging to set up a guiding policy and plan to do this work. The whole idea is to increase Synods leadership capacity at all levels.

2. Social Services.

The current social crises in Ethiopia challenge BSCO to directly involve itself in development and social services in and outside the city of Addis Ababa. One critical priority at this moment is HIV/AIDS—providing care and support to the impacted groups of people, children in particular. Different strategies and approaches will have to be employed in order to realize the vision of involving BSCO in programs related to HIV/AIDS. One of such strategies,

for instance, working in cooperation with congregations and local community; and the other is creating employment opportunities for unemployed young women that are potentially vulnerable to contracting the Virus.

3. Evangelistic Outreach.

As part of Bethel Synods vision, BSCO is considering to engage in evangelistic outreach ministry in the Rift Valley, we are considering to establish contact with a people group called Jille that inhabit at the western part of East Shewa. This people group, although so close to Addis Ababa and Adama cities, have not received and services and therefore still practice very primitive way of life. Moreover, Bethel Synods leaders are determined to continue their cooperation with some of the congregations that are operating in the Rift Valley area, in order that the intended outreach activities could be extended even beyond the Rift Valley area.

4. Income Generating programs.

So far BSCO's role in financial activities has been limited to project screening and soliciting funds for Synods' programs. However, the current economic situation compels us to also increase BSCO's financial capacity to the level that it will have the capacity to financially support the Synods. This may be done by launching Income generating projects in the City of Addis Ababa, while at the same time encouraging the synods to locally do the same.