

TO: Ethiopia Mission Network members and friends

DATE: May 27, 2004

RE: Bethel Synods Coordination Office (BSCO)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

FROM: Doug Sensabaugh, member, Bal Injera (Ethiopia Mission Network Planning Team)

At the inaugural meeting of the Ethiopia Mission Network, Jon Chapman presented a situation update regarding the needs at the Bethel Synods Coordination Office in Addis Ababa. He made an appeal for assistance in supporting the on-going work of this office beginning with the year 2005 and possibly continuing for at least two more years. The funding need is currently \$32,000 per year. This covers the costs for staff, facilities, and office upkeep and maintenance.

We are all concerned that this important office remains in place to make all the connections necessary for successful partnering in mission and ministry within the Bethel Synods. We have been asked to share this concern for the purpose of developing funding to support the BSCO for the coming three-year period.

To that end, the following information has been collected detailing most of the functions and responsibilities the BSCO currently performs. Please share this information freely as a tool for promoting the need for continued funding of this facility. Ask your church, presbytery, synod, or other support group to participate in its support.

Functions and Responsibilities of the Bethel Synods Coordination Office

From The Rev. Jon Chapman, Area Coordinator for Southern and East Africa, PC(USA)

- 1) Coordinating the **visits of PC(USA)** groups visiting and traveling to and in Ethiopia.
- 2) Coordinating Bethel Synods' **project funding requests** and reporting on those projects that are funded. The particular example that I often use is the Low-Cost Church Construction Project. Over three years, some US \$500k was distributed to the five Bethel Synods, under processes and procedures which the BSCO had primary responsibility for setting up, monitoring and reporting to W.D. and major donors about.
- 3) **Operating and maintaining** the Guleli property. (Upper and Lower Guest Houses, three free-standing residences and the BSCO offices.
- 4) **Liaisons** between the EECMY Central Office and the Bethel Synods around mission reporting, funding and ecclesiastical relations.
- 5) **Representing the Bethel Synods** and the PC(USA) - WMD at strategic and vital denominational, ecumenical and Ethiopian Government-sponsored policy and program development consultations.

I trust this will begin to give you a sense of the reliance Louisville places on The BSCO and how much we depend on Ato Solomon's work in keeping communications and resources flowing well and effectively.

From Bill Young, Coordinator, International Evangelism, PC(USA)

The only thing I would add to your [Jon Chapman] good list is the work he [Ato Solomon Nega] has done in helping us **coordinate requests from various Presbyteries** into one comprehensive request. The church construction project you mention is a good example, where we were getting requests from several Presbyteries and Synods and different times and having trouble keeping them all straight. Solomon was able to work with all of them to coordinate one request and provide tracking on it as you mention. He has done that for us on other projects as well.

From Ato Solomon Nega, Coordinator, Bethel Synods Coordination Office, Addis Ababa

Responsibilities of the Bethel Synods Coordination Office

1. From the time the missionaries turned the church work over to The Bethel Synods Coordination up to the late nineties this office had been doing all the accounts for all of the five Bethel Synods. Now all the Synods handle their own accounts but we **hold money in accounts** for each of them in order for them to make purchases and do other church business in Addis by giving advances to the field coordinators. This is important because it is dangerous to carry money between the synod areas and Addis especially since they often use public transport.

2. The Coordination office is very much involved in **purchasing, dealing with emergency needs, and clearing and forwarding goods**, which come from outside the country.
3. The office is also involved in **handling work permits and ID cards for missionaries** working in the Bethel Synods particularly for PCUSA missionaries. Although the work permit is finalized at central office level we do communication with the missionaries before their arrival and make them aware of the needs for processing legal documents in Ethiopia. In this case we also give assistance to foreign churches like RCA, German churches, Swedish and Norwegians who are called to serve in the Bethel Synods.
4. The office also **provides information to missionaries** working under the Bethel Synods regarding the situation of **the country particularly in Addis Ababa. We even go to the extent of providing information** concerning security alerts.
5. The Bethel Synods have **three joint programs, which are coordinated by this office**. The Bethel Mekane Yesus School for girls school in Addis Ababa; BESS in Dembi Dollo for whom we are involved in purchasing and other support; the two guesthouses which Jon has already mentioned which are totally under the supervision of this office.
6. This office has helped **in conducting courses in evangelism and other administrative matters**. I have conducted several courses accounting and management several years ago. Because of the expansion of so many ministries we have not had such a course for a long time but we would like to think about continue this in the future.
7. This office **provides local transport facilities** for missionaries and others coming from the countryside to do church business. We are limited in the number of vehicles, but we always give the Bethel Synods priority in these things.
8. We also **assist in getting international tickets and arrange charter planes** for people coming to visit our work in the various which require a charter.
9. We have been involved in **conflict resolution** among the Bethel church workers. This office is considered neutral and with this understanding we have helped many of the Synods to work out their conflicts before they get out of hand. We are eager to continue this support as well.
10. Four years ago, we had the bethel opportunity to **establish a relationship with The Evangelical Church of Sudan**. We sent several delegates to attend different evangelical seminars. This year I was asked to conduct some courses in January on finances and management. I recently compiled an accountant manual, which is more than 150 pages to help congregations in Khartoum and in the Nuba mountain area. They are requesting that we conduct such seminars again, but because of limited time I will leave that for others.

All these activities are carried by myself with the support of one secretary, one accountant, and one administrative assistant paid by the BSCO along with three guards and one cleaner and one gardener. The salaries for the five people working in the guesthouse are covered mostly by the fees we take in from those who stay there.

In addition to these people, we are so blessed to have the voluntary service of Mrs. Rachel Weller. She is serving as an administrative assistant and has really helped me to handle such matters as drafting letters, arranging the guesthouse, handling visitors, and looking to the needs of the guesthouse and consulting with me on various critical issues. Especially because of my heart and sugar problems, it would have been a disaster to carry out these responsibilities without her assistance.

Again, I would like to thank you for all the effort you are taking in making our position secure in order to continue our joint ministry in Ethiopia.