

Ethiopian Mission Network Meeting April 24-27, 2008
Brief Overview of the EECMY and EECMY Bethel Synods for the first quarter of 2008.

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This overview is taken from the Regional Liaison Quarterly Report for 2008.

Content:

1. Country Overview
2. EECMY Head Office, Addis Ababa
3. Bethel Synods Office, Addis Ababa
4. Western Wollega Bethel Synod
5. Illubabor Bethel Synod
6. South West Bethel Synod
7. East Gambella Bethel Synod
8. West Gambella Bethel Synod
9. Lose Ends

1. Country Overview: Ethiopia continues to be a central U.S. partner in the Horn of Africa region. Ethiopia's stability is crucial to the region and it plays an important role in the region with regard to its relations with neighboring countries; especially, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. Ethiopia's relationship with Eritrea and Somalia remain tense. The border dispute with Eritrea is an open sore and continues to be the subject of accusations between the neighboring countries. Ethiopian troops stationed in the capital of Somalia are also a source of contention not only between Somalia and Ethiopia, but also between Ethiopia and Eritrea. While Ethiopia has troops supporting the government leaders of Somalia who are recognized by the international community as the legitimate leaders of Somalia, Eritrea seems to be supporting the rebel factions. It is not clear to me at this time what role Ethiopia is playing or will play in Sudan, but I anticipate that whatever position Ethiopia will take in its relations to Sudan, Eritrea will take the opposite side. Regardless, in early 2008 Ethiopia was holding a series of discussion concerning cross border trade with representatives of the Government of South Sudan (GOSS).

Domestic: Ethiopia is facing some serious challenges domestically despite signs of economic growth and development. There is a serious tension within the population concerning the cost of living increases experienced by ever rising food prices. This is part of the global problem with the rising cost of grains and the newly developing market for bio-fuels, but it nevertheless is having a detrimental impact on the poor and in many instances, the segment of society that might be described as a developing middle class. High prices of grains in areas like the North of Ethiopia, Afar, Borana, and Gambella where grain production of subsistence farmers has been affected by either extreme of drought or flooding has created a situation of critical food shortages in these areas. In Ethiopia's diverse ethnic populations, food shortages and the inability to acquire food and grain create tensions between the people groups and this is especially important with regard to the Gambella region. The Murle from Sudan continue to raid Ethiopian communities in Gambella, near Abobo. But there are also groups that are not specified as to ethnic identity, but are operating within Gambella region as cattle thieves and disrupting communities along the Barro and Sorbet rivers. The government is now in the

process of relocating communities that were displaced by last year's flooding and cattle raids to their original areas. The timing is crucial as the rains are beginning and the time to prepare fields is at hand. The relocation is an attempt to lessen the potential for conflict between local ethnic groups.

2. EECMY Head Office, Addis Ababa: PC(USA) Mission Co-worker, Dorothy Hanson works with HIV/AIDs through the DASSC Office. She also carries other responsibilities related to clinic work and women's work in the EECMY. ECO E051770

ECOs: EECMY General E862133, Health Work E862141,
EECMY Student Ministry E04008, EECMY Evangelism Program E863170

This information will be important to share with the Ethiopian Mission Network.

January 17-18, 2009 will be set aside for celebration of 50 years of mutual ministry. All mission personnel from the past and present, along with their families are invited to be part of this celebration. Photographs, documents, etc. depicting mission and ministry with EECMY since its beginnings will be most appreciated and contribute to the displays intended to tell the story of mutual ministry from the beginning.

January 19th is set aside for EECMY leadership to make final preparations for the beginning the General Assembly meeting scheduled for January 20-25, 2009.

- A. There are people in the network who may have photos from the early days or knowledge of documents that might be relevant for the celebration.**
- B. It might be interesting, since the focus is on mutual mission, if there are examples and materials that can be shared with EECMY about Ethiopians serving Christian communities in the United States.**
- C. With regard to groups who come to Ethiopia from the Partners, Rev. Iteffa Gobena, EECMY president, has requested that the EECMY Head Office be informed of their visit and their purpose of the visit. This is in the interest of good relations between partners. Therefore, it will be helpful for me as the Regional Liaison to also be informed of planned trips to Ethiopia by Presbyterian congregations and Presbytery partners even if I am not directly involved in the planning or arrangements of the trip or project.**

Summary of Rev. Yonas Yegezu's paper "Approaches to Wholistic Ministry for the New Millennium"

- A. The EECMY has a vision that her mission will be both local and International, impacting human life in a Wholistic manner.
- B. The EECMY will in this Millennium articulate her identity as a church with visions—a church that is unified, self-reliant, and Missionary. We pray that our partners will embrace these visions with us.
- C. In a new awareness of partnership, we desire to be a full partner in "God's Mission" in the world, "embracing the One world in which the Church Universal exists and functions through its visible communities." The members of the EECMY, which grew by 203,418 new members this year, belong to the Church Universal; not simply to the EECMY, the gain is for all, irrespective of where we belong geographically.

This paper is an essential principle for the following decision of the EECMY to move out of a relationship for receiving Block Grants from the partners which have traditionally been used to support the administrative offices. Funding will transition to the mission of the EECMY with regard to **capacity building**. Capacity building of the EECMY human resources and self-reliance are the priority of the Head Office Administration.

The EECMY Self-Reliance Effort and the alternative to Block Grants

- 1. Capacity building and the need to develop leadership at all levels of the church remains the focus and need. As an alternative to Block Grants, the proposal of this paper looks to the development of Capacity Building Fund (CBF). The transition looks like this.**

Year	Direct Budget where Block grants have gone	CBF
2008	100%	0%
2009	70%	30%
2010	50%	50%
2011	30%	70%
2012	0%	100%

The idea involves the EECMY raising the support for its own administration and ministry locally while allowing, inviting partners, to help them develop their capacity. International Partners will not be supporting bureaucracy, but mission. The EECMY intends to make significant financial contributions of its own permanently to the CBF fund. CBF will not be limited to church work in Ethiopia, but will also be used for mission in the Northern hemisphere and other countries to further promote God’s mission...

Reasons for change as they emerged in a discussion that followed the presentation of the paper:

- A. A common purse concept that will help to remove the donor / recipient stigma in our partnerships.**
- B. It will encourage exchanges between partners with regard to mission personnel working in each other’s countries and in partnership in other countries.**
- C. EECMY will not be the only host of the CMCR meeting.**
- D. There is a sense that missionaries working in Ethiopia from the North (USA included) also serve as EECMY Missionaries in that they tell our part of the story of God’s work in the world in their home countries.**
- E. EECMY already has people in countries of her partners doing ministry, perhaps there is room for more direct involvement in the church partner’s body.**
- F. EECMY has launched its mission society for foreign service, so now it is a real possibility to be in mutual mission in the world. South to North needs to be part of our conversations.**

Current Situation for calling new mission personnel to work with the EECMY: One of the issues is for us to have one of the Bethel Synods call the Wheartys. The Bethel Synods Office cannot extend a call and BMYS is managed by a committee that reports to all 5 Bethel Synods. In a conversation with Rev. Teferi Berkessa, Acting Coordinator for BSCO, I

received the proposed resolution. Ato Petros, President of South West Bethel Synod and Chairperson of the BSCO Administration Committee will be present at the Ethio Mission Network meeting and may be able to clarify points.

Western Wollega Bethel Synod will act as the calling Synod for the Wheartys. The Job description will not affect their location for work. They will still be based in Addis Ababa at BMYS. The Job descriptions will remain almost the same with the exception of the fact that WWBS is extending the invitation. They feel this will not be a problem because part of Bruce's job description will involve developing the schools in Addis Ababa designed for Oromo Students and curriculum. So, WWBS should get cooperation from the local Oromia Ministry of Education. The process is beginning.

It has also been decided that East Gambella Bethel Synod will call Rachel Weller for purposes of the work permit and while the job description submitted to the authorities in Ethiopia will be specific for EGBS, it is understood by the BSCO Administration and Synods that she will be involved in the work of all the clinics and her job description that will be sent to PC(USA) will reflect this arrangement.

Another Meeting that Ato Petros can add comments too concerns the EECMY Development and Social Service Commission (DASSC) recent General Assembly. This meeting took place while I was in Sudan. At this meeting DASSC Administration proposed that DASSC should be moved out of the structure of the EECMY. This seems to be the trend with development agencies of the church worldwide. Moving DASSC out of the EECMY structure means that at the Synod level, their DASSC departments would not report to the church at all, but directly to the DASSC Administration. Therefore each Synod would be responsible to create a DASSC board and the VP of each Synod will serve as chairperson of the board provided the VP is not an employee of the church. The Synods are opposed to the idea and I think that Ato Petros has conveyed his opposition to the plan in written form. At this time there is no definite decision with regard to the proposal as I understand it.

*Finally, It may be helpful to let the members of the Ethiopian Mission Network to at least hear of **the EECMY Head Office Building Plan**. This is part of the CBF document. This will need more discussion on a personal level. The proposal probably has a few flaws in its expectations of local contributions but it remains a nice vision using property near the Seminary that the government will take over if the church does not use it soon. The vision includes a new head office, a conference center, and one other building- guest accommodations. Estimated cost is 87 million birr. The drawings are nice. Some international partners, while reluctant, are nevertheless in conversation about the realities. It would be nice to see the EECMY put some actual money on the table or sell other properties to raise capital and then the partners might match the funds.

3. Bethel Synods Office, Addis Ababa:

Ato Petros will be presenting a written report from the Bethel Synods Office Administration Committee.

Things to listen for in this report:

- A. The construction of additional guest house rooms: 225,000 ETB is the cost of construction. 2008 budget for the guest house operations is 231,625 ETB.

- B. Bethel Mekane Yesus School: K-12 girls school. It is mentioned in the report as having a 2008 budget of 2,337,902 ETB budget. I thought you might want easy access to the ECO Account Number: E863112. BMYS continues to seek Volunteer teachers for English language to work with them.
 - C. The proposed 2008 budget for BSCO Administration Office 442,153. ETB.
 - D. Business Plan: Construction of a multifunctional building. The building includes plans for guest rooms, office space for leasing, small scale supermarket and pharmacy. Estimated annual income generated by the building is ETB 500,000. Cost of construction ETB 8.5 million.
4. Western Wollega Bethel Synod: In Partnership with Susquehanna Valley Presbytery. Main support seems to be through Mary Rhodes and the “Head Start” primary schools functioning within WWBS. Capacity building and leadership development continues to be a priority for WWBS. They are starting to lose some depth in their people with degree level education. They continue to train elders and evangelist and pastors through the Gidada Bible School and the WWBS Evangelism department, but resources are scarce.

The WWBS is facing some transitional challenges as a new Administration is responsible for oversight of the ministry and projects within the Synod. Rev. Warriti Galacha is the president and he has served as the WWBS General Secretary for many years. He has inherited a few problems. Some of them are financial accounting problems, which may eventually be worked out. However, one of the biggest challenges involves BESS and its transition to having a Vocational Training College on its campus. I have shared with you previously the results of my role as a mediator for this situation. Primarily the result was to enable parties to be able to continue to the conversation in a constructive way. Ato Abebe is the new director of BESS and he is playing catch up. He also inherited many problems from the former director.

Mike and Janelle McCarty have left the field and their work at WWBS. Janelle was a great asset to BESS though I do not think the former director did anything to encourage or support her in her work. Mike will be greatly missed in the WWBS development department especially in his good contributions to the work with the Majangir Community. They are available in the states for speaking and I trust that someone has helped at least one of them to be present at the network. JoAnn Griffith finishes her time as a volunteer at BESS on May 3.

BESS continues in its request for teachers and I support this request in that the Director has been changed. There will still be challenges. BESS ECO: E862104

Berhane Yesus Elementary School (BYES): Need for English language Teachers: Financial struggles, ECO: E051836.

The church continues to grow in all Synods, but WWBS does have an ECO for Evangelism work. ECO 863169. In Conjunction with this Gidada Bible School trains evangelist and Pastors in WWBS. I believe that Mike McCarty was assisting GBS in getting an ECO account but I do not have the number if the request for an Eco was approved.

- 5. Illubabor Bethel Synod: Partnership with the Shenandoah Presbytery (just renewed the partnership agreement and looks forward to continuing in its 20 year

relationship. Positive relationship and good balance in what it means to be in partnership. Shenandoah Presbytery sent a team to be present at the recent IBS Synod Assembly and will most likely make that part of their report at the mission Network meeting. IBS is one of the healthiest Synods in the EECMY and they are able to be a responsible partner. Approximately 75% of their congregations pay the salaries of the pastor and carry out their local ministry. The Synod itself has an excellent record for implementing projects and facilitating the plans of presbyteries. Currently they have a plan to assist the Jimma Presbytery to become a Synod within the next five years. This may have some implications for aspects of the Partnership with Shenandoah in the future. They also have a priority for Capacity building of their human resources and desire to upgrade their Synod workers to degree and in a few cases advance degree levels. The only ECO that is associated with IBS is a PFF project and I will list PFF ECOs at the end of this report. Some highlights of the work in IBS include a strong Women's department and the Lydia project. The women's department also started a new program aimed at helping young girls ages 12-16 to learn about being women. Terfa Jarso Bible School is a very good training facility for evangelist and pastors.

6. South West Bethel Synod: In partnership with Washington Presbytery. Ato Petros will be there to represent his Synod. This Synod recognizes its need for capacity building with regard to leadership training in fields of ministry, development, and management. If Ato Petros were not so committed to his role in the Synod and dedicated to its development, and were to for any reason leave his work in the Synod, I think the Synod Administration would collapse. There is a need to develop more people in their capacity to be leaders in the Synod so that some of the burden can be taken off the shoulders of Ato Petros. The Charles Haspels Bible School and the evangelism department are in need of financial support. The DASSC department of SWBS needs more depth and trained personnel.

John and Gwen Haspels are PC (USA) Mission Co-workers serving in development, health and evangelism in SWBS.

ECO: Charles Haspels Bible School E047902, Suri Health Work E862764. Also has a PFF related ECO listed at the end of the document.

7. East Gambella Bethel Synod: Currently has no formal partnership relationship with a PC(USA) entity. Young, inexperienced leaders who are devoted Christians, creative, and energetic would like very much to enter into a partnership of mutual respect and support. First Presbyterian Church from Seattle Washington has been involved in some projects with this Synod and I would like for them to be encouraged even though there have been some difficulties that in many respects were not caused by either EGBS or the mission representatives for First Presbyterian Church.

They now have an excellent DASSC director in the person of Rev. Gilo Gora. Their Evangelism Department is well led by Owar ...and they have a Bible School that is emerging. Capacity building of human leadership needs to continue in order to provide depth in leadership and allow the synod to focus on

strengthening its leaders at the presbytery level. EGBS has been a key participant in the peace and reconciliation work in the Gambella region.

EGBS faces current crises as the people in their region, particularly; Peneudo, Gog, and Abobo in the rural areas face a food shortage problem. Gambella Town itself is facing crises with the cost and availability of maize, Wheat, and Sorgum. This crisis is also contributing to strained relations between the highlanders and the Anuwaa. Since the Ethiopian DPPC (disaster prevention and preparedness commission) has released its target areas for assistance and Gambella is listed among the areas ACT will be submitting an appeal in the coming weeks which will allow the PC(USA) PDA to respond. The situation is critical at present and will become worse, deadly, by July.

ECOs: Anuak Evangelism and Leadership Training EECMY E863105, Anuak Bible Translation EECMY E863117. **(The translation work is coming to a close and Breezy has asked me to help with the process of bringing closure. I need some suggestions from you on the process.)**

8. West Gambella Bethel Synod: Currently has no formal partnership relationship with a PC (USA) entity. Capacity building and scholarships are their highest priority. Financial management has been their weakest point for a long time. They have recently hired a new accountant and we have to see how it will work out. I still think a partnership would be an excellent way to encourage the Synod while supporting capacity building in areas of scholarships, financial management training and stewardship teaching. The US partner would benefit from the partnership through the Christian witness and dedication of the Nuer Christians. They have the Barro Bible School to train pastor and Evangelist and they have an excellent DASSC Director in James Gadet. The President, Rev. Matthew Doleak, is a humble spirit and provided me with the best pastoral care I have had in years with regard to my daughter Lydia. WGBS has also played a significant role in the peace and reconciliation work in the Gambella Region. WGBS faces the same crises as EGBS with regard to food shortage. Their areas of focus are Itang, Jakow, Larey (SP).

Rachel Weller, PC (USA) Mission Co-worker has been involved with the training of clinic workers and the rehabilitation of clinics for both EGBS and WGBS.

Lose Ends:

A. Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology. John and Anne Wheeler-Waddell, PC (USA) Mission Co-workers. ECO for the school E051846. School is currently involved in some major construction of facilities and welcome contributions. John and Anne will be available in the States at the end of July, 2008.

B. Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Seminary ECO E862751

C. PFF related ECOs:

E040017	Surma, Deze
E040019	Outreach Illubabor Bethel Synod
E040020	New Forms of Evangelism (EECMY)
E040060	Afar
E040069	Awash-Gibe Area Evangelism
E040074	Outreach in Southwest Bethel Synod
E040086	Arssi Oromos
E040087	Eastern Oromos

D. Michael Weller, PC (USA) Regional Liaison For the Horn of Africa:
ECO:E051698

Report submitted April 22, 2008
Michael Weller