

Partnership Agreement 2008

Background

In 2008, as part of an extended visit to Ethiopia and the biannual IBS Convention, Rev. Reed Hopkins of Loch Willow Presbyterian Church, Rev. Bob von Oeyen of Bethany Presbyterian Church and Elder Cliff Gilchrest from Covenant Presbyterian Church joined with leaders of the Illubabor Bethel Synod in Addis Ababa, during the first week in March, to begin the process of renewing our Covenant of Partnership. Members representing IBS in the renewal process included, Kes Yadetta Kirita, President of IBS, Kes Mersha Seyoum, Kes Tariku Tollasa, Kes Wondimu Legasse and Ato Melaku Tsegaye. PCUSA's Regional Liaison for the Horn of Africa, Rev. Michael Weller had graciously agreed to join us to guide and facilitate our deliberations. With Reverend Weller's leadership and after four days of intense, yet collegial collaboration, we arrived at a draft document we unanimously agreed to submit to our respective bodies. Our time of deliberation and fellowship was consummated by Kes Iteffa Gobena, then President of EECMY, in a very moving and spirit filled Communion service.

Since then, IBS and the Ethiopian Partnership Committee have taken time to review the original draft, make mutually agreed to changes and amendments and submit this as our Covenant of Partnership for the next five years.

Vision Statement

Our shared vision for our Covenant is the continued development of our partnership, our fellowship; that we seek to embody the spirit of Koinonia (Christian Fellowship) by striving to live together in intentional community, sharing a life of prayer, work, study, service and fellowship.

Mission Statement

We reaffirm, as stated in our original MOU, that the Church of Jesus Christ is one body in spite of physical and cultural differences (I Cor.12:13). Within our fellowship, each is equally valued and each receives God given grace and God given life. We still do not embody the fullness of Christ's Church (John 10:16). But standing together we move toward that goal. In this relationship, mission is two-way in all aspects, with each partner mutually and equally sharing and receiving. We strive for the biblical justice seen in the Holy Communion that invites all to partake in the Body. Together, we reach out to the people who do not yet belong to the body of Christ.

Objectives

1. To engage in regular communication.
2. To work together toward quantitative and qualitative growth.
3. To witness and bear suffering together in the world for the sake of our faith.
4. To encourage and motivate one another to reach out to the unreached people with the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.
5. To encourage one another to live as disciples of Jesus Christ, committed to sacrifice all in order to minister to God's people and the world as called ordained leaders and laity.

6. To understand and embody our ministry to one another and to the world in a holistic manner, as in the motto of the EECMY: “The whole gospel for the whole person in the whole world.”

Needs of Each Partner: (The order does not reflect the order of priority.)

Illubabor Bethel Synod: There are needs for:

1. The training of church workers and the equipping of the laity in the knowledge of the Word of God so that all members may provide care and nurture for their respective congregations.
2. Persons with specialized nursing and librarian skills who possess deep commitments of faith.
3. Short term exchanges and visits of people to equip and build up the laity as an expression of the international nature of the Christian Church.
4. Reaching the unreached people in our region through evangelistic outreach.
5. Construction of congregational buildings and support of health ministry projects.
6. Promotion of congregation to congregation relationships that include prayers, committed relationships, exchanges of people, solidarity and oneness with each congregation’s special mission and situation.
7. Continued funding for the IBS departments of Development, Evangelism, and Administration to facilitate the coordination of the Synod’s work.
8. Funding for ministries including: evangelism and outreach, church development, capacity building through leadership training and development activities.

Shenandoah Presbytery: There are needs for:

1. Spiritual renewal and formation.
2. To experience the vitality, depth and richness of faith found among Christians in Ethiopia as a way to stimulate and encourage our members to be strengthened in faith and worship.
3. To challenge our young people with the gospel and the call to Christian discipleship.
4. To experience more directly the global nature of the Church of Jesus Christ and be responsive to God’s call to share the story of God’s love revealed in Jesus Christ with all people.
5. To understand and appreciate how our denomination is involved in mission around the world by participating more concretely in its mission in one part of the world.

6. To experience a more concrete involvement of Christian sharing and discipleship through direct relationships and communication with partners in mission.
7. To experience the solidarity we share with brothers and sisters in Christ with appreciation for the diversity of language, culture, and nationality as we sit together at table, as we pray and worship together, as we share our lives and faith through conversation, as we play and work together in God's service with our Ethiopian brothers and sisters.
8. To discover a stronger desire to share our faith within our own communities.
9. To call people to turn and move toward God
10. To invite and encourage people's participation in the Church of Jesus Christ.
11. To grow in our willingness and ability to share and receive our abundant monetary, talent, and faith resources.
12. To enlarge our view of the world and human life through direct experiences of other cultures, political and economic situations, and be engaged in the development of relationships with the people of those cultures.

Specific Commitments of our Fellowship

Shenandoah Presbytery:

1. We will pray fervently for one another. We will promote the first Sunday on odd-numbered months (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sept., and Nov.) and the last Sunday in September as days for prayers for our respective partner church. We will encourage additional prayers for specific needs and individuals. We will also send our prayer request to IBS.
2. We will communicate regularly through letters, phone calls, faxes, emails and personal visits. All formal and/or administrative contact or action undertaken, including congregation to congregation partnerships will be shared with the IBS Executive Board and Shenandoah Presbytery's Ethiopian Partnership Committee.
3. We will allocate at least \$6,000 annually from Shenandoah Presbytery's budget to support the evangelistic and development work of the Illubabor Bethel Synod.
4. We will encourage congregation to congregation partnerships and Mission Community to IBS Presbytery partnerships within the larger partnership between Shenandoah Presbytery and IBS.
5. We will continue to build relationships through yearly exchange visits. Shenandoah Presbytery will encourage visits by pastors and representatives of congregations in the presbytery, in response to the needs and requests of IBS, giving priority to first time visitors from as wide a representation from mission communities as possible. ***IBS will cover local mileage and accommodations during visits to its biannual Synod convention.***

6. We will seek to recruit committed Christians from Shenandoah Presbytery with useful skills and training for longer term work within the Illubabor Bethel Synod, as per specific requests from IBS.
7. We will explore supporting an extended visit of a leader from the Illubabor Bethel Synod as a missionary within the Shenandoah Presbytery.
8. We will respond to opportunities to assist in the training of leaders for the Illubabor Bethel Synod by supporting scholarships to the Mekane Yesus Seminary, sending useful books to the Synod, and sending qualified teachers for short-term leadership training seminars.
9. We will encourage churches and individuals to consider responding to special opportunities for the support of projects and ministries, including but not limited to the Mettu Library Project, English for Ethiopia, HEART, Medical Clinics and cow for a pastor.
10. We will continue to promote and support the ministry of the iCARE program.
11. We will send itineration teams to promote the Partnership through out Shenandoah Presbytery.
12. We will continue to support and participate in the Ethiopian Mission network.

Illubabor Bethel Synod:

1. We will continue to pray for one another, the first Sunday of every other month (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sept., Nov.). Prayer request will be translated and sent to Synod staff devotion and congregations regularly. We will also send our prayer requests to Shenandoah Presbytery.
2. We will make every effort, to our level best, to regularly communicate through letters, phone calls, faxes, emails, and personal visits. All formal and/or administrative contact or action undertaken, including congregation to congregation partnerships will be shared with the IBS Executive Board and Shenandoah Presbytery's Ethiopian Partnership Committee.
3. An annual narrative and financial report shall be sent to Shenandoah Presbytery in order to share the ongoing developments that take place in Illubabor Bethel Synod.
4. We will encourage congregation to congregation partnerships, and through such partnerships share visions, experiences, create opportunities for mission.
5. We will continue to build relationships through exchange visits. Through such visits, we encourage pastors and representatives of congregations in Shenandoah Presbytery to be involved (teaching/training) in the Illubabor Bethel Synod

leadership development activities that are regularly performed on a short-term basis each year.

6. Illubabor Bethel Synod will cover local mileage and accommodation expenses for Shenandoah Presbytery visitors who attend the biannual Synod convention in Mettu.

Evaluation and Reporting

The Illubabor Bethel Synod/Shenandoah Presbytery covenant will be evaluated every five years.

Members of our respective bodies will meet together during exchange visits either with the IBS Executive Board /Synod leaders, Management Committee or the Ethiopian Partnership Committee of Shenandoah Presbytery.

The focus of these conversations will be a “checking in” with regard to each party’s experience in the partnership. While conversations during visits may lead each body to suggest modifications in the Covenant, actual changes in the Covenant will be undertaken through the regular evaluation process. Reports from visitors will be considered when making such changes.

Resources Available to Fulfill Fellowship Commitments

Shenandoah Presbytery:

The Ethiopian Partnership Committee of Shenandoah Presbytery has an annual budget of at least \$12,000 which is used to cover travel costs related to exchange visits and provide an annual contribution to support the evangelistic and development work of the Illubabor Bethel Synod, and other IBS requests.

Communication expenses are typically paid by individuals or congregations involved in various activities in the partnership.

Ethiopian Partnership Committee of Shenandoah Presbytery will cover round-trip airfare for first time visitors to IBS. The individual or his /her congregation will provide in-country expenses, such as ground transportation, meals, etc., (usually estimated at \$1,200-1,600).

Funding for special projects is raised through donations by congregations within the presbytery in response to promotions of new projects within IBS.

Funding for the support of children participating in the iCARE program will be provided by individuals and congregations who have made a commitment within the parameters of the iCARE program.

Illubabor Bethel Synod

Illubabor Bethel Synod is committed to allocate some amount of money from its administrative expenses for the following purposes.


1. To cover the local mileage, food and accommodation expenses of visitors from Shenandoah Presbytery who are attending the Biannual IBS Convention.
2. Cover local expenses (visas, per diem, and related activities) for IBS visitors to Shenandoah Presbytery.
3. To cover IBS communication expenses related to this partnership.

Covenant
Between Illubabor Bethel Synod and Shenandoah Presbytery

Approved by Shenandoah Presbytery Stated Session Date Feb 14, 2009

Full Name Sally J. Hinchman Signature Sally J. Hinchman

Approved by Illubabor Bethel Synod _____ Date _____

Full Name Yadetta Kirita Signature 

Partners:

EECMY Synod: Illubabor Bethel Synod

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Contact Person: Elder Sally Hinchman, Interim General Presbyter, Shenandoah Presbytery

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