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 ዋናው ጽሕፈት ቤት
THE ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH MEKANE YESUS
CENTRAL OFFICE

ሙሉ-ሙን ስሙ ማገልገል		"Serving the Whole Person"	
አባይ ዳቡስ ሲኖድ	Abay Dabus synod	ማዕከላዊ ሰሜን ኢትዮጵያ ሲኖድ	North Central Ethiopia Synod
አማር ሲኖድ	Anaro Synod	ማዕከላዊ ደቡብ ኢትዮጵያ ሲኖድ	South Central Ethiopia Synod
ቤጊ ጊዳሚ ሲኖድ	Beghi Gidami Synod	ማዕከላዊ ደቡብ ሲኖድ	South Central Synod
ብርብር ዳላ ሲኖድ	Birbir Dilla Synod	ደቡብ ኢትዮጵያ ሲኖድ	South Ethiopia Synod
ማዕከላዊ ግብ ሲኖድ	Central Gibe Synod	ደቡብ ምዕራብ ቤቴል ሲኖድ	South Western Bethel Synod
ማዕከላዊ ሲኖድ	Central Synod	ደቡብ ምዕራብ ሲኖድ	South West Synod
ማዕከላዊ ኢትዮጵያ ሲኖድ	Central Ethiopia Synod	ደቡብ ሲኖድ	South Synod
ምሥራቅ ጋምቤላ ቤቴል ሲኖድ	East Gambela Bethel Synod	ግብ ባቱ ሲኖድ	Wabe Batu Synod
ግምቢ ጆርጎ ሲኖድ	Ghimbi Jorgo Synod	ምዕራብ ጋምቤላ ቤቴል ሲኖድ	West Gambela Bethel Synod
ኢሉባቦር ቤቴል ሲኖድ	Illubabor Bethel Synod	ምዕራብ ሲኖድ	Western Synod
ሰሜን ምራ ክፍል	North Area work	ምዕራብ ወለጋ ቤቴል ሲኖድ	Western Wollega Bethel Synod

ቁጥር
 Ref. No. 24th December, 2010
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 Date

Arch Bishop Anders Wejerd
 Church of Sweden
 Uppsala, Sweden

Re: Calling on the Church of Sweden to reconsider its decision pertaining to the "rite for the blessing and ordaining of registered homosexual partnerships".

Dear Arch Bishop Wejerd,

Greetings to you in the name of the incarnate our Lord Jesus Christ!

First of all, we would like to begin with expressing our indebtedness and high gratitude to the Church of Sweden, (CoS) recalling some memorable facts of history. In this regard, the sacrificial contribution of pioneer missionaries like Dr Eric Sodstrom who had played a significant role in accompanying Onesimos Nesib, an indigenous leader and evangelist at the very beginning of the inception of the EECMY is worth mentioning. We also would like to highly value our journey as partners in God's mission since then.

Thus, it is fitting for the EECMY to thank CoS and its leadership for the unreserved accompaniment and partnership in promoting a wholistic mission— Evangelism, Development and Social services—to the people of Ethiopia. Further, the EECMY highly appreciates the contributions of missionaries of different skills and capacities who have rendered sacrificial services at various levels of the EECMY, with sincere commitment to their call, proclaiming the Gospel in words and deeds. At this historical juncture, we earnestly acknowledge that the present flourishing growth and enormous blessing we are experiencing are the fruits of such labor.

The legacy of heroes of faith like Dr Sodstrom and many others will continue to remind us of the importance of loving, caring and passionate commitment demonstrated in the ministry given to the Church of God. Moreover, it is our firm belief that such mission initiative, faithful to the authority of the Holy Scripture and that incorporates integrity in Christian life has to continue to generations.

The EECMY had never anticipated that such commitment and covenant, sealed by our forefathers would in course of time; take another direction—a direction that is currently

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ሰዎችን ሁሉ የሚያድን የእግዚአብሔር እጋ ተገልጦአል ቲቶ 2:11
 "For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all men," Tit. 2:11 (KJV)

jeopardizing our partnership in mission. The EECMY had the conviction that this historic mission Partnership between herself and the CoS would continue to bear witness to our biblical faith and Lutheran identity and strengthen our long standing mutual commitment. This was the sole ground on which our forefathers built their partnership, entering a covenant to abide with the truth that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and a guide for partnership in God's Mission.

However, we have realized a strange development, contrary to the above stated conviction, taking place in the theological journey of the CoS.

As a result, we have been deeply alarmed by the direction the CoS chose to pursue, without taking into consideration the above mentioned truth. It is out of this deep concern that the EECMY would like to voice her plea, with a heart saddened deeply and dismayed by the decision taken regarding issues of human sexuality.

As partners in God's Mission, we always pledge respect for decisions that we each make within our own institutional and constitutional rights. It is clearly stated in our Standard Agreement document that the partnership we have in God's mission is solely founded on, and attested by, our confessional commitment to the truth of the Holy Scripture. The EECMY therefore, regards any decision that is contrary to the authority of the Holy Scripture as "conscious departure" or "intentional deviation."

With regard to the decision of CoS on the right for blessing of registered homosexual partnership, earlier in 2006, we do recall that we had clearly declared the position of the EECMY with the message sent to you in our letter of January 11, 2007, and pleaded for the reconsideration of the decision passed, for the sake of the responsibility given to each of us, as partners, to guard the truth of the teaching of the Bible. As you may recall, we have also been discussing on how we could work together having our positions on this issue. However we were not able to reach consensus. To our regret, however, the subsequent actions taken by the CoS in November of 2009 where the church adapted further policy on homosexual mirage and ministry practices which indicates that the CoS is continuing to pursue this decision with out considering the implication it has in her partnership relations with the EECMY.

Hearing the report and recommendation of the Board of Mission and Theology in relation to the resolution of the CoS, the 6th Council of the EECMY, held in Gimbi town (Western Ethiopia), July 1-6, 2010, discussed this issue at length seriously, and unanimously resolved as follows:

- a. To reaffirm its standing position on human sexuality expressed already and communicated to pertinent partners.
- b. To extend a pastoral call to the CoS to return to and abide with the authority of the Bible and reconsider her resolution on the "rite for the blessing and ordination of registered partnership."
- c. To grant a waiting time of one year in line with the Standard Partnership Agreement, and that the response to be received from CoS be reported to the 7th Council of the Church for further appropriate action.



- d. to offer petitions and intercessory prayers at all levels of the EECMY, for the CoS, during the one year waiting period.

Pertaining to this decision, the EECMY took the following points into account:

(1) obviously, the relationship between the EECMY and the CoS has a longstanding history which dates back to 1866. We thank the Lord that this relationship has led us into full partnership in mission. Indeed, we have pledged "to work together in a spirit of mutual trust, transparency and accountable stewardship" [SAFP II. 6]. This has a variety of implications for both churches in partnership. It presupposes, among other things, that our relationship binds us to share information mutually, and see to it that our decisions or actions would not jeopardize, but rather promote and enhance our communion relations.

(2) In the Standard Partnership Agreement, we have mutually entered into a very strong commitment, which is worth mentioning for reference at this juncture:

"We [the EECMY and the Partners] strongly believe that participating in God's Mission is a wholistic and corporate responsibility of all God's people. Thus, by virtue of our shared heritage, and as a consequence of our long-standing relationships, we belong to each other and have a common task to accomplish for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

We uphold the Biblical truth that the Church of Jesus Christ is one body in Him. Just as each member of the human body lives and functions together with the other members for the well-being of the whole body, we have been joined together by the Lord Jesus Christ to live and function together. This unity is for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission together, as entrusted to us by the Lord Jesus Christ". [SPA 3.1. - 3. 2.].

(3) Based on these facts of our relationship, the EECMY Council was compelled to question the place of mutual belongingness, unity of purpose and mutual care for the well-being of the whole body of Christ in the context of the decision of CoS to bless "registered homosexual partners", marriage and adaption of ministry policies prior to making any attempt to share its hermeneutical stance. Thus, the unilateral decision taken by the CoS on such a theologically and confessionally sensitive issue has disturbed the EECMY constituency at large and has provoked worries and uncertainties pertaining to the EECMY – CoS relations.

(4) The EECMY General Assembly at its 17th meeting, which took place in January 2005, approved the Core Values of the Church, which eventually became part and parcel of our reframed Constitution. One section of the Core Values ["EECMY Moral Standard"] that deals with the Church's biblical understanding of marriage and family states:

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus believes and profoundly affirms that human beings are created in the image of God as men and women (Gen. 1:27);



and are therefore, worthy of love, care, respect, dignity and protection in all aspects.

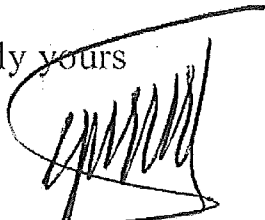
As essential component of her fundamental social value cited above, the EECMY believes and relentlessly asserts that family is formed by the marital union between a man and woman, as preordained by God the creator” (Gen. 2:22 & 24).

Therefore, it is our sincere prayer that, in God’s own intervention, the Lord Holy Spirit may call the CoS to metanoya (repentance) and that your leadership may promptly consider revisiting of this decision, for the sake of the authority of the Scripture and the service God has entrusted to us all which is the base and foundation of our call and partnership. We also pray, in particular for you, at this critical time, that God may grant you wisdom in handling this situation.

We very much look forward to hearing your response at your earliest convenience.

May God bless us all as we seek his face for guidance!

Sincerely yours



Wakseyeun Idosa (Rev. Dr)
President, EECMY



Cc: Rev. Martin Junge
LWF General Secretary
EECMY Leaders
EECMY Synods/Joint Programs and DASSC
CO Management Committee