

# Covenant

## Between El Sinodo de La Iglesia Evangélica y Reformada de Honduras and The Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ

### I. Nature

This document expresses the mutual willingness of the parties to enter into a voluntary relationship in which each agrees to undertake both general and specific goals, tasks, and obligations in pursuit of the purposes stated below. This is not to be seen as a legal obligation but as an equal partnership with each party acknowledging its accountability and responsibility to the other and to the partnership.

### II. Partners

The partners are El Sinodo de La Iglesia Evangélica y Reformada de Honduras and The Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ.

### III. Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the partnership set forth in this covenant is to :

- experience the all-inclusive, world-wide nature of the Church;
- engage in service that builds up the Body of Christ;
- support Christians in another land to share and live out their understanding of Christian faithfulness;
- help the partners deepen their understanding of what each is called to be and do in their respective settings within the global family;
- help each to become sensitive to the cultural differences in lifestyle and daily life concerns of the other;
- work together for a just peace locally and in the world at large;
- engage in exchange visits.

Accordingly, the two parties agree to enter into covenant for the seven year period, January 2004, to January 2011. The covenant may be amended or modified by mutual agreement following a joint evaluation and review. It may be renewed by the same process.

### IV. Strategies

A. Each partner will appoint or elect a special "Link Committee" that consists of at least two ordained and two lay members. The Link Committee shall serve for only the following purposes and no others: to implement, coordinate and oversee the strategies and programs developed to meet this agreement's purposes and goals, monitor their progress, and communicate regularly with the other. Each partner will endeavor to fulfill its duties, obligations and responsibilities in a timely and expedient manner.

B. Each partner agrees that every two years, beginning in 2004, they will participate in a "Mission Council" meeting to be held in Honduras. The Mission Council shall consist of three members of each "Link Committee". At this Mission Council meeting, each partner will discuss their hopes, dreams and goals, as well as all specific projects and action plans, that they hope to accomplish over the next two year period. The Mission Council meeting will result in a two year "Mission Plan" that includes all projects, visits, retreats, and other activities that will be realized during that period. No other activities will be added to the partnership program until the next scheduled Mission Council meeting. The only exceptions to the "Mission Plan" will be in the case of natural disasters. Each partner reserves the right to cancel any or all components of the Mission Plan with notification to the other partner.

C. Each partner agrees that every project, visit, retreat, or other activity will proceed with the following project guidelines:

- All project requests and offers must have a local "Project Committee" as its sponsor. A Project Committee shall consist of both lay persons who are members of the churches involved as well as clergy. Community members who are not members of the church may also be part of the local sponsoring Project Committee.
- All Project Committees shall be co-chaired by an elected church leader and a layperson.
- Once a project has been approved by the Mission Council, all communication shall be between these two Project Committees and their co-chairs.
- The role of the Link Committees will be to provide guidance and to monitor progress by reviewing progress reports that have been submitted by both local Project Committees. Milestones requiring reports can be determined based on the size of the project.
- The sponsoring Project Committee must remain active throughout the entire project.
- The project documentation will explain how the community and how many people will benefit from this project
- No project will be considered that is not community based.

D. Each partner agrees that this covenant is not limited to but calls the partners to:

- support the other through prayer, worship, and service;
- share the joys and sorrows, struggles and triumphs of the other as we seek to be the body of Christ;
- learn about and seek to understand the economic, social political and cultural aspects of the other's country;
- send and/or receive work teams to assist (in construction, maintenance or repair of) with projects chosen by the Mission Council;
- work together in supporting, promoting, and implementing programs of the Synod through AIEH in areas of public health, educational, theological education, and social action (programs of AIEH);
- send and/or receive visiting delegations [to each other's annual meetings and assemblies].

## V. Resources

Each partner will endeavor to be sensitive to the financial implications for the other of exchange visits and work teams. Prior to exchanges of visitors or the sending of work teams, the coordinating committees will determine the extent to which the host can provide room, board and domestic transportation, and the extent to which the visiting partner will have to cover such costs.

Prior to the arrival of work teams and delegations of visitors, the partners will determine the resources (personnel, time, materials and finances) to be provided by each. The project timetable will also be clearly established and agreed upon.

All financial assistance will be pre-determined by the Mission Council.

## **VI. Spirit**

Each partner will inform its membership of the details of this covenant and encourage its member churches and agencies to both actively participate in the partnership and also abide by its contents. All member churches and associated organizations will be required to plan two-years in advance in order for projects of any sort to be discussed at the biennial Mission Council.

Each partner acknowledges that open dialogue is essential to the successful maintenance of the partnership and commits itself to communicate fully and effectively with the other.