



# The President's Report

**Rev. Dr. Moses Suah-Dennis, President Liberian Ministers Association of the Delaware Valley Annual Report to the Second General Assembly held at Faith-Immanuel Lutheran Church, East Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, December 12, 2015.**

## **Introduction**

We meet here today in Assembly under the theme *Missional Foresight: Embracing the Future, Building with Focus*. This theme is a call and a reminder to us like that of Jeremiah's to his people during their time of exile. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV). The message embedded in this theme and passage for me is that God always has a future for those who consistently look to God no matter their location, life circumstances or history. And because God does not give-up on us, we cannot give-up on God or one another, no matter our differences. Thus, we come together on this twelve day of this twelve month with a missional foresight to discern together ways of embracing our shared-future and build it together with focus under the leadership of Holy Spirit.

Before diving further into this future-looking subject, let me invite all of us to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of all who ended their earthly journeys with us in 2015. I ask you to particularly continue to pray for the families of Apostle Connery Dagadu, Rev. Dr. Napoleon Divine and many Ebola victims who made their transitions from labor to rest. Let us also in this same vine give thanks for the many blessings and miracles seen among us during this same time period. Our individual and collective experiences of the mysterious amidst the miraculous in 2015 and years past provide adequate reasons for our need for Mission Foresight that embraces the future God envisions and can only be built with focus.

## **2015 Highlights: Challenges and Successes**

Scripture, Reason, Tradition and Experience are said to be the 4-legs that any sound theology must stand. This report is not a theological disposition but, I however urge you to utilize the trajectory of experience, tradition, reason and Scripture to engage each other interest as we

deliberate today and the months ahead. If re-elected today, my commitment will be to continue working on the goals of strengthening the association's existing structures, building lasting legacies and developing of community partnerships. These three focus of our administration helped to anchor us in the last two years as we worked sacrificially at serving our respective congregations and the larger community.

Allow me to intentionally use sacrificial as the key word to describe our leadership of this noble association during the last two years. We entered the year 2015 when the impact of the Ebola Virus on Liberia and West Africa was about midway to its peak. Our appointment by President Dahn Dennis of the Liberian Association of Pennsylvania to lead our community Ebola response efforts followed by the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrants Affairs to chair the Coalition of West African Countries affected by Ebola intensified the responsibility entrusted to our care. We successfully held weekly planning meetings, raised fund by printing and selling T-Shirts and wristbands.

Donations were also were also received through the distribution of envelopes and via the [lmadv.org](http://lmadv.org), our very attractive website also developed by this administration. The highlight of the coalition's 2015 Ebola work was the planning and implementation of the Ebola Healing and Benefits Concert in partnership with the Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church on June 14, 2015, 4-7pm. Gospel Artists with national and international recognition from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, including the LMADV Mass Choir, Ambassador Marron Cassell, Ministers: Evelyn Marsh, Steve Kelly and guest star Tamika Patton participated. Join me expressing our heartfelt gratitude to all our artist who made that day successful.

In addition to the general work of the coalition highlighted by this concert, the Liberian constituent of the coalition shipped a 40FT container of donated Ebola Relief items to Liberia with the total price tag of \$10, 697.51. Our Association is still indebted for the amount of \$3150.00 for the total cost incurred on this project. T-shirts and wristbands are still available for sale to help generate the money and payback borrowed to pay for the release of these Ebola Relief items from the Freeport of Monrovia, Republic of Liberia.

Our work on the Ebola relief effort also coincided with un-expected deaths of the Apostle Connery Dagadu and the Rev. Dr. Napoleon Divine. The Association rallied by way of voluntary contributions and presented the sum of \$1, 000.00 to each of the bereaved family as the

association's expression of sympathy and support. Special Thanks to the Rev. Dr. Anthony Kawala Sengbe and the people of Victory Harvest Fellowship International for allowing the bereaved families to use their premises for the funeral and reception for Apostle Dagadu and the repass for Rev. Dr. Divine. We also identified with other members of the LMADV during their time of bereavements.

The Association further identified with members who celebrated anniversaries, special occasions and those who faced other life challenges. Visits were paid to Bishop Amos Tarpeh and Rev. David Wonzon during their respective hospitalization and rehabilitation by individual pastors and groups at different times. We were officially represented at New Hope Baptist Church ordination service of Deacons and Deaconesses; the anniversaries services of Agape Baptist Church International, the Breathe of God Ministry, Agape Senior Center Ministry; appreciations services for Apostle Winston Duba and Rev. Dr. Napoleon Birsch; fundraising program hosted by Ophelia Dawolo; the Union of Liberian Associations in the US (ULLA) general assembly, the inaugural ball of the Liberian Association of Pennsylvania; the graduation thanksgiving service for the Rev. Dr. Anthony Sengbe. Thanks to all of you who also attended my graduation celebration on August 19, 2015.

## **Leadership Empower Forum**

### **Relationship with Board**

#### **Frequent section**

In addition to the holding of the Association's monthly meetings, the association's youth arm hosted a Valentine's Day fellowship on February 14. The annual Independence's Day Thanksgiving Service for Liberia 168<sup>th</sup> Independence Day was held on July 26 at the Victory Harvest Fellowship International. The Family Enrichment, Pastors and Community Leadership Appreciation Dinner held on October 31 was the Association's most successful program for 2015.

Just as the opportunities and challenges of 2014 continued into 2015 so will those of 2015 overflow into 2016. I intent to continue to expand on the successes achieved over the last two years by this administration. The challenges we faced helped us learned valuable lessons that will help us navigate future ones. The LMADV calling to be gate keepers to our neighborhoods

and the responsibilities of our congregations/ministries/churches to be the back-bonds to our communities cannot be over-emphasized. We must therefore work together to fulfill these duties under the umbrella of the LMADV matter our differences.

### **Recommendations:**

The experiences gained over the last two in leading the LMADV amount to a wake-up call. Our participation in responding to the crisis created by the deadly Ebola Virus, the July 5, 2014 Gesner Street tragic fire, the passing of Apostle Dagadu and Dr. Divine are in themselves more than sufficient reasons why we must collaborate and work together for the good of our people and community. To this end, I am recommending two new activities that will help strengthen our association within and increase our visibility and relevance within our constituent. These activities are intended to expand the valuable space needed for our congregations, ministries and churches to increase their participation in the work of the LMADV. The youth wing example is a proof that with commitment, this is doable.

First, I suggest an annual day and night of prayer for Liberia and Liberian to precede our annual July 26 Thanksgiving Service. This Day and Night of Prayer will be a medium for Liberian Christians in the Delaware Valley to collective pray for Liberia.

Second, I propose the holding of a quarterly Discussion Forum on Issues of Concerns for Liberians at home and those of us in the Diaspora. This talk forum can be organize in partnership with the Liberian Association of Pennsylvania (LAP) and will allow Liberian across the Delaware Valley and the country to add their voices to the conversations that can help to shape the future of the motherland, Mama Liberia.

This mid-term report is intended to reiterate my administration platform to strengthen the Liberian Ministers Association of the Delaware valley through the building of working structures, lasting legacies and vibrant community partnerships. Thanks for your presence, your listening ears, your response and input as we work together today and in the future to better serve our people, community and country.

**President's Report to the Liberian Ministers' Association of the Delaware Valley 2014  
Assembly, Faith-Immanuel Lutheran Church, E Lansdowne, PA, December 27, 2014.**

**Introduction**

On this occasion of our first general assembly in recent years, the Apostle Paul confession that our God completes those things that are begun speaks to the past, present and future of the Liberian Ministers Association of the Delaware (LMADV). I submit this report as the fourth President of the LMADV standing on the shoulders of those who came before us as members, officers, board and supporters of the LMADV. The work of the LMADV must continue in obedience to our Lord's command, in honor of those who came before us and in commitment to our founding document: "Unity for Spiritual Progress and Commitment" (Pre-amble, LMADV Constitution)

**At the Beginning**

I raised my right hand alongside Rev. Urias Dixon and Rev. Solomon M. Muin on November 14, 2013 as we were sworn in as President, Vice President and Secretary of LMADV, respectively. This took place in the presence of former President, Bishop Amos Tarpeh with whom I served as Vice President for 4 years and other officers and members at the Refugee Baptist Church. The Rev. John Jallah was elected Board Chairman, Bishop Gabriel Lardner-Co-Chair, Bishop Joshua Cummings-Board Secretary, Rev. John Gblah and Rev. Henry Koffa as members on that same day.

We got into action beginning that day and I am very excited to report all our accomplishments over the last twelve months to this assembly today. Our first order of business was to hold a day-long mini-retreat designed to review the association's past, do reconciliation among ministers, hold

bi-elections and plan for the future. This retreat was held on November 14, 2014, 9am-4pm at the Victory Harvest Fellowship International Ministries. Our platform presented at that meeting called for the re-focusing of the LMADV as a dignified professional organization. To that end, we laid out three strategic approaches in pursuing this goal:

1. structurally strengthen LMADV
2. Engage in Legacy Building and
3. Identify Dependable Community Partners. The retreated ended with the holding of bi-elections: Rev. Dr. Samuel Ndorley-Treasurer, Rev. Amos Suah-Financial Secretary and Evangelist Letricia Roberts-Chaplain. A total of 37 persons participated in that that day-long retreat.

The planning and implementation of executives and board Inauguration with the honoring of former leaders and members of the association and community became our next task. A committee of 5 persons, chaired by the Rev. Solomon Muin was constituted and on February 16, 2013, a grand inaugural ball was held at the North American Motor Inn on 444 City Lane Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 6-10pm. During the ball, Bishop Gabriel Lardner, Rev. John Gblah, Rev. Anthony Sengbe, Rev. Kau-Dolopei, Rev. John Jallah, Rev. Ruth Deah, Rev. Napoleon Birsch and Bishop Amos Tarpeh received plaques in honor of their leadership and services to the Christian Church and larger community.

### **Celebrations and Success**

The inaugural ball was graced by performances by the newly re-organized Mass Choir to the delight of LMADV officers, Board members, guests and friends. Distinguished guests included: Ms. Karen Strokes, who presented a citation on behalf of PA Governor Tom Corbel, Mr. William Greaves-Liberia's Council General and his wife, Rev. Gordon Simmons-Dean Delaware County Conference-Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod/Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Dr. Vera Tolbert- President/Coalition of African and Caribbean Organization, Rev. Marcus Kibgs-installing officer, among others.

Our successful holding of the December mini-retreat and February inaugural ball provided us with the opportunity to begin achieving our proposed platform to structurally strengthen the LMADV, build concrete legacies and identify active community partners. The Liberian

Association of Pennsylvania (LAP) initiated the first outreach gesture. Faith-Immanuel Lutheran Church was honored with the presence of Mr. Dahn K. Dennis, other officers and members of the Board of Directors at our regular 11:30am service when I administered their oath of office and later served as installing officer at LAP's inaugural ball.

LAP's President, Mr. Dahn K. Dennis encouraged by our visibility and engagement in the community elevated the relationship between LAP and LMADV by inviting us to serve a key partner on the Coalition that planned and successfully implemented Liberia's 167th Independence anniversary here in Philadelphia, July 25-27, 2014. I received LAP's 2014 Outstanding Community Leadership Award for the LMADV work at the 167th Gala Ball at the Airport Marriott attended by His Excellency Ambassador Jeremiah Sulunteh, ULAA President, City Philadelphia and State Officials and other Signatories.

### **Crises and Opportunities**

Our involvement in two significant crisis in our community on behalf of the LMADV contributed to our receiving of the LAP Community Leadership award. The first being the wrongful arrest of two prominent Liberians (Mr. & Mrs. Korlewala) on April 3, 2014 on alleged robbery charges, which were eventually dismissed. The July 5, 2014 early morning Gesner Street fire was the second.

The fight for justice for the Korlewalas' was almost to the finished line when news of the tragic death of 4 Liberian children reached us on the early morning of July 5<sup>th</sup>. We rushed to Bartram High School that morning, met with Red Cross Representatives, family members of the deceased children, and later that day welcomed Mayor Michael Nutter, Ambassador Jeremiah Sulunteh-whom we accompanied to City Hall for a meeting with City Officials. We worked tirelessly with numerous community leaders, including our Board Chair, the Rev. John Jallah, Rev. Napoleon Divine, Mr. Dahn Dennis, Mr. Shiwo Kamara and working committees at providing the leadership our community needed during those very challenging months.

Official word about the spread of the deadly Ebola disease in Liberia reached us at the 167<sup>th</sup> Independence celebration Gala on July 26. Ambassador Jeremiah Sulunteh in his keynote address at that Gala Ball urged Liberians in the Diaspora to join in the fight against Ebola. We

were again appointed by the Liberian Association Pennsylvania (LAP) President, Mr. Dahn Dennis to lead the community's Ebola Response effort. LAP's efforts in the fight against Ebola was expanded in October when the City of Philadelphia through the Mayor's Commission on Africans and Caribbean Immigrants Affairs invited us to expand our coalition to include Guinean and Sierra Leonean Communities in the Delaware Valley Ebola Response—  
[www.operationcrushebola.org](http://www.operationcrushebola.org)

## **Looking Ahead**

The Year 2014 is ending and there are carry-ons that we will continue to work on into 2015. The Ebola response is obvious. The LMADV support, prayer of thanks for Bishop Amos Tarpeh for physical strength as we did for his medical recovery must continue. The LMADV developed many relationships as a result of the Korlewalas' situation, Liberia's 167<sup>th</sup> Independence Celebration Coalition, the Gesner Street fire, the Ebola outbreak and subsequent formation of a working coalition. Our leadership role in the Liberian/African Community and the City of Philadelphia are likely to increase. I pause here to applaud our collective effort in doing all that we have done and all that we will accomplish together in 2015 and beyond.

## **2013-2014 Recaps**

Before putting forth some recommendations, here is a recap of our achievements in 2014 for the platform we put forward:

- I. The following efforts were directed at strengthening the leadership structure of the LMADV**
  - 1 Mini-retreat and bi-election (11/14/2014)
  - 2 Designing and requesting of members to complete and turn in membership forms as a way of formalizing membership in the LMADV (November 14, 2014)
  - 3 Formation of working committees that worked on constitutional and structural issues that produced recommendation I will recommend this convention to review and adapt (November 14, 2014).
  - 4 Holding of officials meeting/conference call prior to all regular general monthly and called emergency meetings (November 2013-December 2014).



- 5 Engaged in conversation with other Liberian Minister Organizations, locally and nationally (January-December 2014).

## **II. Our Legacy Building efforts was achieved by**

1. The honoring of former LMADV members, leaders and other Liberian Pastors at the inaugural launched our efforts at legacy building initiatives (February 16, 2014).
2. Formation of a Mass Choir that sang at our inaugural ball, hosted an exhibition concert and made our community very proud at the 167<sup>th</sup> Independence Day celebration Thanksgiving service was the next step (January 2014).
3. Development of a very functional and user friendly website ([www.lmadv.org](http://www.lmadv.org)) was the third and most significant initiative directed building lasting legacy (March 2014).

## **III. We identified and worked with the following community partners:**

1. LAP: planning and implementing Liberia's 167<sup>th</sup> Independence Day celebration in partnership with the Liberian Women in Progress, Soccer Coalition, Liberian Association of Buck County and the Liberian Embassy in Washington DC (May-August 2014).
2. We held a dinner meeting Dr. Rob Cavotta & attorney Gary Hensil. Both men pledged their services to our community as needed (March 2014)
3. Ministers' and Spouses' rekindling fellowship dinner in partnership with the Marriage School under the leadership Rev. Natt Miller, II was an very important initiative in our efforts at building partnerships (October 18, 2014).
4. Mr. Alan Richardson of ADT Security Company offered free installation of security systems as a result of the Gesner Street Fire. Our partnership with Mr. Richardson is still ongoing (August-December 2014).
5. Initiated conversation with the Philadelphia Fire Department and the 24<sup>th</sup> Police District to work together as partners as results of meetings we had at the Fire

Department Headquarter (9/11/14) and Community Meeting at Christ International Baptist Church, (11/19/14).

6. We are currently chairing the Delaware Valley Ebola Response Coalition made of the LAP/LMADV, the City of Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Affairs, the Sierra Leonean and Guinean Communities in Philadelphia, PA (September 2014-).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To God be the glory for seeing us through a rather challenging and yet fulfilling year. We had a successful election and bi-election; a successful inaugural ball; courageously facilitated the formation of an active mass that participated in all LMADV major programs; helped in the hosting of an unprecedented joint 167<sup>th</sup> July 26 Independence celebration and provided leadership to our community during the arrest of the Korlewalas, the Gesner Street Fire tragedy and the Ebola crisis. Let me thank members of the LMAV, my fellow officers, board members, LAP officers; and all our partners, supporters and friends of the LMADV for your participation and support in 2014.

To continue, increase and expand our work for the next year of our term and that of future administrations, I am requesting your approval the following recommendations:

### **I. Structure Building**

1. Review our monthly regular meeting day quarterly to ensure maximum participation in our meeting and activities.
2. Review the working committees' report to address the following needs of the LMADV: clarification of membership requirements/obligations and ineffective members and office holders.
3. Appoint the Constitution Committee to implement the reinstatement/renewal of LMADV lost 501 C3 status with the IRS by January 31, 2015
4. Adapt proposed guidelines for the governance of the mass choir membership and leadership.
5. Member-churches without other covering considered tithing with the LMADV for which they receive full coving from the LMADV.

6. Others: Member-churches and larger Liberian Community and the African Diaspora utilize the services of the PAADCA (Pennsylvania African Diaspora Consulting Advisors).

## **II. Legacy Building**

1. Continue to hold an annual event on the third Saturday of February (inauguration day) to celebrate, confer membership awards and recognition of leadership accomplishments. This will be launch on February 21, 2015. Buttons will provide membership buttons/pin to all registered due pay members.
2. Required all registered ministers of the LMADV to commit minimum of 5 or 10 members of their choirs/praise team members to join the LMADV mass choir.
3. Continue Ministers' and Spouses' Rekindling Fellowship Dinner annually on a suitable day in November.
4. Others:

## **III. Identifying Community Partners**

1. Fully continue an active support of the work of the Delaware Valley Ebola Response Coalition with focus on post Ebola planning in 2015 and beyond.
2. Work closely with LAP to utilize proposed partnership with the City of Philadelphia's Fire Department, 24<sup>th</sup> Police District, Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Affairs, and the Philadelphia Community of Leaders.
3. Continue Partnership with the Marriage School to host Ministers and Spouse Rekindling Fellowship Dinner annually.
4. Enter into a formal conversation with the Christian Vision Broadcasting Network (CVBN) for the purpose of it becoming an official partner of the LMADV.
5. Others:...

In closing, I invite you to join me in thanking my fellow officers: (VP: Rev., Urias Dixon, Secretary: Rev. Solomon Mandala Muin, Financial Secretary: Rev. Amos Suah, Treasurer: Rev. Dr. Samuel N'dorley, Chaplain: Rev. Letricia Roberts and PRO: Minister Hannah Brooks); officers of the Board of Directors (Rev. John K. Jallah-Chair, Bishop Gabriel Lardner-Co-chair, Bishop Joshua Cummings-Secretary, Rev. Henry Koffa-member, Rev. John Gblah-member); Members of the LMADV, Officers, Directors and members of the LMADV Mass Choir, Friends and Supporters of the LMADV, this first Assembly Planning Team members (Rev. Zarwolo

Gatei, Rev. Amos Suah, Rev. Napoleon Divine, Rev. Henry Koffa, Rev. ); and My family (wife: My First Lady Helena Laurene Johnson-Dennis and Faith-Immanuel Lutheran Church) for your support during 2014.

Because the task at hand and ahead is extensive and our work has just began, I call on all of you to join us in moving the LMADV forward in 2015 and beyond. We must, especially those of us who are Ministers in Diaspora must embrace our inevitable responsibility to be pillars of community, individually and collectively not just for "Unity for Spiritual Progress and Commitment" that we are called to foster, but also the socio-economics well-being of our people and community. We can do this if we collaborate in ways that facilitate the blessed of us to work with the best of us for the rest of us. May God continue to bless the work, workers, supporters and efforts of the LMADV now and in the years ahead. Shalom!

**LMADV 2015 Proposed Calendar of Major Activities and Events**

January 2015	LMADV Event 01/24/2015	General Meeting 11am @
	Jan. 14, 17-18, 2015	Ebola Fund Raising: City Hall, A. Museum, SB
February 2015	LMADV Event: 07/21/2015	Membership Awards-Drama Min. Launching
	Members/Community Events	Ambassador 2/28, 6pm, 2/15 anniversary
March	LMADV Event	
	Members/Community Events	Divine Fellowship Church 3/7, 4pm, 3/15-1pm
April	LMADV Event	Children Praise
	Members/Community Events	4/12 UPCG
May	LMADV Event: 5/24 or 31	Mass Choir Mothers' Concert
	Members/Community Event	
June	LMADV Event: 6/27/2015	LAP/LMADV Fire Dept. 24 <sup>th</sup> Police District Event
	Community/Members Events	6/7-14 FOI
July	LMADV Event: 07/26/2015	168 <sup>th</sup> Independence Thanksgiving Service
	Members/Community Event	7/15-19 Agape
August	LMADV Event	LMADV Youth Event

	Members/Community Event	Rev. Moses Suah-Dennis, D.Min. Party
September	LMADV Event	9/1 God's Victory
	Members/Community Event	
October	LMADV Event: 10/31/15	Ministers and Spouses Rekindling Dinner
	Members/Community Event	
November	LMADV Event: 11/29/2015	Mass Choir Thanksgiving Concert
	Members/Community Event	
December	LMADV Event: 12/12/2015	LMADV 2 <sup>nd</sup> General Assembly
	Members/Community Event	

LMADV general meetings are currently being held on the second Saturday of each month on a rotational basis. This assembly will maintain or change this schedule to ensure maximum participation.

**Rev. Moses Suah-Dennis, M. Div.**