



REPORT OF THE

**CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND
ADMINISTRATION**

TO THE

**185TH ANNUAL SESSION
LIBERIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

HOSTED BY

CAPE PALMAS DISTRICT CONFERENCE

CO-HOSTED BY

**KRU COAST, GARRAWAY, GRAND GEDEH, AND BARABO
DISTRICTS**

“A FUTURE WITH HOPE”

JEREMIAH 29:11 & ROMANS 5:1-6

**KOJO G. WEEKS, SR.
PRESIDENT, CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND
ADMINISTRATION**

**REV. DR. SAMUEL J. QUIRE, JR.
RESIDENT BISHOP
LIBERIA EPISCOPAL AREA
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

MARCH 12-18, 2018

GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTION

Rev. Dr. Samuel J. Quire, Jr., Resident Bishop, Liberia Area, United Methodist Church, The Dean and Members of the Bishop's Cabinet, The Lay Leader, Retired Bishops of the Liberia Area, United Methodist Church, Visiting and Invited Bishops, Conference Officials, Government Officials, Invited Guest, Conference Delegates, Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Calvary greetings of esteemed compliments to you from the membership of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration and the entire Business and Finance Team of the Liberia Annual Conference. We are again humbled by the opportunity afforded us as stewards to account for the financial activities of the Conference amidst challenges.

The Conference Council on Finance and Administration was revived as per provisions of the Book of Discipline (Paragraph 610 & 612.2a) at the 184th Annual Session constituting Twenty One (21) members drawn across individuals and organizational representation.

The membership indorsed the leadership team previously elected by the interim CCF&A which was constituted by Rev. Dr Arthur F. Kulah as part of a STOPGAP measure in response to financial improprieties which had dire financial and reputational consequences on the Annual Conference. Those to whom our colleagues reposed their confidence to stare the affairs of the CCF&A are as follows:

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|----|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. | Bro. Kojo G. Weeks | President |
| 2. | Sis. Ethel Knuckles-Walker | Vice President |
| 3. | Sis. Theresa M. Davies | Secretary |

The finance of the Annual Conference is being administered by the Interim Conference Treasurer, Bro. David P. Guinkpa and as at the cut off period has been supported by Two (2) staff, an Accountant and an Expeditor.

FINANCES

This report covers a Twelve (12) months performance for the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017 which analyses and evaluates the conference's operations highlighting revenue and expenses for a given period.

- **CASH PROOF ANALYSIS**

During the period under review, the Conference recorded a Balance Brought Forward of Eight Thousand Three Hundred Thirty Four United States Dollars (**US\$8,334.00**) plus operating revenue of One Million Seven Hundred Sixty Eight Thousand Sixty United States Dollars and Sixty Six Cents (**US\$1,768,066.66**) and incurred expenses of One Million Four Hundred Three Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Nine United States Dollars and eighty Five Cents (**US\$1,403,669.85**) thus leaving a balance of Two Hundred Eighty One Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Eight United States Dollars Sixty Six Cents (**US\$281,878.66**).

- **BUDGET PERFORMANCE**

The Conference approved a balanced budget of One Million Seven Hundred Sixty Eight Thousand Sixty United States Dollars and Sixty Six Cents (**US\$1,768,066.66**) funded from two sources (local and foreign), Twenty Eight percent (28%) and Seventy Two percent (72%) respectively. The conference achieved a revenue performance of Ninety Five percent (**95%**) with a shortfall of Five percent (**5%**) attributed to delayed payment by local sources and drop in foreign funding. Operating expenses incurred amounted to Seventy Nine percent (**79%**) of the 2017 budget.

Expenses drawn on local funding were significantly affected with attention and approval given to very vital areas of the conference programs/activities in order to meet our obligations to the GBGM. The decision to streamline expenses remains necessary to enable the conference live up its commitment to GBGM which accounts for over Twenty One percent of local funding, the single source from which payments are being made. The Council extends sincere gratitude to everyone for the support and ardently request your continued cooperation as the conference undertakes these austerity measures in creating an ideal fiscal space.

- **BALANCE SHEET**

The conference balance sheet reflected a total asset of US\$5,008,469.85 while total liabilities stood at US\$355,854.11 leaving a fund balance of US\$4,652,615.74 as at December 31, 2017. The council has initiated a process of asset verification which is geared towards establishing a detailed register reflecting the fair value of these assets and their locations.

Proverbs 22:7: “**Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender**”. Current austerity measures are largely geared toward relieving the conference of all external debts (GBGM and LBDI) which account for over Eighty Two percent (82%) of our total liabilities.

We have engaged the LIDB authorities for an agreeable settlement of the conference obligation. We are seeking to have the bank review the penal charges on the facility which has nearly equalled the sum of the interest and principal with hopes of a waiver to rekindle our once mutually beneficial relationship.

ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROLS

The Council continues to perform its responsibilities by developing, maintaining, and administering a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference as required in paragraph 612 of the Book of Discipline (BoD).

In light thereof, the Council met regularly on a quarterly basis and conducted several emergency meetings in response to issues requiring urgent attention. Specialized committees worked closely with the interim treasurer in safeguarding the conference finances.

The Internal Audit Team of the Council has been required to begin reviewing the unaudited period of the conference financials and work with the interim treasurer and DCoM in reviewing all foreign funds to various programs and agencies to ensure proper accountability.

In compliance with Paragraph 617 of the BOD, the council is commissioning an audit of the conference finances by a certified public accountant within 150 days after this sitting of the Annual Conference. Findings of the audit shall form part of the councils report to the next sitting of the Annual Conference.

GBGM MOU

The Annual Conference entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the GBGM on March 28, 2017 as a result of findings of separate audits conducted by Moore Stephens and Global Ministries in May 2016, November-December 2016, and January 2017. The conference committed itself to the implementation of Thirteen (13) provisions of said agreement and has full complied with Eleven (11) of these counts while we remain partially compliant

in completing the recruitment process to fully staff the business and finance office. We started off by electing the GBGM Finance Officer as Interim Treasurer who now leads the treasury functions of the conference, have made three (3) quarterly installment payments towards settlement of financial obligations to GBGM and remain well on course with the payment plan.

We are further pleased to inform this conference that the council during the period under retrospect instituted several measures to ensure controls and greater accountability. The council developed, reviewed and adopted policies such as “Financial Procedures Manual” and “Petty Cash Policy” which now provide the needed guidance and fiscal discipline for the business and finance office. These Manuals provide best practice and universal standards which are appropriate for replication across the annual conference. Copies of these financial documents shall be made available through various channels and proceeded by training by the council.

Fellow conferees, please be informed that while we remain committed to ensuring that we live up to all provisions of the MOU, we are equally challenged by our current financial position. The council conducted interviews as required by the MOU but have not been able to hire due to financing gap between what is being offered and the industry standard or minimum expectation of applicants.

CONFERENCE TREASURER

The conference finance is currently being administered by the Interim Treasurer who was elected to serve a term of one (1) year with hopes that staffing and training of other members of the business and finance office would have long been concluded prior to the first anniversary of the of the MOU. As earlier mentioned, we have fallen short of such anticipation due to financial challenges.

One cannot over emphasize the need and urgency relative to staffing the Business and Finance Office as the MOU comes to its expiration yet, it is important that we tread carefully and equally not lose sight of the lapses and financial improprieties of the former treasurer which caused the LAC’s reputational and financial losses.

- **STATUS OF CASE INVOLVING THE FORMER TREASURER**

Fellow Conferees, we still seek to bring to a logical conclusion the case involving our former acting treasurer, Bro. James Jackson whose actions and inactions have plunged the conference into a dire financial and reputational deficit.

We applaud the tireless efforts of the Chancellor, Bro. Powo C. Hilton, Esq, who ensured the arrest of the former Treasurer in Bong County. The Treasurer in his statement to the police denied all claims made against him. The Conference has countered same and the police have since sought to locate the former Treasurer to have charges drawn against him for court proceedings. We will at this juncture employ the efforts of everyone in assisting the Chancellors with any information that would lead the police to have the former acting treasurer, Bro. James Jackson rearrested, charged and forwarded to court. It is our prayer that individuals would assist the process for the general good of us all by putting the interest of the church of Jesus Christ above their personal relationship with the former Treasurer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the charge bestowed upon the Council as provided by Paragraph 612.2b of the Book of Discipline which dedicates authority to the Council to nominate the Conference Treasurer or other officers having the functions described in Paragraph 619.

- 1. The council recommends the extension of the tenure of Bro. David P. Guinkpa, Interim Treasurer by another 12 months to assist in the conclusion of the recruitment, training and staffing of the business and finance office to ensure proper evaluation and readiness of the team of individuals to whom he shall hand over to.**

As there now exist a compelling need for the enhancement of our local funding and we must and should change our current apportionment formula for the smooth operation of the Liberia Annual Conference. We cannot and should not do the same thing the same old way and expect different results. We are at our financial and stewardship kairos moment as we deal with our giving and stewardship education in the life, ministry, mission, witness and service of the Liberia Annual Conference.

The voice of the master still echoes in Malachi 3:10 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

We are appealing to this 185th Annual Session of the Liberia Annual Conference that you consider passage of the recommendation of a new formula for our apportionments:

- 2. That the Liberia Annual Conference approves the changing of the apportionment system to increase the connectional giving to secure additional financial resources by the biblical principle of tithing or the contribution of ten percent (10%) of the actual operating budget of the Districts beginning with six (6) districts, namely: Monrovia, St. Paul River, Sinoe, Grand Bassa, Gbarnga, and Gompa districts being a case study in this 2018 conference year.**

CONCLUSION

We are grateful to God for his grace and to you our brothers and sisters for the trust reposed in us as financial stewardship and to the entire Council for the cooperation during the implementation of our assigned responsibilities. The challenge might seem insurmountable at the moment “but as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded, 2nd Chronicles 15:7.

May the good Lord bountifully bless and replenish every one for the individual and collective time, talent and treasury placed at the disposal of the Council.

Respectfully Submitted:

Bro. Kojo G. Weeks
President/CCF&A

MEMBERSHIP

1. Bro. Kojo G. Weeks President
2. Sis. Ethel Knuckles-Walker Vice President
3. Sis. Theresa M. Davies Secretary
4. Bro. Johnson Gwaikolo
5. Rev. Dr. J. Sawolo Nelson
6. Sis. Beryline Togba
7. Bro. Edmund Forh Forh
8. Bro. Powo C. Hilton, Esq
9. Bro. Bro. Jscob Davies
10. Rev. Dr. Isaac Chukpue-Padmore
11. Bro. David P. Guinkpa (Interim Treasurer)
12. Bro. Maxwell Lawrence (CUMYF)
13. Bro. Abraham P. Johnson (CUMYAF)
14. Sis. Taryonnoh M. Doe (CUMWO)
15. Bro. James T. Worquea, Sir (CUMMO)
16. Rev. Dorthy W. Macauley (LUMEF)
17. Rev. George D. Wilson (DCoM)
18. Rev. Christopher G. Marshall (DoC)
19. Rev. Dr. James Z. Labala (Conference Secretary)
20. Bro. Tolbert Nyenswah (Lay-Leader)
21. Rev. Dr. Samuel J. Quire, Jr. (Resident Bishop/Ex-officio)