

# 2018 NALAA CONVENTION FULL REPORT

## West Oranges, New Jersey

### September 28-30, 2018

#### **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2018**

The NALAA leadership team headed by Bro. John T. Flomo arrived in West Orange, New Jersey, on Friday, September 28, 2018 at 10 AM, with Elder George Davis, treasurer of the West African Union. The team visited with Sis. Dowu Dennis and then with Sis. Rachel Johnson, the hosts. A welcome dinner was served followed by a welcome program in the evening with Pastor Emmanuel Abar, the pastor of the Living Faith SDA, as speaker. He admonished those in attendance to hold together and keep looking up to the Lord.

#### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2018**

In place of the Sabbath School lesson study, we had two wonderful seminars:

1. **"Dumping Debt"** by Dave Ramsey, a video seminar was shown. The accumulation of debt in the US has prevented many from returning tithe or giving freewill offering to further the Lord's mission. Incurring debt was never a part of God's plan for man. We can live debt-free and help finance the work of God, if only we decide to put God first.
2. **"The Silent Killer"** a health seminar was done by Elder Dr. Anthony Moore. He spoke on how a heart attack occurs. He gave the signs and symptom of heart attack, and what to do when you feel any of the signs.

Sis. Samuelina Opoku and her children rendered a musical selection after the seminars.

#### **DIVINE SERVICE:**

The call to worship was from 1 Chronicles 16:14, followed by our theme song: 'Bind us together, Lord. Bind us with cords that cannot be broken,' and the invocation by Pastor Mathew Kamara, momentarily filling in for Pastor James Gbolo.

The welcome was done by Bro. John T. Flomo, National President, NALAA. He admonished the brethren to meet and make new friends. He said, "Don't leave this convention without befriending someone. The purpose of our convention is to meet old friends and make new ones." Sis. Esther Nwaji, a member of the Living Faith SDA Church, the host church, did the Intercessory Prayer. She prayed for the success of our organization and peace for Liberia.

Bro. John T. Flomo did the Tithes and Offering appeal for the church. The group, Vision for God, offered the musical selection, followed by the Scripture reading from Deut. 7:9 which was read by Sis. Hazel Kamara Suah. Sis. Theresa Smith introduced Pastor James Gbolo, the speaker, followed by the song of meditation done by Sis. Samuelina Opoku and her family.

Pastor James Gbolo spoke on the topic, "GOD IS FAITHFUL." He reminded us that God has been faithful to us during the Liberian civil war and is still devoted to us today. He said that God is faithful to us not because of what we have done, but because being faithful is God's nature. He brought the church several times to her feet through his personal testimony of how God healed him when doctors could not. Pastor Gbolo was accompanied by his wife and their three children, along with a few members from his Church.

The NALAA donation offering was lifted by Pastor Dr. Matthew Kamara of the Pilgrims Seventh-day Adventist Church. The group, Vision for God, offered a special selection, and the congregation belted out the hymn, "Tis So Sweet To Trust in Jesus," with the closing prayer by Elder Tarpeh Zarzar. Lunch was served after church from 1:15PM-3PM

#### **Musical Concert: The MC was Maj. Simeon Smith**

There was a musical concert headed by Min. David N.N Young, the music director of the convention, and funds were raised to purchase pews for the Bokeza Church in Lofa County, Liberia. The concert was well attended with over 150 persons in attendance. During the concert, the pastor of the Living Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church presented a check donation of \$500.00 on behalf of the Living Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church. The 2018 NALAA Convention Mass Choir, which was organized by Minister David Young, only one hour before the concert, ended the concert with a beautiful rendition of "Come Let Us Worship the Lord."

#### **Evening Dinner:**

The dinner hall was opened at 7:30 PM with visitors arriving from the concert. Elder John D. Suah, National Vice President, did both the welcome remarks and the opening prayer at 7:45 PM. Bro. John T. Flomo, national President, NALAA, introduced the Guest speaker, Elder George Davis. In his introduction, he noted that Elder Davis came from humble beginnings and was born in Kataka. He mentioned that he and the speaker grew up together in the Kakata SDA church where they both serve as youth leaders keeping the church functioning during the Liberian civil wars.

Elder George Davis, the treasurer of the West Africa Union, thanked the leadership of NALAA for extending him an invitation to attend the convention. He mentioned that he was grateful and excited to meet so many brethren gathered together to help the brethren in Liberia. He elaborated on the progress of the Mission field in Liberia with one conference and two Missions. He mentioned the efforts of NALAA in each of those fields including the renovation of the Paynesville SDA, scholarships for students and now a completed Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lofa county, Liberia. He admonished Liberians to support the Church in Liberia financially, as this will help boost the pastors' salary.

Elder Davis told the gathering that Liberians are now heading key positions in the mission fields including the newly established Adventist University of West Africa which was previously headed by a Nigerian, now headed by Pastor Emmanuel G. Kollie. He noted that enrollment at the University was up to 1,500 students. He admonished us to stay united even though Satan may attempt to divide us.

During the dinner, Sister Johnetta Flomo was surprisingly honored by the women of New Jersey for her endeavor in NALAA and a cake was provided for her birthday which was on September 27th. Special music was done by Elder David Young who raised a song that brought the group to their feet as they got involved in singing and dancing to the glory of God.

Sis. Johnetta Flomo did the closing remarks. She thanked the women of New Jersey for the honor bestowed upon her, and she added that her efforts are an automatic reflection of the values instilled in her by her parents who loved people and taught her always to help others. She thanked those who had gathered from far and near, giving the leadership their moral and financial support. Bro. Emmanuel Jallah did the closing prayer at 9:25 PM.

## **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 – BUSINESS MEETING**

The meeting began at 9:45 am with a devotional by Pastor Dr. Mathew Kamara. He admonished members to be steadfast in their support by helping others who cannot help themselves in Africa. He encouraged us to remember that we too were once in need and were helped by people. We had a group season of prayer for our families and Liberia.

The business meeting was opened and the reports were made by the president and the treasury team.

### **President's Report:**

In his report for the past two years, the president was at times emotional and frowning on the lack of support by the majority of our community members. He thanked the faithful few who are supporting the organization, which has led to great works achieved in Liberia so far.

He gave a timeline of things the leadership did during the two-year time period.

1. Black History Month Fundraiser in New York  
In February 2017, NALAA hosted the black history month at the Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church in New York with a mini-fundraiser concert to raise funds for the Bokeza project.
2. Celebration of life for the late Pastor Mulbah Jallah  
In February/March of 2017, NALAA played a role during the ailment and homegoing of our dear brother and pastor, the late Pastor Jallah Mulbah, both in fundraising to provide alternative healthcare and during his burial.

3. Celebration of life for the late Mrs. Jeanette Lewis-Harding  
In June 2017, the president and the secretary, Sis Johnetta B. Flomo, represented NALAA at the homegoing celebration of the late Sis. Jeanette Lewis-Harding, wife of Pastor Harding, in Georgia, a representation the Harding family truly appreciated. The family expressed gratitude and certainty that they knew NALAA would send a representative.
4. In August 2017, the president spent two weeks in Minnesota to:
  - a. Do a fundraiser for the Bokeza project.
  - b. To reorganize the Midwest Chapter of NALAA

While in Minnesota, the president spoke with permanent Adventists including pastors and set up a reorganization committee. Sadly, according to him, he has not heard from anyone up to now. However, he concluded that “there is time for everything, and I have not given up on a strong Midwest chapter yet.”

5. In October 2017, a fundraising program was held in Maryland at the Pikesville Seventh-day Church to conclude our activities for the 2017 year.
6. In March 2018, President Flomo visited the Living Faith Seventh-day Adventist church and was accompanied by a team from Pennsylvania. This would be the location of the 2018 NALAA. During their visit, he thanked the church and its members for their previous contributions made toward the Bokeza project and showed them a PowerPoint pictorial of the status of the church project. They also met with the leadership of the church.
7. In June 2018, a mini-fundraiser was done in Pennsylvania to raise funds to support the 2018 NALAA convention in New Jersey. "Last week, Sept. 22, 2018, we were here in the community, and we visited four Churches to promote this convention. The result was great as you all saw." He took a deep breath, followed by a drink of water and then asked the convention attendees to be quiet and listen very carefully. He then blurted out, "IT IS FINISHED, THE BOKEZA CHURCH IS COMPLETED. THANK GOD, IT IS FINISHED! THE BRETHERN ARE TODAY WORSHIPPING IN A MODERN CHURCH BUILDING." There was a chorus of praises to God, people thanking God and also Bro. Flomo. Responding to the outcry, he reminded the group that it is, "No, no, not me. Thanks to all of you wonderful supporters who donated your hard-earned dollars, who believed the NALAA dream. We are glad that you can see the result of your donation. Thanks to all of you and those out there who will hear about this later."

### **Financial Report for fiscal year 2015/2018**

The financial report for the past two years was made, discussed and accepted. During the discussion, it was noted that members were not forthcoming with their \$5.00/monthly due payment. Members who were in attendance were encouraged to pay their monthly dues.

### **Plans and Proposal for the next two years:**

Many points of interest were discussed during this time and with votes on principle, the following were agreed upon:

- 1 The Financial team to make a yearly operational budget for the organization.
- 2 To build five water wells/pumps in two years, depending on the cost . One of these wells will be in Bokeza. It was noted that those wells would be built to supply safe drinking water for the public, not just Adventist.
- 3 To build a latrine for the Bokeza SDA church.
- 4 The convention t-shirts will be worn on Sabbath, the primary convention day during church services. Members are encouraged to register before the convention to assure that they get their convention t-shirts for the Sabbath morning worship.
- 5 Convention 2020 will be held in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.
- 6 Due payment by members will be made public to encourage non-due paying members.

A four-member Scholarship Initiative Committee was set up to revamp the NALAA Scholarship Initiative. They will meet and find ways to get donors to contribute toward the scholarship fund, to help support our students and enable them to achieve a better education. The committee members are Maj. Simeon Smith, Theresa Smith, Rachel Addy, and Muna Saylee.

The meeting ended with a closing remark from Bro. Flomo, who thanked the Philadelphia chapter, especially the ladies of New Jersey namely: Chairlady Sis. Rachel Johnson, Sis. Lucia Dossen, Sis. Dowu Dennis, Sis. Muna Saylee and Sis. Henrietta Kingsley.

The closing song was our theme song: "BIND US TOGETHER, LORD. BIND US WITH CORDS THAT CAN NOT BE BROKEN," followed by group photos and departure at 2:15.

### **CONVENTION SURPRISES:**

The following individuals had not met or seen each other for several decades:

1. Sis. Rebecca Gizea and Elder Dr. Moore for 35 yrs. (3<sup>+</sup> decades)
2. Sis. Flomo and Amanda Yah for over 31 yrs. (3<sup>+</sup> decades)
3. Bro. David Young and Maj. Simeon Smith over 30 yrs. (3<sup>+</sup> decades)
4. Bro. George Davis and Bro. David Young for over seven years.
5. Bro. John Dahn Suah and Elder David Young over 20 yrs. (2<sup>+</sup> decades)

There is always fun at our conventions. Come and be a part of the fun.