BIBLE SOCIETY OF LIBERIA

Minutes of the 4th Annual General Meeting

Theme: Restoring the Bible Heritage of the Liberian Society

(Joshua 1:8)

DATE

Saturday, June 26, 2021

TIME

10:30 am to 2:30 pm

VENUE

Monrovia Christian Fellowship Church, 9th Street, Sinkor, Monrovia, Liberia

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1 Meeting Details and Attendance

The Bible Society of Liberia (BSL) hosted its 4th Annual General Meeting on Saturday, June 26, 2021, at the Monrovia Christian Fellowship Church, 9th Street, Sinkor, Monrovia. The meeting started at 10:30 am. Participants came from different Christian denominations and organizations.

143	58	85	52	2
Total participants	Females	Males	Churches	Christian-based organizations

The majority of participants came from Montserrado County. Others came from Bomi, Nimba, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties.

2 Opening Program

CALL TO ORDER

After the Christian musical prelude, Pastor Fayiah S. Tamba, BSL Church Relations Officer, served as Master of Ceremony and called the AGM to order.

DEVOTION

Rev. Joseph N.D. Bannah, BSL Board Co-Chair, led the devotion from 2 Kings 4:1-7. He emphasized that there is always something around us that God can use to change our stories. We must therefore never underestimate whatever God places in our hands, and He will increase the work of our hands as we move by faith.

WELCOME AND WORSHIP

The Board Chair, Rev. Dr. Jerry P. Kulah, recognized and welcomed all AGM delegates and special invitees. Mr. Johnson Gaye, BSL staff, led praise and worship with a couple of inspirational songs. Min. Lewis J. Sowa then rendered a special selection to usher in the Guest Speaker, Rev. Dr. J. Luther Tarpeh.

3 Guest Speaker

Rev. Dr. J. Luther Tarpeh served as Guest Speaker. He spoke on the theme *Restoring the Bible Heritage of the Liberian Society*, taken from Joshua 1:8.

- He challenged the assembly and the Church of Liberia to talk less and walk more in order to restore the Bible heritage of Liberian society. He believes true Christianity is demonstrated in deeds, not words.
- Based on his observation and involvement with national duties, he challenged Christians to prioritize education, business, and even politics. He insisted that if Christians refuse, the heathens will decide the fate of Liberia and Liberians.

- He described the Bible as the "book of a miracle," testifying that it has changed many lives, including his own.

4 Business Session

After Dr. Tarpeh's presentation, Rev. Dr. Jerry P. Kulah explained the significance of the AGM and declared the business session open for members' participation.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Paul F. Stevens, General Secretary, read the 2018 AGM minutes, which covered board election results, the financial report (2019/2020), and other program reports of the Bible Society of Liberia. Questions arising from the minutes were posed to the General Secretary for clarity.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

QUESTION 1

Why is the Bible Society's financial reporting currency only Liberian Dollars (LD) when it usually transacts in both LD and United States Dollars (USD)?

RESPONSE

Mr. Stevens explained that, by directive of the financial reporting standard of the United Bible Societies (UBS), all Bible Societies, including BSL, are required to keep financial transactions in their local currency. He added, "Although Bible Society receives funds in USD currency, we convert all USD transactions into LD for reporting purposes."

QUESTION 2

Where does the Bible Society get funds to run its daily operations and projects?

RESPONSE

The General Secretary listed three sources of funding for BSL operational costs and projects: donors, the Bookstore, and Membership Dues.

QUESTION 3

Why does the Bible Society's financial report (2019/2020) show both a deficit and a surplus?

RESPONSE

Mr. Stevens explained that the two components show BSL's financial outcome with and without extra funds from donors. A deficit means a loss and a surplus means a gain. The deficit component shows that, had BSL depended only on the sale of Bibles and Membership Dues, it could not implement its projects or cover its operational costs. He noted:

> "If we were only selling Bible, the Bible Society could be no more."

With the continued minimum assistance of donors, however, BSL would expect a surplus.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To promote transparency and accountability, Mr. Stevens promised in his closing remarks to make the 2019/2020 financial report and the Constitution available to all members on the BSL website at the end of June. He encouraged every member to check the website and download these documents.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mr. Stevens submitted the minutes to the Board Chair, Rev. Dr. Jerry P. Kulah, for approval.

ACTION	MEMBER
Motion to accept the minutes and file them for future reference	Mr. Tamba Johnson
Motion seconded	Apostle Abraham J.B. Weah
Outcome	Endorsed by the assembly

5 Address by the Board Chair

Dr. Kulah informed the assembly that, on account of the Board's success, the Bible Society in Liberia has been given full status to operate as the "Bible Society of Liberia." He explained that this means the Society is now a member of the international body, with no limitations: it can be present at all international meetings and can run for elected positions in the United Bible Societies (UBS).

As a result, the Board has been changed from an Advisory Board to a Board of Directors.

Dr. Kulah also:

- Promised to work with the General Secretary to establish BSL's presence in Nimba, Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, and Margibi counties, in order to increase membership and create sub-offices.
- Officially introduced BSL's new staff member, Church Relations Officer Fayiah S. Tamba, and encouraged church leaders and members to work directly with him to promote the vision and mission of BSL.
- Expressed his excitement at the achievements of his leadership so far, insisting, "we are going to be an office organization" and hoping to "make Bible Society second to none in West Africa."

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6 Remarks and Recommendations from Church Leaders

At the end of the business session, four church leaders representing churches in Nimba, Bomi, Margibi, and Montserrado thanked BSL Management for allowing them to be part of the 2021 AGM. The assembly was made aware that BSL currently operates an outlet in Ganta, Nimba, and hopes to decentralize to other counties.

The following concerns and recommendations were raised:

- **Declining native languages.** One representative observed that Liberian languages are declining and charged the assembly to help BSL restore them. He added that many people do not purchase their language Bible because they cannot speak their language.
- **Literacy.** Another member said people also do not buy them because they cannot read their language. Both members suggested that BSL conduct literacy programs in various churches to promote reading and writing in Liberian languages.

- **Braille Bibles.** Rev. Fallah Boimah, a member of the Free Pentecostal Global Church, advocated for braille Bibles to be given to visually impaired people, as he is visually impaired himself.

In response, the Board Chair, Dr. Kulah, acknowledged their recommendations.

7 Closing Prayer and Adjournment

The closing prayer for the entire program was offered by Success Taylor, a member of the BSL Board. The program ended at 2:30 pm, and lunch was served.

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