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Liberia's 168 Independence Anniversary in Washington Focused on Celebrating Community Unity and Liberian Culture

Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States , Mon, Aug 17, 2015

Washington, D.C.: August 14, 2015: The 168th independence anniversary of the Republic of Liberia was celebrated by the Liberian Embassy in Washington, D.C. with a highlight on Liberian culture and history to foster understanding and unity amongst Liberians in the Diaspora and at home. Held under the national theme, "Celebrating our communities for strong and accelerated growth and development," the celebration in Washington was held over a period of three days – July 24, 25 and 26. Events commemorating the independence celebration kicked-off on Friday, July 24, with the well-attended Diplomatic Reception at the residence of the Ambassador. This was



followed on Saturday, July 25, by the Cultural Extravaganza on the grounds of the Embassy. The celebration concluded on Sunday, July 26, with an Intercessory Worship Service at Trinity Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. Speaking at the jam-packed Diplomatic reception, Liberia's Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Jeremiah C. Sulunteh, underscored the special historical ties subsisting between Liberia and the United States. Ambassador Sulunteh lauded the United States for its support to Liberia, highlighting strong U.S. commitment and support towards Liberia's post-war reconstruction, especially during the Ebola epidemic. Ambassador Sulunteh also commended Liberians in the Diaspora and friends of Liberia for the strong support in Liberia's fight to contain the deadly Ebola virus. Representing the U.S. Government at the ceremony, Hon. Bisa Williams, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the State Department, also emphasized the historical relationship between Liberia and the United States. Deputy Assistant Secretary Williams reaffirmed United States commitment to further strengthening the relations between both countries, which share many common values. An important highlight of the Diplomatic Reception was the honoring of several personalities, as well as the Peoples Congregational Church in Washington, D.C. for their sacrifices and support to Liberia during the Ebola epidemic. Three of the personalities were honored posthumously. The late honorees are as follows: Dr. Samuel Brisbane, a prominent Liberian doctor and head of the Emergency Department at the J.F. Kennedy Medical Center in Monrovia; Dr. Abraham Borbor of the J.F. Kennedy Hospital; and Washington Post photojournalist Michel du Cille, who was a three-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his dramatic images of human struggle and triumph. Dr. Brisbane and Dr. Borbor contracted the Ebola virus and died in 2014 while treating patients from the disease. Journalist du Cille collapsed and died from an apparent heart attack while he was on assignment for the Washington Post in Liberia to cover the Ebola epidemic in 2014. Others honored were Dr. John T. Wulu, Jr., a member of the Embassy's Ebola Steering Committee and the Peoples Congregational Church, for outstanding support for the fight against Ebola. During the ceremony, The Embassy also conferred Honorary Citizenship on Dr. Walter F. Faggett, a member of the Embassy's Ebola Steering Committee, and Dr. Franklin Graham, president and CEO of the charity organization, Samaritans Purse, for their support to Liberia

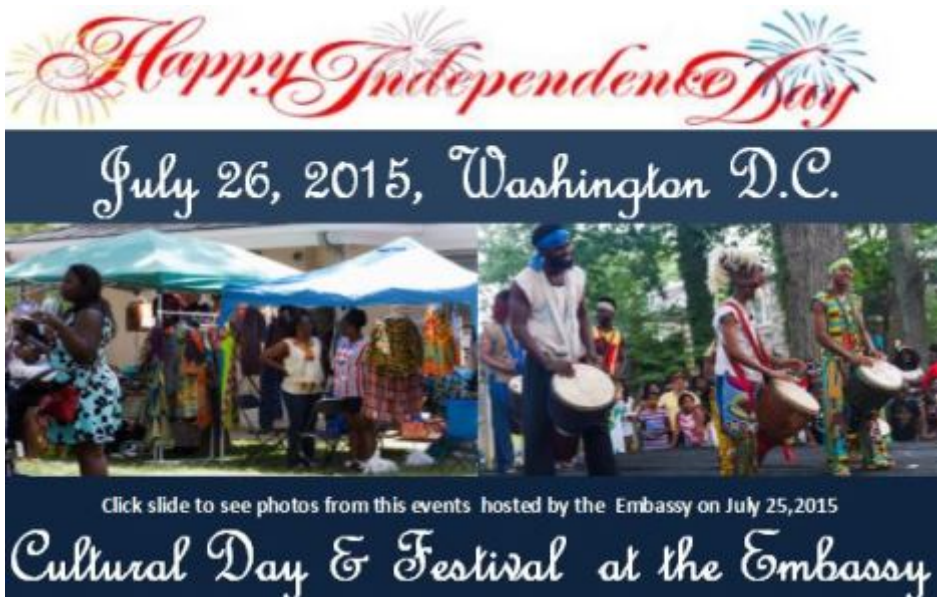
during the Ebola crisis. Dr. Graham is the son of legendary evangelist Billy Graham. On Saturday, July 25, thousands of Liberians and friends of Liberia converged on the grounds of the Embassy for a day-long Cultural Extravaganza, called the Liberian Day, which was celebrated with pomp and pageantry. Highlights of the Liberian Day event included the parade of the flags of the 15 counties of Liberia with citizens and supporters of the various counties marching behind each flag; the Dehkontee Theatre Artists, led by noted Liberian playwright, Dr. Joe Gbaba, which did a drama and an educational presentation on the history and national symbols of Liberia, such as the seal and flag of the republic; and the Universal Dance Ensemble, which thrilled the audience to Liberian cultural entertainment. The cultural entertainment featured a three year-old drummer, who literally stole the show amid thunderous applause from the audience. The culture troupe, and the drama production - which highlighted a Liberian historical and cultural theme – featured mostly children and youth of Liberian parentage. The drama and educational presentations were aimed at the children and young people, who were among the several thousands of revelers that converged on the grounds of the Embassy, where there were various categories of Liberian and African cuisines, arts and craft, among other products on sale. The Independence celebration climaxed on Sunday, July 26, with the Intercessory Worship Service at Trinity Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., to give thanks to the Almighty for His protection and guidance of Liberia and the Liberian people. Delivering a passionate sermon at the Intercessory Service, the Reverend Veronica Fannie Kazouch of the Wall of Fire Ministry, called on Liberians to put their trust and faith in God not fellow man. Rev. Kazouch expressed the need for Liberians to be honest in the service of their country and people. The Independence anniversary celebration was planned and executed in partnership with the Liberian Community Association in Washington, D.C. Metro Area, headed by Ms. Nee Allison, and the Association of Liberian Christian Ministers (ALCM), led by Rev. J. Orlando Flahn.

Please click on one of the links below to view photos of the Day's Activities

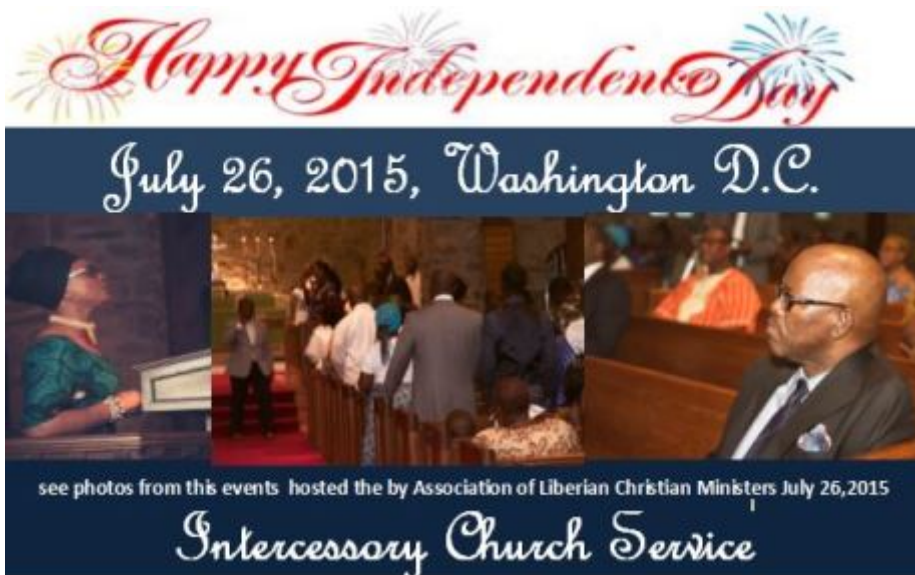
[Diplomatic Reception, July 24 at The Ambassador's Residence](#) [1]



2. Festival and Cultural Day at The Liberian Embassy Grounds, 5201 16th Street, Washington D.C. [2]



3. Intecssory Church Service, Sunday, July 26 2015 [3] at Trinity Episcopal Church, Washington D.C. [3]



Signed:

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