



CCPI Update



United Methodist Church Bishops (from left) Moises Domingos Fernandes, Emilio J. M. DeCarvalho and Gaspar João Domingos lay hands on a new pastor during an ordination service in Angola.

Continue your support for CCPI:

- Talk to your friends in the United Methodist community and share CCPI's story.
- Host a CCPI reception for friends or church members.
- Visit the CCPI Web site to download materials or contact the CCPI office to request materials to share with those you know in other churches and conferences.
- Encourage interested individuals to support the campaign.
- Consider increasing your pledge or gift.

Angola Pension Pilot Program Begins

In January 2010, the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI) launched a pension pilot program in Angola—this is the CCPI's third pilot program.* Retirees and surviving spouses in the East Angola and West Angola annual conferences received their first quarterly pension payments in February 2010.

Both annual conferences in the country are now served under a single pension program covering 77 retirees and 85 surviving spouses. Retired pastors and surviving spouses receive quarterly payments. The funds are sent by bank transfer and deposited directly into the pensioners' personal banking accounts.

Pension support existed in Angola until civil unrest in the 1990s strained church resources and caused the programs to be discontinued. The CCPI has been working with Bishops José Quipungo and Gaspar João Domingos in the East Angola and West Angola annual conferences, respectively, since August 2008 to develop the new plan, ensuring that all of the country's retirees are supported.

**The first pilot program was launched for Liberia in January 2007, followed by Mozambique in January 2009.*

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GENERAL BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Caring For Those Who Serve

Donor Spotlight

The Reverend
Dr. Michael Curd

United Methodist Church,
Nebraska Conference



A few months after beginning his new appointment in Milford, Nebraska approximately 2½ years ago,

Rev. Curd became involved with the kickoff of the CCPI campaign in the Nebraska conference.

“Initially, I was surprised to learn there were clergy and spouses with no retirement support, when clergy and spouses in America receive such essential retirement benefits,” says Rev. Curd. “I agree with Bishop Ann Sherer-Simpson that it is a justice issue. We need to share some of our resources.”

Rev. Curd hosted a reception in his parsonage for individuals in his congregation and received an outpouring of support. He also directed the donations from the 2009 Ministers’ Appreciation Month to CCPI and has included the CCPI as one of the mission opportunities each year for Mission Sunday.

“The generosity is overwhelmingly from middle-class people and a number of retirees who simply feel a need to be a part of the effort. At one point, our church of 350 members had raised more money than the rest of the entire annual conference—more than \$35,000,” says Rev. Curd.

Angola Pension Pilot Program *(continued from page 1)*

In addition, the CCPI held a training session with both conferences’ boards of pensions to ensure that they were knowledgeable about the program and prepared to administer it to the country’s retirees.

Church leaders in Angola have expressed their appreciation for the efforts of the CCPI, as well as those of individuals and churches throughout the denomination. Their generous gifts and donations have made central conference pension support possible.

“Thank you for the wonderful job and leadership, in engaging to let the dream become reality,” says Bishop Domingos. “May God bless all the supporters of the CCPI.”

Mozambique Pension Program Completes First Year



CCPI staff visited Mozambique in February 2010 to complete its first annual process review for the pension pilot project. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate the program, ensure timely distribution of all pension payments and identify any problems that should be addressed.

Developing a Sustainable Program

During the visit, it was confirmed that all pension funds were accounted for and pension payments were distributed or were in the process of being distributed. The two Mozambique annual conferences previously evaluated options for collecting pension contributions from active pastors. These contributions are integral to developing a self-sustaining pension program. The conferences determined that the churches will partner with the country’s national social security system—the National Institute of Social Security (INSS)—to administer future pensions for active clergy. The INSS requires a 3% employee contribution and a 4% employer contribution toward retirement. The INSS is expected to provide a reliable, sustainable pension program—reducing or eliminating the need for a separate church pension program—as well as nationalized health care for participants.

The INSS’s social security program became mandatory for all Mozambique citizens in 2009. Bishop Nhanala of the two Mozambique annual conferences, currently is spearheading a nationwide effort to register pastors and other church workers with INSS. When the INSS registration is complete, the conferences will bring the district records together and create a conference office-based system of payments and record-keeping. Annual conferences will make both the employer contributions to INSS and individual contributions on pastors’ behalf through withholdings from their compensation.

At the end of 2009, the Mozambique pension pilot had 100 participants, who receive quarterly pension payments based on years of service.

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Providing Witness

During the visit, in-home, personal interviews were conducted with a randomly chosen group of nine pensioners, both retired pastors and surviving spouses. All of those interviewed said that they received every pension payment. Below are a few interviewees' personal accounts. Additional stories will be posted to the CCPI Web site at www.ccp-umc.org in the coming months.

The Reverend Angelo Nhatsave: Rev. Nhatsave was ordained in 1972 and served the Church until he retired in 2009; the last 15 years he served as district superintendent. Much of his service occurred during what he calls "tough times." He experienced apartheid during a pastoral appointment in Soweto and survived civil war during the 1990s. During those challenging times, he says, "[I] saw so many church people take community leadership and display courage in their convictions."

Rev. Nhatsave is thankful for the CCPI support. He says, "Before the pension program, we were really suffering." The pension payments provided by the CCPI have enabled Rev. Nhatsave to finish building his house, which has been under construction since 2006. He appreciates the fact that pension payments are deposited directly to his bank account. "The way we used to do it was so slow and unreliable. This way is much better," he says.



The Reverend Amina Isaias Valoi: Rev. Valoi is both a retired pastor and a surviving spouse. She preceded her husband in the ministry when she was ordained in 1979—one of the first two ordained women in Mozambique. Her husband died in 1989 while he was still in active service. She continues to contribute to the church when asked by her district superintendent.

Rev. Valoi has only "words of gratitude" for the CCPI and its supporters. "At last, we can change our lives," she says.

Note: The CCPI Web site also features an earlier account about Rev. Valoi's struggles before the pension pilot project was established.

Donor Spotlight

The Reverend Jamie Jenkins

*Cabinet Member and Executive
Assistant to Bishop Watson,
North Georgia Conference*



Last year, Rev. Jenkins helped to organize the Bishops' Day Apart in Atlanta, an event that spurred giving to the CCPI that has continued ever since.

Rev. Jenkins supports the CCPI to help bridge the significant gap between the retirement security of U.S. pastors and that of central conference pastors. He says, "Ministers in North Georgia are well compensated and cared for in retirement. Conversely, pastors in the central conferences have nothing. It is important that we understand their struggles and come together to help support them in retirement."

CCPI in the Congo

The United Methodist Church in the Congo has a history of providing for its retired servants. In the 1800s, when the Church began in the Congo, the first pastor who retired received a house at retirement. For many years afterward, clergy were supported by their congregations. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, a succession of wars and violent conflicts—and the resulting starvation, disease and displacement—prevented the Church from focusing its efforts on retired clergy. Today, clergy in the Congo receive only irregular and inadequate amounts during retirement.

Half of the retired pastors and surviving spouses in the central conferences—approximately 1,000 individuals—

live in the Congo. There are three bishops and 14 conferences in the Congo. While the conference offices have kept very good records on their active and retired pastors, they are not able to pay normal pensions. CCPI staff visited the region in February 2009 to assess the needs of the churches and began development of a single plan to cover the conferences in the Congo. Financial data is now being gathered on all active and retired pastors in each episcopal area. Once the information has been compiled, the CCPI will be able to move forward with further planning.

Challenge goal: **\$25 Million**
Raised to date: **\$19.5 Million**
Percentage of
goal raised: **78%**

The CCPI campaign would not be possible without the dedication of our entire committee. In addition to attending meetings, helping solicit major gifts, providing feedback and welcoming CCPI into their churches and conferences, all committee members have made financial gifts to the campaign. Thank you to our hard-working committee members!

What are the United Methodist Central Conferences?

- The central conferences are conferences in countries outside the United States.
- There are currently seven central conferences in three regions (Asia, Africa and Europe). They are composed of 72 annual and provisional conferences in 42 countries.
- The central conferences include more than 6,900 organized churches with more than 3.5 million lay members.
- More than 9,300 clergy members minister to this rapidly increasing Church population.

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Philippines Pension Plans Moving Forward

A third visit to the Philippines, from March 8-10, 2010, continued preparations for the country's pilot project launch, specifically the finalization of the pension plan document. Establishing an affordable and reliable method of collecting pension contributions from active clergy is the most significant challenge to completing the plan. Both churches and clergy must contribute to the mandatory Philippines social security system (SSS), the government organized pension system.

The visit also provided an opportunity to provide training to the executive committee of the board of pensions; training for the entire board is planned for future trips. While a start date has not been established for the Philippines pilot program, the country's board of pensions hopes to finalize the pension plan documents this year in preparation for the program launch.

Zimbabwe Planning New Pension Program

The two annual conferences in Zimbabwe traditionally provided pension support to their retirees. However, due to a decade of economic turmoil, that pension program has not been adequately funded. When the country's economy collapsed due to abuses by its political regime, pensions were severely curtailed.

The Church's leadership in Zimbabwe is now working to create a new pension system. During a visit in February 2010, the board of pensions—which includes representatives from both conferences—took part in a daylong workshop. The board discussed ways to team with the CCPI to create and fund a long-term, sustainable pension program for all clergy throughout the country. The conference hopes to complete its planning process over the course of the coming year in preparation for a sustainable CCPI pilot project.

Second-Mile Giving

Have you already completed your CCPI pledge payments but would like to give again? New pledges or one-time gifts can be made online at www.ccpi-umc.org or checks can be made payable to the *Central Conference Pension Initiative* and sent in the enclosed envelope.

Remember: Your donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Questions? Interested in Helping?

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