



CCPI Update



The Sierra Leone Annual Conference celebrates 106-year-old retiree Rev. Isaac Ndanema.

Please continue your support for CCPI:

- Talk to your friends in the United Methodist community and share CCPI's story.
- Visit the CCPI website 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.
- If your previous pledge is already paid in full, consider extending it or making an additional one-time gift.

Three New CCPI Pilot Projects Launched

The CCPI is proud to announce the launch of three new pension pilot projects. Pension pilots began in *Cote d'Ivoire* and for the two annual conferences in *Zimbabwe* on January 1, 2011, and the pension pilot for *Sierra Leone* will begin on April 1, 2011.

CCPI staff members have worked with Bishops Boni (Cote d'Ivoire), Yambasu (Sierra Leone) and Nhiwatiwa (Zimbabwe), as well as their respective conference offices and boards of pensions to bring these projects to fruition. Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe have new or amended pension plans that have been approved by their annual conferences; Sierra Leone's new pension plan will be voted on during its annual conference session in March. In all three countries, retirees and surviving spouses will receive payments through a combination of electronic funds transfer (EFT), checks or cash distributed by district superintendents and other conference office personnel.

Pension support is not a new concept for these countries' retirees. Contributory pension schemes existed in Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. But in each case, benefit amounts could not keep pace with changing economic conditions, so the pension amount became a fraction of the local poverty rate.

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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 Paul Maliel
*United Methodist Church,
Greater New Jersey Conference*



Rev. Maliel—
superintendent
of the Cape
Atlantic District in
the Greater New
Jersey Annual

Conference— first heard about the struggle of pastors in the central conferences when a CCPI representative spoke to his conference’s cabinet about the initiative. He immediately decided to do what he could to help personally and to share the news of his colleagues’ struggles.

He says, “The amount of money the CCPI will provide in pension support is very small relative to what pastors receive here in the United States. My conference, district and local churches contribute several times more than my personal contribution to my pension. It is a matter of justice for us to help provide for their retirement. People give their lives to the Church, living in poverty to spread the Word. We must partner with them so that they are provided for in old age.”

It has now been two years since Rev. Maliel learned about the initiative. He has spoken to other pastors and distributed brochures about the CCPI. He believes that since “The economy is different in [the central conferences]... small contributions can make a huge difference.”

Three New CCPI Pilot Projects... *(continued from page 1)*

For many years, clergy in Zimbabwe contributed toward their retirement in a defined contribution plan that resembled a 401(k). However, economic instability and a devaluation of the Zimbabwe Dollar wiped out these accounts, eradicating the lifelong savings of many church workers.



Zimbabwe’s inflation rate began rapidly rising in 2004, after a land reform program decimated commercial agriculture. At the peak of inflation in November 2008 (the second highest in world history), prices doubled approximately every 24 hours. As a result, the use of the Zimbabwe Dollar as an official currency was effectively abandoned in April 2009. Clergy who were still working during this period of hyperinflation were forced to extend their careers; those who had already retired stopped receiving pension checks and had to find alternate means to support themselves, often relying on family and charity.

All pledges and gifts to CCPI are held and invested at the General Board, ensuring that the economies of the countries CCPI supports do not affect the availability of pensions. Active clergy in Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe also will contribute to their financial futures, making payroll contributions to the pension plan. This participation from active clergy ensures that the programs will remain sustainable and available to future generations of clergy who serve in these countries.

With the launch of these three pension pilot projects, CCPI will bring its total number of active pension projects to six, approximately half of the total programs that will be supported. Similarly, the amount of funding dedicated to these six pilot projects is about \$12 million—nearly half of the total amount being raised by CCPI to support pensions for central conference retirees and surviving spouses.

Pension Support Is Changing Lives

During a March 2010 visit to Liberia, CCPI staff learned more about how the lives of retired clergy and surviving spouses are improving because of CCPI pension support. In addition to sustaining subsistence needs—such as food, housing and clothing—pensioners have begun to save small amounts over several months to pay for major expenditures and to begin small businesses. For instance, one surviving spouse has opened an account at the local building supply company, depositing small amounts when she is able, to save up for zinc sheets. These galvanized metal sheets will be used to replace her thatch roof, as the fungus that can grow in thatch causes health problems. Another pensioner plans to purchase two acres of land to plant a cocoa farm. A third plans to use his pension to start a business, beginning a second career as a fishmonger and trading goods as a merchant at the market.

Stories about the ways CCPI support are changing circumstances for central conference pensioners follow. Read additional stories on the CCPI website at www.ccpi-umc.org.

Pension Support Is Changing Lives *(continued)*



The Reverend Pilar Page

Rev. Page was ordained in 1983 and retired in 2004. She recently purchased a mattress with her CCPI-supported pension payments. It is the first mattress she has ever owned. “Until now I have slept on the ground my entire life,” says Rev. Page. “Now I sleep so much better. It is the best thing I ever did for my health.”

At the age of 85, Rev. Page is focused on her legacy. She is in the process of recording the title for a 150-acre farm she owns; she plans to donate a portion of this land to the Church.



The Reverend Barbor Gblosso

Rev. Gblosso began serving the Church in 1944 as a custodian and sexton at age 14. After a secular career at Firestone Rubber Company, he was ordained and served four churches.

During wartime, he lost his home; however, in his three years of retirement, he has built a new one. Rev. Gblosso lives with his wife and two of his children. He plans to use his pension payments to begin a small business. He is negotiating to purchase two acres of farmland so that he may raise cocoa beans for wholesale in retirement.



The Reverend Dehcontoe Gogoe

Rev. Gogoe served the Church as a pastor’s wife and was later ordained as a clergy-person. She says, “My husband died 30 years ago in active service as a pastor. I have worked full-time for the Church ever since.”

Although Rev. Gogoe is still asked to preach occasionally, she was ashamed to do so because she felt her clothing was not presentable. Pension payments supported by CCPI enabled her to purchase new clothing. “Now I have bought enough clothes so that I can resume my teaching and preaching in the churches whenever the DS needs me,” she says. “I am grateful to God for the board of pensions!”



The Reverend Sarah Fisk

Rev. Fisk has served the Church in many capacities—as a clergy spouse, later a deacon and then as an elder. She retired from active service in 2008, but still leads Sunday School in the same church she served as pastor. Her son is now the pastor of that congregation.

Her home was destroyed during wartime, but CCPI pension support has enabled her to repair it.

“Until now I have slept on the ground my entire life. Now I sleep so much better. It is the best thing I ever did for my health.”

—Rev. Pilar Page



The Reverend James V. Piah

Rev. Piah was ordained in 1980, and served the Church as a senior pastor and assistant to the director of connectional ministries until his retirement in 1996. At times, he was responsible for three churches at once.

In retirement, Rev. Piah had problems with his eyesight; however, his CCPI-supported pension payments have allowed him to afford operations on both eyes. He also was able to repair his home. Now, he is enjoying his retirement and says it is “... very, very good.”



Thomas Warnee

Thomas Warnee is a surviving spouse. His wife died in 2001 while still actively serving the Church. He was left with expensive bills for his wife’s end-of-life care, and the responsibility for their children.

“We had to put [my wife] in the hospital in Monrovia,” says Thomas. “It was very expensive, but the pension [payments have] helped us pay off those bills.”

Challenge goal: **\$25 million**
 Raised to date: **\$21.5 million**
 Percentage of
 goal raised: **86%**

What are the United Methodist central conferences?

- The central conferences are those 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 population in our Church.

Feedback please!

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Pension Support Is Changing Lives *(continued from page 3)*



The Reverend Washington Gbuse

Rev. Gbuse served the Church as a lay speaker before becoming a pastor. His church family now cares for him in retirement. "I have always been the counseling elder for the younger pastors in this district. Now, they take good care of me," says Rev. Gbuse. "My DS takes me to the hospital when I need to go. He is my adopted son."

He is grateful for the pension support. He says "We bought a new roof for our house and a mattress on which to sleep." The payments also have allowed him to afford his medications.



The Reverend Aaron Gartumonjah

Rev. Gartumonjah has never had to survive in retirement without CCPI pension support. He retired one year ago and has used his pension to pay school fees for his children, and to purchase food and clothes. He also has begun a small business as a local fishmonger.

"I have had a hard time keeping my children in school, so the pension has been a great blessing," says Rev. Gartumonjah. "The churches to which I was appointed never paid me, so the pension is the largest and most dependable income I have ever had."



The Reverend David Paye

Rev. Paye served six different churches during active ministry and concluded his career in the Church as the chaplain in the conference office. During wartime, he served two churches along the Monrovia/Gbanga highway. He provided care for 500 people who fled their homes and lived in his churches, surviving on a diet of tree leaves. He is proudest, however, of his role in influencing 20 pastors to join the ministry. At every annual return to the busy season following the summer, Rev. Paye preached about slowing down to hear God's word, earning him the nickname "Rev. David Slow Down Paye."

After retiring from active ministry three years ago, Rev. Paye had a stroke. His recovery has been partially funded with CCPI-supported pension payments. He says, "Some of my motor ability has returned, and my doctor says that when I get stronger [my speech will improve]." Rev. Paye's medication still costs more than his pension payment. Yet he encourages younger pastors to make contributions, because he has seen "how important my pension has become to me."

Questions? Interested in Helping?

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