



CCPI Update



United Methodist Church members raise their hands in celebration in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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.

Fundraising Milestone Celebrated

The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the office of the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI) recently announced the attainment of the \$20 million initial fundraising minimum goal to fund pensions for the central conferences (those outside the United States). This milestone comes approximately two years after CCPI launched its initial fundraising effort, and 10 years after CCPI was created with a General Conference 2000 charge to launch "a pension support plan for the central conferences."

The work of the CCPI would not have been possible without support and contributions across the denomination. The CCPI office has benefited from events and fundraising efforts, speaking opportunities and media coverage, along with other contributions from general agencies, annual conferences, foundations, clergy, congregations and other Church groups.

The people of The United Methodist Church embraced this funding challenge early on and responded generously, even during the recent economic downturn. Since 2000, all annual conferences have returned at least one United Methodist Publishing House annual distribution (known as "Cokesbury checks") to the CCPI.

(continued on page 2)



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

Caring For Those Who Serve

Donor Spotlight

Emmy Lou John

Lay Volunteer and Central Conference Pension Committee Member, North Central Jurisdiction



Emmy Lou John is a member of the fundraising committee for CCPI and is the former treasurer

and vice-president of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, an international association of women's missionary societies. She has been involved with supporting missionaries who were called upon to educate, engage and enable people in other countries—often in the central conferences. Her experiences with mission projects and overseas travels have fueled her passion for the CCPI.

"My maternal grandfather was a 'circuit rider' pastor who would stay with church members on his travels," says Emmy Lou. "He was given food items from grateful members; however, in retirement he was supported by a pension. In other countries, many pastors are paid with chickens, eggs, vegetables and other items, but in retirement, they have no pensions to fall back on. It really sunk in how important it is to provide these people with some sustenance."

Emmy Lou feels that laity have a responsibility to ensure that Church workers are cared for.

(continued on page 4/Donor Spotlight)

Fundraising Milestone Celebrated *(continued from page 1)*

When Cokesbury distributions were discontinued, many conferences provided donations equal to the amount of their previous Cokesbury checks. In addition, local churches sought and continue to seek ways to give despite declining financial resources, and individuals continue to send contributions and make pledges.

The achievement of this significant funding milestone is cause for celebration, but it does not represent the culmination of the CCPI fundraising effort. At year-end 2009, CCPI announced an additional \$5 million challenge goal—for a total of at least \$25 million—primarily to accommodate growth in the central conferences since the initiative began 10 years ago. CCPI staff hopes to meet this challenge goal in the coming year as the initiative continues to spread its message in word and deed across the denomination.

Annual Evaluation of Liberia Pilot



CCPI staff visited the Liberia Annual Conference from March 9 – 18 to perform the third annual process review. Staff met with the board of pensions to further develop best practices and also met with the new director of connectional ministries to discuss ways to encourage greater compliance with the requirement for contributions from employers and active pastors. In addition, interviews were conducted with pensioners—both retired clergy and surviving spouses. CCPI staff learned that for many pensioners, the CCPI pensions constitute the most dependable income that they have received during their careers in ministry.

In 2009, nearly all pension payments (98%) were validated by a dated signature. The amount of time to deliver payments has fluctuated—due to the fact that payments are delivered by hand, rather than through a banking infrastructure—however, district superintendents have established routines that enable them to make deliveries without neglecting other responsibilities. For instance, some have distributed payments to many pensioners during districtwide gatherings, rather than always making home visits, which can be expensive and time-consuming.

Pensioners are beginning to trust in the dependability of their checks. Interviews with 17 randomly selected pensioners and anecdotal feedback from conference office staff revealed that in addition to being able to afford day-to-day needs, many pensioners are able to make larger expenditures—saving small amounts over time for major home repairs and entrepreneurial endeavors.

One remaining obstacle to the pension program is the lack of universal personal contributions from active clergy in the annual conference. However, current pensioners have offered to help promote personal contributions to the pension plan by making appearances at events in every district. They will attest to the improvements in their living situation made possible by regular pension payments. These personal appeals will help move the conference toward full participation from all active clergy.

Planning Continues in Other Central Conferences

Sierra Leone



Sierra Leone Annual Conference attendees learned about United Methodist pensions and the prospects for a CCPI-supported plan during a CCPI visit from March 4 – 9. CCPI staff also trained the board of pensions, worked on the pension plan description and discussed active participant contribution levels. A draft plan description will be further reviewed and revised by the annual conference's board of pensions before the next CCPI visit.

Once CCPI-supported pensions are established, pensioners will receive payments from both the Church pension plan and the country's national pension program, the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT), which was established in 2002 and requires mandatory employee and employer contributions.

Philippines



CCPI staff visited the Philippines for a third time from March 8 – 10. A draft of the country's proposed pension plan was reviewed and discussed during this visit. The approved plan will be the final criterion that must be satisfied before a CCPI-supported pension can be implemented in the country. Following implementation, retired clergy and surviving spouses will receive both

Church pensions supported by CCPI and payments from the Philippines Social Security System (SSS).

Cote d'Ivoire



A bishop's orientation and board of pensions/conference benefits officer training was held by CCPI staff in Cote d'Ivoire from April 5 – 11. A draft of the plan description for a CCPI-supported pension

program also was completed. CCPI staff received a report containing the base salaries for all active clergy in the conference, which will be used to determine the pension payments to retirees.

Retirees in the country receive support from government social security payments and from their annual conference pension program. However, the Church pension program is inadequately funded. CCPI pension support will augment the annual conference pensions.

Nigeria

A preliminary draft of the Nigeria Annual Conference pension plan description was created during a CCPI visit from April 13 – 18. CCPI staff also took the

(continued on page 4/Planning Continues...)

The success of the CCPI has been due to many across the denomination, but we want to give a special final thanks to the Central Conference Pension Committee. Since the beginning of the campaign, these individuals have worked tirelessly to support our efforts. Thank you again to our hard-working committee members!

Rev. Dr. Brian K. Bauknight (Retired)
Northeastern Jurisdiction

Neal Berte, Ed.D
Southeastern Jurisdiction

Barbara Boigegrain
General Secretary
General Board of Pension and Health Benefits

Rev. Dr. Timothy K. Bruster
South Central Jurisdiction

Bishop Ben R. Chamness (Retired)
South Central Jurisdiction

R. Earl Cox III
South Central Jurisdiction

Rev. Paul Dirdak
Director, Central Conference Pension Administration
General Board of Pension and Health Benefits

William Green, Ph.D.
Northeastern Jurisdiction

Larry Hollon
General Secretary, United Methodist Communications

Emmy Lou John
North Central Jurisdiction

Bishop Linda Lee
North Central Jurisdiction

Bishop Cal McConnell (Retired)
Western Jurisdiction

Rev. Greg McGarvey
North Central Jurisdiction

Dan O'Neill
Managing Director, Central Conference Pensions
General Board of Pension and Health Benefits

Bishop Ann Sherer-Simpson
South Central Jurisdiction

Bishop B. Michael Watson
Southeastern Jurisdiction

Bishop Peter D. Weaver
Northeastern Jurisdiction

Rev. Dr. J. Edsel White
Western Jurisdiction

Challenge goal: **\$25 Million**
Raised to date: **\$20.6 Million**
Percentage of
goal raised: **82.4%**

What Are The United Methodist Central Conferences?

- The central conferences are those conferences 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 annual conferences in 44 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.

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please!**

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Planning Continues... *(continued from page 3)*



opportunity to conduct training for the conference benefits officer and orientation for the bishop.

The Nigeria Annual Conference currently has 715 active clergy and 24 retired clergy; however, all retirees may not need support from the CCPI pension program. The country has a national civil service pension program, which has provisions that prevent pensioners from receiving support from other pension sources. Therefore, if a clergy member has worked for the civil service, they may decline their CCPI pension to collect a civil service pension.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In February 2009, CCPI staff visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to start the planning process for a pension pilot program. CCPI's follow-up visit from May 24 – June 6, 2010 provided the first opportunity for the new DRC Board of Pensions to meet. This visit also enabled CCPI staff to conduct training for the board and for each Episcopal area's financial coordinator, and allowed CCPI to collaborate with financial leadership to produce the first draft of a DRC pension plan description.

CCPI staff expects to use various methods to distribute pension payments in the DRC. Pensioners may be paid by bank transfers (where available), transfers to payment "agencies" (wire transfer service providers), in person at conference offices or by delivery from district superintendents.

East Africa Conference

The CCPI staff is working with the East Africa Conference—which is composed of the countries of Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan—to develop a pension program. The United Methodist Church has been active in the area for only a few decades, so there are not many pastors who are retired or near retirement. This plan will be designed to enable active pastors to contribute toward a secure retirement. CCPI will help to develop a single plan for the conference.

Donor Spotlight *(continued from page 2)*

"It lays heavy on my heart that people who want to share the message of God and stories of the Gospel ... must sacrifice during their careers and struggle in retirement," she says. "We have failed in providing good pension support for these people. I am so excited and so blessed to be part of the effort to provide this support, and proud that we have surpassed \$20 million in donations."

Questions? Interested in Helping?

Central Conference Pension Initiative, Web site: www.ccpi-umc.org

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