



CCPI Update



Beth Shalom United Methodist Church, Côte d'Ivoire (UMNS photo)

\$25 Million Fundraising Goal Accomplished

The Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI) has achieved its \$25 million challenge goal—the amount needed to fund pensions for current retirees and surviving spouses in the central conferences (those outside the United States). A recent generous donation from the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) completed our fundraising—making it possible to retire the fundraising effort once all pledged contributions are received.

General Secretary Barbara Boigegrain commented, “We are so grateful to the thousands of individuals, local churches, conferences and others, and now the GBOD, who contributed over the years to make it possible for our United Methodist Church clergy in the central conferences to also have hope for the future.”

With the achievement of this goal, all clergy around the world, including every eligible central conference pastor, now have reliable pension support through their conference and/or government program. In January 2013, all central conferences seeking pension support through CCPI had met the necessary pension program start-up criteria. Plans are now fully funded and in operation in Africa, Asia and Europe, covering 2,801 retirees and surviving spouses.

(continued)

CCPI Achievements

Pensioners receiving pensions: **2,801**

Challenge goal:	at least \$25 million
Pledged to date:	\$25 million
Percentage already collected:	93%

Central Conference Facts and Figures

The central conferences are located outside the United States and include annual conferences in Africa, Asia and Europe.

Within the central conferences, there are 75 annual and provisional annual conferences.

- More than 12,000 active and retired pastors and surviving spouses are now supported with current and future pensions



General Board

Pension and Health Benefits

Caring For Those Who Serve

CCPI's Sustainability Standards

These benchmarks measure each conference's progress toward the goal of attaining and maintaining a sustainable pension program. Criteria are divided into two categories—*funding and administration*—and cover such topics as legal review, plan compliance and benefits education.

As defined by CCPI, "sustainability" is achieved when a program generates the resources to meet its own needs. A sustainable pension program is:

- Well-funded by regular church and clergy contributions
- Carefully governed and administered
- Well-written, with funds distributed in a fair and equitable manner
- Reviewed regularly



\$25 Million Fundraising Goal Accomplished *(continued)*

To date, \$3.9 million has been dispersed, providing a financial foundation while giving central conferences time to build their own contribution base for future retirees. In this way, conference pension programs will become self-sustaining over time.

CCPI pension support has improved life in the central conferences. Pensioners are grateful to have served the Church, and thankful for the generous gifts of CCPI donors. Many are using their payments to buy food and medicine for themselves and their families. And some are now saving for other needs, such as home improvements and tuition support for their children or grandchildren—benefitting not only their families but also their villages and local communities.

While the achievement of this fundraising milestone is cause for celebration across the connection, it does not mean the end of CCPI's efforts. We still need the funds you have pledged in order to successfully finance all pensioners' benefits. CCPI will continue to accept donations as the Initiative transitions from fundraising to full-time pension administration and support.

Conference Benefits Officers Gather in Johannesburg for Training and Education

On September 24, seventeen central conference benefits officers (CBOs) traveled to Johannesburg, South Africa, for the second Central Conference Pension Initiative training event. During the three-day forum, attendees from Africa, Europe, the Philippines and Russia discussed CCPI pension plans and shared best practices for improving them.

A video-message from General Secretary Barbara Boigegrain opened the meeting, providing an overview of CCPI—its history, progress to date and mission of sustainability. She encouraged attendees to focus on achieving pension program sustainability saying, "*you are taking-charge, stepping-up and stepping-forward to sustain what has been built.*"

Attendees learned about the principles of sustainability and worked through each of the 10 Sustainability Standards to understand why they are important for successful pension program implementation. CCPI staff (Tim Koch, Dan O'Neill and Paul Dirdak) also guided the CBOs through various pension processes, reinforcing the value of transparent administration and accurate record-keeping—these functions are essential to the ongoing success and integrity of their pension programs.

"*CCPI helps the central conferences create and administer pension plans that they will fund themselves, so that, over time, all plans will be self-funded and self-sustaining, which is our ultimate goal,*" said Dan O'Neill, director of the Central Conference Pension Initiative.

The spirit of sharing and camaraderie was evident throughout the forum—with attendees offering their thoughts on common problems and building, as well as reinforcing, friendships made during the 2011 meeting—all while finding better ways to serve their pensioner communities.

CBO Training and Education (continued)



CCPI training event in Johannesburg, South Africa

“It was so gratifying to see the central conference CBOs building on their already-proven success as pension officers,” said O’Neill. “The duty they perform—administering pension payments—is critical to their pension program and its future for so many. We are proud of their success thus far and look forward to even greater milestones in the future.”

The administrative fund created after General Conference 2000 paid all expenses for this training meeting—no donor contributions were used.

Annual Evaluations Performed in Africa

Earlier this year, CCPI Directors, Dan O’Neill and Paul Dirdak, visited Angola, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe to conduct annual evaluations for each country’s pension program. An important check and balance for all plans, the annual evaluation helps assure the continued success and operation of all central conference pension programs by:

- Assessing the overall program
- Ensuring full and timely distribution of all benefits
- Identifying any problems that should be corrected
- Implementing improvements to the process

As part of every program review, CCPI personnel examined financial records, interviewed retired pastors and surviving spouses who are receiving benefits and discussed plans for additional pension education efforts for conference personnel.

Together Angola, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe cover 493 retired pastors and 639 surviving spouses.

Church leaders across these conferences expressed great appreciation to both individuals and churches throughout the denomination for their gifts and donations.



CCPI’s Fund Update— We Achieved Our Goal!

Thanks to the generosity of donors around the world, the Central Conference Pension Initiative has achieved its \$25 million challenge goal. On behalf of those who serve in the central conferences, the General Board thanks the denomination for its continued support of CCPI. This program will help assure lifetime pension support to central conference ministers and surviving spouses in retirement. **We thank each of you for your gifts, and ask that you continue to honor your outstanding pledge payments.**

We will keep you informed in the future as the need arises. For further information at any time, call us at 847-866-4230.



Your Support is Changing Lives

During their spring 2013 trips to Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, CCPI staff interviewed retirees and surviving spouses who are receiving pension support. Each expressed thanks to donors around the world for their continued generosity which helps to improve their lives. Read their inspirational stories below.



The Reverend A.G. Smith *Retiree, Sierra Leone*

Rev. Smith is 85 years old and has been retired for "a long, long time," he said with failing memory and physical stamina. Cared for by his daughter, Rev. Smith's family receives his pension via their bank account and they use the money for food, medicine

and school fees for the grandchildren. He likens his life to bitter leaf sauce—a staple in the region. "To make bitter leaf sauce, you must pound it and pound it to take away the bitterness, then it is delicious. Our life is like that. If you do not pound, it stays bitter. But if you work to make your life happy, it will be happy," he said with a smile.

What is "bitter leaf sauce"?

Commonly known as *shakpa* or *satuwi* leaves in Sierra Leone, they have a sour flavor. Before cooking, the leaves must be boiled, washed, rinsed and then kept in a bowl of cold water. When the sour flavor disappears, it is ready to use for cooking.

Taken from *Foods of Sierra Leone and Other West African Countries: A Cookbook*



M'Bouke Wrohon Adele *Surviving Spouse, Cote d'Ivoire*

Adele's husband died the same month that he retired—July 14, 1996—and she now lives with her son, Stephan, who is her primary care-giver. She has fond memories of first meeting her husband as a member of one of his congregations. "He loved to sing

and teach hymns to his parishioners. He knew the tunes to every hymn in the hymnal," she remembered. (No small feat, considering there are 400 hymns in the French Methodist hymnal!)

As a surviving spouse, Adele depends on the pension payments she receives every month. "The pension is a good thing. If I didn't have it, I would not be able to buy electricity or water," she said. Her son echoed the same sentiments saying, "I am grateful that we are part of the global United Methodist Church, particularly for the sake of our pastors. I pray this support will continue."



Marie Fattoh *Surviving Spouse, Cote d'Ivoire*

Marie has chaired her annual conference's Mission Committee for many years. In that role, she recently organized volunteers to acclimate a missionary couple to their new work in a remote village. The team built a house for the pair, helped convert

residents to United Methodism and introduced an economic development project to make soap from indigenous ingredients to sell at the regional market. "Mission is my passion," she said. "We should teach people to be autonomous; that's why I'm committed to self-development projects."

She uses that same passion at home as the leader of a cottage industry; buying equipment and materials to manufacture traditional woven fabric. Local women whom she has trained help her weave designs that incorporate Burkina and Ivorian designs, setting aside a portion of the funds raised for other mission initiatives.

When asked about her pension support, Marie said: "The pension provides additional support for my projects as well as for my four children who are students. I encourage pastors to support the program; God said we should take care of the widows and orphans."

Retirees and surviving spouses are thankful to donors around the world for their continued generosity.

Questions? Interested in Helping?

Central Conference Pension Initiative, 1901 Chestnut Avenue, Glenview, Illinois 60025-1604

Phone: 847-866-4230, E-mail: ccpi@gbophb.org, Website: www.ccpi-umc.org