



CCP Update



Bishop Ben Chamness with former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

“It is truly a matter of justice that our central conference ministers have support in retirement when their careers in ministry end.”—BISHOP BEN CHAMNESS

In Memoriam

Bishop Ben Chamness

There have been countless individuals who have contributed to the success of the Central Conference Pensions (CCP) initiative. Perhaps no one contributed more to this effort than Bishop Ben Chamness, who passed away in December 2018.

Bishop Chamness took the lead in ramping up fundraising in 2007 to support CCP’s efforts to establish clergy pensions in the central conferences. When CCP reached its \$25 million goal in 2013, Chamness joined in the celebration.

“It is truly a matter of justice that our central conference ministers have support in retirement when their careers in ministry end,” Chamness said. “This is a significant effort that now recognizes and rewards a life of service to the Lord.”

Chamness served as president of the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath) from 2004 to 2008. He joined the board in 2002 as an at-large member to its benefits committee.

Chamness excelled at leading groups in making major decisions, said Barbara Boige grain, Wespath’s General Secretary and Chief Executive.

“What he did was really help bring people together to have discussions to work through complex issues,” Boige grain said.

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CCP Financials as of 4/30/19

\$26,318,178

Total donations received
Inception to date

\$38,225

Donations received
Year to date

\$899,351

Emergency grants
2006–2012

\$9,518,666

Pension funds distributed
(1/1/2007 to date)

\$615,860

Pension distributions
Year to date



Wespath
BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS



Retired Liberian Pastor Reflects on His Tenure with Church

The Reverend Ernest Namakpeh, to paraphrase Charles Dickens, has seen the best of times and the worst of times during his lifetime—especially during his tenure serving the many parishioners of the churches he has led.

Rev. Namakpeh was assigned to his first church in his homeland of Liberia in 1992. At that time, Liberia was well into the first of two devastating civil wars that eventually lasted for the better part of 13 years—in which nearly a half million people were killed.

He served five churches for a total of 21 years, before retiring to a church near the Guinea border. During his



ministry—and to this day—he felt strongly that evangelism was one of the keys to life. He loves the teaching ministry of The United Methodist Church as a means of educating his fellow Liberians, especially children, who he sees as the future of his homeland.

“Young people need assistance to go to school,” Rev. Namakpeh said, “And I work within the church to help them.”

He is grateful that his pension allows him to care for himself and his family in his retirement. For that, he counts himself blessed and is truly thankful.

Pictured: The Reverend Ernest Namakpeh, 70 years young

“Young people need assistance to go to school. And I work within the church to help them.”

—REV. ERNEST NAMAKPEH





Congo Central Conference Annual Reviews Help Strengthen Pension Programs

CCP consultant Paul Dirdak visited and conducted pension plan reviews for all four episcopal areas of the Congo Central Conference—Central Congo, East Congo, South Congo and North Katanga—in the fourth quarter of 2018. These meetings were primarily reviews of plan performance—but also allowed time for visits with retirees to assure each was receiving their pension payments. A visit with the Congo Central Conference Board of Pensions also took place during this trip.



A meeting with the newly appointed Diocesan Benefits Officer Didier Banza also took place.

Funding sources, eligibility and benefits were among the topics on the agenda of the two-day seminar. There were many questions asked and answered as attendees helped each other understand the new concepts being presented. A retired pastor, who had been a teacher to many of the current District Superintendents, addressed the group and helped galvanize support for the program.

A primary activity of the visit to North Katanga was to present a pension seminar for all 38 District Superintendents and the Conference Treasurers of the North Katanga Episcopal Area. This was the first time that a CCP representative had presented a pension program in the episcopal area headquarters town of Kamina.

Pictured: East Congo retired pastors and surviving spouses met with Central Conference Pension representatives to confirm that their pension payments are received regularly.

Bishop Ben Chamness (continued)

From 2000 to 2008, Chamness was bishop of the Central Texas Conference in his home South Central Jurisdiction. He led the conference as it took on hosting duties of the 2008 General Conference, when the denomination's multinational lawmaking assembly gathered in Fort Worth.

He came out of retirement in 2011 to serve for a year as interim bishop of the Tennessee and Memphis conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Chamness is survived by his wife, Joye, sons David and Steve, their wives Caroline and Edy, and six grandchildren. He was 78.

Thanks to the generosity of donors worldwide, like you, Central Conference Pensions (CCP) achieved its \$25 million challenge goal, providing necessary seed money to help launch pension programs for retired central conference ministers and their surviving spouses in retirement. Donations can be made to:

Central Conference Pensions
c/o Wespeth Benefits and Investments
75 Remittance Drive, Suite 6714
Chicago, IL 60675

Make checks payable to Wespeth Benefits and Investments and add "CCP" on the "memo" line.

Or, visit our website to make donations online.
<https://www.wespeth.org/ccp/donations/>



Central Conference Facts:

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

Within the central conferences there are 78 provisional and annual conferences (of which 69 are assisted by CCP) with 5.4 million members.

Statistics

Country	Active clergy	Retirees receiving payments	Surviving spouses/beneficiaries receiving payments
Cote D'Ivoire 	220	4	28
Liberia 	969	221	520
Mozambique 	215	44	46
West Angola 	267	88	68
East Angola 	80	24	18
Sierra Leone 	128	20	11
Zimbabwe 	384	37	46
Russia 	148	18	0
Philippines 	1,620	187	189
Nigeria 	350	42	75

Country	Active clergy	Retirees receiving payments	Surviving spouses/beneficiaries receiving payments
East Africa 	725	137	98
East Congo 	327	87	59
Central Congo 	350	177	117
South Congo 	242	75	172
North Katanga 	917	274	235
South Africa 	20	7	0
Southern and Central Europe 	216	21	12
Lithuania 	11	0	0
Latvia 	12	2	0

Total CCP Statistics

- Active pastors covered—**more than 7,000**
- Retirees and Surviving spouses receiving support—**3,159**
- Total of all pension support funds released to date—**\$10,418,017***

**Total of emergency grants and pension funds distributed*

Questions?

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