

WESLEYAN MISSIONARY ALUMNI FELLOWSHIP



LINK

LINKING former Wesleyan missionaries to each other and to Global Partners

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Spring 2014

Our open house/dedication on November 2, 2013, was a wonderful day for Shunem Ministries! God has provided! We now own the house, thanks to the generous gifts of many individuals, churches, women's groups, retired missionaries and missionaries now serving. One of the dedication statements said: *"In the spirit of the couple from Shunem who fed and built a special room for Elisha, the prophet, We dedicate this house."*



Hospitality, rest, renewal, encouragement, fun and enjoyment for missionary children are all goals and intentional love we purpose to show God's servants. God has done a "new thing" that makes us think of His promise in Isaiah 43. In 2013 we had 246 over-night guests, staying anywhere from one night, a few nights, a week, several weeks or a few months. Shunem has existed for eight years and ownership is now reality! Through God's people, it will continue to be God-managed. Our prayer is for a growing team of consistently active supporters to pray for the ministry, volunteer for projects, and give regularly. Individuals, churches, and groups who consistently send monthly gifts to help with operations are urgently needed.



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As we walk by faith, we would appreciate your prayer support. If you would like to send an offering, we are a 501-c-3 charitable organization and we can provide a receipt for tax purposes. We are committed to good stewardship in this new area of ministry. Our location at 313 Hall Court, Noblesville, IN 46060 is near The Wesleyan Church headquarters.

Check out our website at www.shunem.org .

--- by **Jim and Jeanette Vermilya, Co-Directors and Hosts**
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Missionary Ruth Pierson passes

Ruth Pierson, 71, went to be with her Lord on Dec. 19, 2013. Born Ruth Meyering, her mother died when she was six, and Ruth was raised by her sister, Mary Johnson, in Holland, Michigan. She knew Jesus as her Lord and Savior by age 9 and was part of Holland Central Wesleyan Church.

Ruth followed her calling to become a missionary nurse at Kamakwie Wesleyan Hospital, Sierra Leone, West Africa, where she served from 1967-1989. Ruth married Dr. Charles Pierson in 1972, and together they served in Kamakwie, where they raised three sons. After they moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan, in 1989, Ruth became active in the Berrien Center Bible Church and Bible Study Fellowship. Even after 1989 she returned multiple times to Sierra Leone, until prevented by the progression of ovarian cancer.

Ruth is survived by her husband, Chuck; sons: David, Mark (Michelle) and Steven (Kandi) Pierson; four grandchildren; sisters: Jennie (Joseph) Hoch and Esther (Clyde) Tilton; and brothers: Chet, Don (Ruth) and Paul (Charlene) Meyering.

A celebration of life service was held for Ruth on January 3, 2014, at Berrien Center Bible Church, with burial following in Rose Hill Cemetery in Berrien Springs.

Memorials may be made to the Ruth Pierson Memorial Fund, c/o Wesleyan Investment Foundation Community Education Development Initiative Fund, P.O. Box 7250, Fishers, IN 46037.

--- by Dr. Kerry Kind, TWC Communications Dept.



ESTHER ALEIDA SMEENGE

JULY 24, 1925 – December 13, 2013

Esther was born in Holland, Michigan, to Thomas and Effie Smeenge as the 3rd child to a family of 5 children. As most little girls, she dreamed of having a loving husband and a home in the country with lots of children and pets. But she also had a dream of being a nurse from early on. She writes in her book of memoirs *Thistle*: "As a teenager I gave these dreams over to Jesus. The words He gave are from Isaiah 55:8,9 (KJV) 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.' These have been MY verses throughout life.

"His leading took me to college, nurses training and then to Africa! There was no husband, no children of my own, no home in the country – just lots of little ones needing to be cared for and loved and needing to be introduced to Jesus."

At age 50 she was no longer able to go back to Africa, so she settled in Grand Haven, Michigan, as head nurse at North Ottawa Community Hospital, building her dream of a Swiss Chalet in the woods near Lake Michigan, found pets to cherish, two little girls needing a mother, and in her older years SEVEN beautiful grand children to add excitement, joy, love and life to her home.

She associated with Holt International Children's Services. Having adopted her two girls through them, she later traveled to Russia and Korea setting up adoption programs and case histories of children in those orphanages.

She never lost her love for the African people or her desire to serve the Lord however large the project appeared. She set an example of God's love wherever she was and was a great friend to many. She was the fourth of her 5 siblings to die but her death is mourned by her surviving sister, 2 daughters, 7 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren and 8 nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be sent to Holt International Children's Services www.holtinternational.org.

--- by Marilyn Decker, sister of Esther

Myra Augusta Sanders

1915 - 2011



Myra A. Sanders passed away in Brazil Lake, Nova Scotia, Canada on January 13, 2011. She was born on September 4, 1915, to Elton and Annie Crowell. She is survived by her sister Edith Bergen.

Choosing a career in nursing, she graduated from Yarmouth Hospital School of Nursing in 1988, receiving an R.N. Diploma, with honors of scoring the highest marks in the province.

Myra went to South Africa as a missionary nurse. She met and married "the love of her life," Charles Sanders, the son of pioneer missionaries to South Africa. They ministered together to the Zulu tribe and beyond for thirty-three years with a goal to glorify God who had definitely called them to service there. Charles died February 10, 2002.

Myra was the life of a party and her smile would light up a room. Some of her hobbies included gardening, sewing, knitting, crocheting, cooking and she was an avid reader. She was a wonderful homemaker and hostess. In her later years with her health failing, she always manifested courage, grace and resilience.

She is missed by her girls, Pamela, Esther, and Joy; her seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Daniel A. McCandless

1926 - 2014

Daniel A. McCandless, age 88, of Brooksville, FL, died February 12, 2014. Born in Newark, NJ, he moved to Brooksville 25 years ago from Brevard, NC. He was a U.S. Navy veteran of WWII and a missionary and teacher with The Wesleyan Church. He and his wife, Betty Lou, served as Wesleyan missionaries from 1956 to 1986 in Villasis Bible College, Philippines; Zambia, Africa; and the island of Haiti in the Caribbean.

Dan and Betty Lou attended the Wesleyan Church of Brooksville, FL, and enjoyed fellowship and remembering missionary exploits with colleagues in retirement. Predeceased by sister Arlene Hartmon, he is survived by his wife: Betty Lou McCandless of Brooksville, FL; three sons, one daughter, one brother, two sisters, one grandchild and three great-grandchildren.

From Enemy to Believer

The Nepali crowd was really big and growing. As we prepared to show the *JESUS* film, a military person came up and threatened us. He said we couldn't show the film. He told us that our religion is "cow eating" and trying to divert people into our religion. He blamed us for calling other religions a Satan. We asked him to watch the film, and if he found any negative thing blaming other religions, then he could destroy everything we had.

The film is directly from the Gospel of Luke. The crowd watched silently, but the man carefully looked for some mistake to accuse us about. There he saw Jesus, the Lord of love and miracles, sacrificed on the cross for us. Many people cried.

I called the man to the front and asked him what he learned watching the film. He paused, and then he asked for forgiveness from us. He was a completely changed man. He said, *"Please forgive us that we did not know anything about Christ. We had a negative image about Christ. We have heard the wrong things about your religion, and we believed them. But this film has shown us that Christ did not come to earth to divert us but to show us the way—the way to truth and a faithful life that can only be obtained through Jesus. We will not stop any Christian from sharing the good news of Christ. In fact, we will go to church and try to learn more about Him."* To God be the glory!



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Connecting Haiti with Africa

During the Ghana National Conference in December, Issah Osman, missionary to Burkina Faso, reported on the new work started there just over a year ago. Already one church has been established and there are three preaching points that are quickly developing into churches.

Issah reported that one of the most pressing needs was to begin training leaders within each of the emerging congregations. Knowing that there were Wesleyans in Haiti who had expressed a call to missions and a vision to work in French-speaking Africa, Bob suggested to Issah that he try to recruit a team from Haiti to help with training. Issah responded positively and the Ghana and Burkina Faso churches committed to covering the costs of meals and housing for such a team.

The Haitian church is now selecting a team to send and are gathering funds to cover personal expenses of team members and in-country travel expenses.

As Africa Area Director, Bob committed to raise the funds for tickets from Haiti to Burkina Faso and back. Unsolicited, he received word from a Wesleyan leader in Papua New Guinea who felt impressed that he should help support ministry in Africa - at a level that will cover half the cost of the tickets! In late January the rest of the ticket money was promised after Bob spoke at a District Superintendents' meeting in Orlando.

Plans are now underway for Bob and Ghana National Superintendent Joe Ocran to visit Haiti in a few months to help with the preparation of the Haiti team. Lord willing, the Haiti ministry team will depart for Ouagadougou in mid-September, and we will have a Haitian missions team serving on a Ghanaian mission field in Burkina Faso partially supported from Papua New Guinea and North America. How cool is that!

Praise God for how He is pulling people together from around the world (Ghana, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, and the US) to advance His work in Burkina Faso.

**--- by Dr. Bob and Brenda Bagley, GP Africa
Area Director**