



# LEISURE WORLD NEWS

## Keeper of the flame of hope

Honoree says God won't let him sit still

By Cheryl Walker  
The News

**T**hirteen year resident Dr. Joseph Harry Haines jokes that he's spoken at almost every Leisure World club at one time or another.

But the reason he's a sought-after speaker is the wealth of fascinating true stories he tells.

In October, the Historical Society will single out the Methodist minister for these lectures as well as preaching at local churches like the United Methodist Church and Geneva Presbyterian and teaching bible classes.

But the main focus of the distinction will be the life of a man spent working with the hungry, homeless, destitute, downtrodden and victims of war and natural disasters as a missionary for the United Methodist Church. Haines has been in distressed areas around the globe; among them, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Vietnam (during the height of the war).

"He's really a vital person with an enormous amount of energy," says Methodist co-worker Betty Gunnerson.

"He's an absolutely incredible man," adds Doreen Tilghman, a representative of the United Methodist Committee on World Relief (UMCOR), an organization which, in the post of associate general secretary, he served for nearly 20 years directing emergency relief efforts in 79 countries which impacted more than five million people.

And the New Zealand native, who recently turned 80, author of seven books, fluent in five



Janine Swiatkowski/The News

Dr. Harry Haines, has spent more than 40 years traveling all over the world ministering to the poor.

languages, says he finds it impossible to retire. "I flunked it," says Haines with a smile.

Since he's supposed retirement in 1983, he has spent half of each year as an interim minister wherever he's called be it England, Hawaii, Japan, Ohio, the Golden State or, what he calls "God's Country" - his homeland.

Haines' motivation is simply "an unswerving faith in our Sovereign God" who has not told him to "sit down and shut up."

See HONOREE, page 23

## Ceremony facts

**Who:** Harry Haines  
**What:** Leisure Worlder of the Month for October  
**Where:** Clubhouse 6  
**When:** 10 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 1  
**Sponsor:** Leisure World Historical Society

## HONOREE

From page 1

"Most important and personally satisfying for me have been 41 years involved in reaching out to the destitute and displaced, fighting world hunger, attacking the root causes of hunger, aiding in development needs and the re-settlement of refugees and building hope and dignity."

Haines says he's been able to do so with the support of his wife of 53 years and fellow missionary, Loma Ruth, and institutions like UMCOR and the World Council which bolster his faith with the awareness of the strength of the world church "established and surviving throughout wars and famines, floods and efforts to destroy."

**"I look upon the world as my parish": John Wesley, founder of Methodism:** Haines' missionary calling was unprecedented in his family.

His father, a Welsh coal miner at age 12, came to New Zealand in search of economic opportunities as did his mother's family.

The immigrants met and married in their adopted land but never achieved material success.

"We were so poor we didn't know we were poor," recalls Haines.

He says his parents had been churchgoers in their native land but couldn't afford the proper clothes to continue that practice in New Zealand.

Haines said he saw God's hand at work when he had a religious experience at age 14. He went with a high school friend to a church service which just happened to be focused on a sendoff of four young people to be

missionaries in China.

Haines says he suddenly had a "profound inner conviction that God had a plan for everyone's life and one should find what it is and do it."

But he didn't take action right away, enjoying a good job instead with the New Zealand Fruit Growers Federation. But soon his calling won out and he became active in the Baptist Church (he became a Methodist when he married Loma), went to Sydney University and volunteered for the missions.

His first assignment was China and although the date of his arrival was Dec. 7, 1941, Haines felt no matter what the situation he could, even in a small way, make a difference.

He served in West China for seven years, working with refugees, feeding the hungry, educating the young and taking care of those with medical problems. He left just a month before the Communist takeover, to pursue graduate work in the United States, the country of his wife's birth.

Later Haines spent 10 years heading a large mission in Malaysia followed by more than 20 years with the World Council and UMCOR.

With those organizations, the world literally did become his parish taking him to five continents and neighboring islands where he was one of the main decision makers determining how to "utilize the enormous resources the church has."

"I spent 40 years of my life working among refugees and victims of famine, millions of people," says Haines but admits that all that work is only a drop in the bucket of what still remains as long as people are victimized by corrupt political systems and lack of access to

land, education and medicine.

But while Haines admits he can alternate between despair and joy he still truly believes that "one person and God are always in the majority."

In his books "I'm Only One Person What Can I Do?" and "The Twain Shall Meet" he tells stories of many friends and acquaintances, among them the famous like the Dalai Lama of Tibet and Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and not so famous who have lived lives of selfless giving.

Explains, Haines, "If I look at a world map what springs to mind are not the tourist attractions but the great people in country after country, God-possessed men and women who hate injustice and who love people with great compassion and are busy clothing the naked, releasing prisoners and offering a cup of cold water in Christ's name."

He notes with pride, that his son, Dr. John Haines, every year takes staff and equipment at his own expense to poor countries to take care of the blind and sight impaired.

Haines says he knows his line of work has its critics, particularly among those who feel it doesn't tackle the root cause of problems that keep people in dire straits.

Yet, he underlines that "even when all our efforts toward greater justice fail, we cannot pass by on the other side while men, women and children are deprived of the necessities which enable them to be truly human.

"There remains an absoluteness about our obligation to respond with caring for those who suffer . . . . and I felt God called me to pick people up, stand them on their own two feet and tell them my God loves you."