

01-GS-34 VOTED with abstentions: the Twenty-third General Synod adopts the resolution “Pension Supplementation for Native American Ordained and Licensed Ministers.”

PENSION SUPPLEMENTATION FOR NATIVE AMERICAN ORDAINED AND LICENSED MINISTERS

WHEREAS in 1819 Congress passed a bill providing for a “Civilization Fund,” which was the basis for church-government cooperation;

WHEREAS an act of Congress in 1873 assigned to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions the responsibility for Protestant mission activity on Indian reservations;

WHEREAS as the missionary movement discouraged the development of leadership that could lead to self-determination, Native American congregations have historically lacked full-time Native American ordained ministers to lead them and have relied on ministers, either ordained or licensed, who have been compensated at a part-time rate;

WHEREAS most of the approximately twenty Native American ordained and licensed ministers serving Native American United Church of Christ congregations today receive low salaries and thus can establish no base for adequate retirement income;

WHEREAS these ministers serve small congregations who cannot provide financial compensation comparable to that provided to their non-Native counterparts and thus have no basis for adequate retirement income; and

WHEREAS in order to ensure a reasonable retirement program for Native American pastors who have served Native American United Church of Christ churches, financial supplementation from the wider church is needed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ will honor the spirit of promises, pronouncements, and commitments relating to compensation since 1973 and direct the establishment of a program to ensure adequate retirement income for Native American ordained and licensed ministers who have served Native American congregations of the United Church of Christ;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-third General Synod calls upon representatives of:

The Council for American Indian Ministries
The Minister for Native American Relations from the Office of General Ministries,
The Racial Justice Ministry of Justice and Witness Ministries,
The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry of Local Church Ministries,
The Stewardship and Church Finances Ministry of Local Church Ministries, and
The Pension Boards

to meet and develop a plan for fair and adequate pensions for those Native American Pastors who have served, are serving, or will serve Native American United Church of Christ churches as ordained or licensed ministers, and processes for implementing the plan, including the securing of

financial commitments, and administering the plan, including the distribution of information to the affected ministers and congregations; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that progress on the plan's development will be regularly reported to the Executive Council with a full report to Twenty-fourth General Synod.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.