

Ministry Personnel Salary Equity Proposal

Origin: Shining Waters Regional Council - Pastoral Relations Commission

1. What is the issue?

We believe that as followers of Jesus the Christ we are called to a way of justice and equity. Recognizing the current state of inequity of salaries of ministry personnel, particularly between personnel in the same community of faith and personnel in the same geographical area, we believe God is calling us as a denomination to create more equitable compensation policies for ministry personnel. Specifically to:

- immediately put into place measures that will assure the same percentage above minimum salary for those in team ministry in one community of faith
- make it part of the work of a community of faith to disclose the amount paid to previous ministry personnel—particularly % above minimum &/or extra benefits—when calling/appointing new ministry personnel
- create an updated resource for ministry personnel re: negotiation process and resources/tools for negotiation, as well as a process whereby ministry personnel are oriented/educated regarding negotiation (this could involve liaisons, Pastoral Relations Ministers, and/or Pastoral Relations Commission, etc.)

2. Why is this issue important?

- the key underlying issue is pay/compensation disparity
- this includes disparity in compensation between large urban congregations and rural congregations; disparity between GCO salaries and pastoral charge salaries; compensation disparity in team ministry within one community of faith; salary inequity in pension resulting from salary inequity throughout careers; compensation disparity between newly called/appointed ministry personnel and (an) immediate predecessor(s)
- pay equity is a theological, ecclesiological and a justice issue
- the key underlying issues are issues of compensation equity for all ministry personnel; the need to create a theology of compensation, rather than a business model of compensation; the question of whether our denomination subscribes to a model of equal pay for equal work, or a model that lifts up qualifications and achievements
- historically the question of salary equity has been an issue since the formation of the United Church in 1925, and the three major founding denominations brought with them differing traditions.
- almost every General Council since has seen the issue arise in memorials or resolutions
- most recently in November of 2014, the General Council Executive approved a minimum comprehensive compensation model for ministry personnel not residing in a manse, to be implemented in July, 2015; since then the church and ministry personnel have been learning how to live into this model, and the weaknesses of this model are now being exposed
- the principles informing this issue include: fairness, equity, justice

- the benefits of these actions support and contribute to the regional councils' mandate of joy, health, and excellence for ministry personnel
- while we are reluctant to 'crystal-ball' the future without action on these issues, we respectfully suggest that if there were no action taken on this issue, there will be increased disparity in compensation packages in our church; the theology of compensation may be lost to the business model of the world; the need for increased equity in our pastoral relations system, as identified in the Final Report of the Equity Goal Research Project of the Shining Waters Pastoral Relations Commission, will not happen

3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

- regarding welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities into full membership and ministry in the church, this proposal offers some initial ways of assuring all ministry personnel are paid the same amount for the same work, regardless of sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- regarding committing to becoming an intercultural church, this proposal offers initial ways of insuring that all ministry personnel are treated fairly during all pastoral relations processes, including salary and benefit negotiation
- regarding opposing discrimination of any kind on the basis of identity, and developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an anti-racist denomination, this proposal offers simple steps that can be taken towards assuring that all ministry personnel are treated fairly and impartially

Who has been consulted in the development of the proposal? Was the proposal developed "with" people, or "on behalf of" people? What might be the impact of this proposal on people and communities? Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this approach?

- the Pastoral Relations Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council was consulted in the development of this proposal
- the Final Report of the Equity Goal Research Project, done for the Pastoral Relations Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council was consulted. This report was developed with interviews of ministry personnel, search committees and pastoral relations liaisons. This report is the result of the commitment of the Pastoral Relations Commission of Shining Waters Region to examine the regions's pastoral relations policies and procedures through an equity lens. The commission was particularly interested to know how racist/sexist/ableist bias has impacted ministry personnel and the pastoral relationships in our communities of faith in Shining Waters Regional Council. See Appendix and <https://shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Equity-Goal-Research-Project-Final-Report.pdf>
- a paper entitled Paying the Pastor: A Critical Analysis of the Development of Salary Policy in the United Church of Canada, written by Paul Stott, was consulted
- ministry personnel working in team in a pastoral charge could benefit from this proposal

- while communities of faith will not be disadvantaged by this proposal, they could be ‘pushed’ to examine more closely their assets and their theology of compensation

4. How might the General Council respond to the issue?

Shining Waters Regional Council proposes that the General Council could:

A. Study/discussion of the issue

- Study and develop a theology of compensation that would inform new compensation policies in the future

B. Action on the issue: General Council could

- immediately put into place measures that will assure the same percentage above minimum salary for those in team ministry in one community of faith
- make it part of the work of a community of faith to disclose the amount paid to previous ministry personnel—particularly % above minimum and/or extra benefits—when calling/appointing new ministry personnel;
- pastoral relations commissions be mandated by GC to include a process to inform and coach ministry personnel in negotiation of fair compensation
- create an updated and enhanced resource for ministry personnel re: negotiation process and resources/tools for negotiation, as well as a process whereby ministry personnel are oriented/educated regarding negotiation (this could involve liaisons, Pastoral Relations Ministers, and/or Pastoral Relations Commission, etc.)
- examine how compensation contributes to the UCC’s equity work and strategies
- examine the Shining Waters Equity Goal research as a contribution to the church’s work on this issue.

5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal? Is this proposal in response to a previous proposal, motion or action? If so, please name the previous action(s) and proposal number(s).

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to info@generalcouncil44.ca.

APPENDIX A

QUOTES FROM EQUITY RESEARCH PROJECT

Many of these direct biases also correlate with systemic biases. For example, there are unwritten norms differentiating the negotiation process for an appointment versus a call. Sometimes this means not haggling over a few months' worth of terms, or Communities of Faith taking the opportunity to save some money while they are in search mode.

- "I had an assumption that because contracts were short, there was no negotiation process. They never opened the door and I don't think I ever knocked."

- "I am comfortable with the appointment, but if I was offered a call, I would negotiate the heck out of that."

What becomes problematic about this, is when it is held up against the statistics of who (gender, age, race, etc) are offered appointments versus calls. (See final section for details).— p.28

Many participants would like a set of guidelines and best practices for negotiating terms, beyond what is available in the UCC Pastoral Relations: Search and Selection Handbook (2000), so that these skills are not concentrated among certain privileged demographics.— p. 30

Pro-active regional support and intervention in the initial pastoral relationship, are crucial to many equity-seeking ministry personnel. These include sharing historical information the Regional Council has about a Community of Faith, such as past schisms and landmines, and the previous ministers' terms of call/appointment, particularly % over minimum, technical allowances over basic phone for internet costs, etc. The Regional Council could also encourage discussions with past ministers to understand community dynamics.—p. 31