

Resolution on Dealing With Seminarian Debt
in the Maine Conference, UCC

(Sponsored by the Commission for Community Life, The Commission for Spiritual Life and the Commission for Witness Life and voted in concept at their April 12, 2003 meeting)

1. **Whereas**, today many seminarians borrow large sums of money (typically, \$30,000
2. to \$50,000) to finance their tuition, expenses and living costs, and
3. **Whereas**, when ministers complete their education and begin to earn salaries in the
4. profession for which they have trained, their earnings capacity is substantially lower
5. than that of most other professionals with similar educational requirements, and
6. **Whereas**, the Maine Conference has historically relied on students and on people
7. beginning their ministries to fill the pulpits of many very small congregations in
8. the Conference, and
9. **Whereas**, the salaries offered by many small congregations in the state of Maine
10. preclude recent graduates being able to serve them and still pay off their student
11. loans, and
12. **Whereas**, many graduates of seminary, including Bangor Theological Seminary,
13. seek better paying pastorates in other parts of the country, and those graduates who
14. do accept a call to a small church often find the burden of debt impossible to carry
15. along with living costs, and these graduates are unable to remain, either in the small
16. church or in ministry in the Maine Conference;
17. **Be it resolved** that the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ undertake a
18. fund-raising campaign, the proceeds of which will assist churches whose pastors are
19. carrying educational debt to provide funds for debt repayment; and that the necessary
20. standards and procedures for the campaign, and for the distribution of the funds, be

21. developed by a committee representing the three Commissions of the Conference,
22. and submitted to the Coordinating Council for approval.
23. **Be it further resolved** that the Commissions continue to study “Our Common
24. Calling” a pronouncement and call to action adopted by the General Synod in July
25. 2003, and to develop additional proposals for the Coordinating Council which would
26. assist students In Care with their educational expenses through the efforts of local
27. churches, Associations, and the Conference.
28. **Be if further resolved** that the Annual meeting call on each local church and
29. Association to study the General Synod Pronouncement and Call to Action “Our
30. Common Calling” and to devise their own responses to the crisis of seminarian debt.

Anne Roundy, July 22, 2003

Revision by John MacDuffie, July 22, 2003

Revision by Jean Alexander, July 23, 2003