

Methodist bishops agree to cut their pay: Other leaders taking similar cuts

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Bishops in the United Methodist Church have voted themselves a pay cut after “recognizing the financial challenges facing the church.”

The UMC’s 50 active U.S. bishops voted to give up their planned pay raises for next year and instead reduce their salaries to the 2008 level, dropping their annual pay from \$125,650 to \$121,000, according to United Methodist News Service.

“The current global crisis has uncovered our hesitancy to act, but it has also gifted us with a sense of urgency and an opportunity to lead courageously,” the bishops said in a May 8 statement at the conclusion of their annual spring meeting. The bishops also said they will cut their semiannual council meetings from five days to four to save money.

Several bishops said that some regional and local church leaders had already taken similar salary cuts to help keep ministries going.

The picture grew starker the following week when top executives of the United Methodists’ 13 general agencies met in Nashville.

For the first time in 50 years, the denomination’s publishing house will not be able to contribute \$1 million toward pensions for retired clergy. The publishing house, which does not receive any general church funds, has suffered revenue shortfall of at least \$8.5 million, according to United Methodist News Service.

Other agencies looked to canceling some meetings, cutting down travel, sharing staff, making layoffs and not filling open positions. The Board of Discipleship, however, said that it will move ahead with plans to start new churches and to hold an international meeting for young people in Germany in 2011.