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September 11, 1972

Pastors, Church Staffers Lose Income, SBC Publication Reveals

DALLAS (BP)--Some Southern Baptist pastors and church staff employees suffered what amounted to cuts in income during the past two years.

A denominational publication reached this conclusion after comparing salary statistics and Consumer Price Index figures for the summers of 1969 and 1971.

Deacons and church committees did not plot to pare dollars from the incomes of pastors, ministers of music, and ministers of education, said The Years Ahead, quarterly publication of the SBC Annuity Board.

Rather, churches failed to increase compensation at all, or did not hike it sufficiently to match the rising cost of living, the publication pointed out.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, a government agency, shows the Consumer Price Index stood at 109.7 in June 1969, and rose to 121.5 by June, 1971. This is a gain of 10.7 per cent.

In every category of church size, the average income gain for pastors was well under 10 per cent during the two-year span, according to The Years Ahead.

The research services department of the Baptist Sunday School Board supplied income figures based on surveys of church staff compensation.

The survey covered only churches with 500 or more members, since few churches smaller than 500 members have staff members other than pastor. The survey sought to reflect ministers of education and ministers of music as well.

Eighty per cent of the nearly 35,000 churches affiliated with the SBC have less than 500 members each, the publication explained. A salary survey in 1968 indicated the majority of churches with under 500 members paid salaries far below the national average, perhaps barely above poverty level.

"There has been no indication of dramatic change," said The Years Ahead regarding income for pastors of small churches.

The Years Ahead also reported that few, if any, churches are covered by the wage freeze, since it applies only to organizations with 60 or more employees.

"But for many Southern Baptist pastors, ministers of Education, and ministers of music, income has been frozen just as certainly," it added.

"On the other hand, some (pastors and staff) are making incomes equal to or greater than the average high budget (income) reported for a family of four by the Bureau of Labor Statistics," the article reported.

The Years Ahead referred to a recent study in Louisiana which showed pastors near the bottom of a list of trades and professions in income, at around \$6,000 or \$7,000 per year. Other state Baptist groups also are conducting surveys.

Average total compensation for surveyed pastors ranged from \$11,722 in a church with 500 to 749 members, to \$22,670 in a church with 3,000 or more members, using Baptist survey figures in 1971.

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There are 2,751 churches in the 500-749 member category, and 130 churches with 3,000 or more.

"Since compensation is related to church size, it is reasonable to assume pastors of many churches in the under-500 category receive compensation less than the 'low' budget level" cited by the labor statistics, and Annuity Board periodical said.

The "total compensation" figure used for pastors and ministers of education and music represent cash salary plus housing allowance, church-paid insurance and retirement contributions, utilities, automobile expenses, and other items.

The Years Ahead said ways to improve or supplement income open to church members are often closed to pastors. It cited trade union membership and working wives as examples. "Strong sentiment often prevails against the minister's wife working," the publication noted.

"All this is to say churches must keep closer watch on compensation (of staff) to be sure it's adequate," the publication commented editorially.

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Belmont College Dedicates
New Business School Center

9/11/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--Belmont College here dedicated a new \$1.2 million Business Administration Center designed to strengthen the Baptist school's fastest-growing area of study.

Nearly one fourth of the school's 1,000 students are enrolled in business administration.

More than 2,000 guests attended the dedication services for the new building which features in its foyer a unique sculpture symbolizing man's relationship to money.

The 21-foot sculpture of black cast iron depicts stick figures of two men--one kneeling in apparent worship of a large cast symbol of the 'almighty dollar'; the other standing with foot on top of the dollar sign, lifting in triumph a lance-like pencil in one hand and the torch of knowledge in the other.

The unusual sculpture was contributed to the college unexpectedly by Irvin Limor, president of Artistic Ironworks of Nashville, in gratitude to the Nashville community for what he called an act of "Good Samaritanism" when he came to Nashville 16 years ago from Israel.

Jack Massey, Baptist layman who heads the board of Hospital Corporation of America, contributed \$500,000 in matching funds to the college to help finance the new Business Administration center.

Massey, formerly a dominant figure of Kentucky Fried Chicken, has given more than a million dollars to the Baptist school, much of it to strengthen the business administration department in an effort to provide trained personnel to benefit Nashville businesses.

In the dedication address, Robert P. Beasley, executive vice president for finance of Firestone Fire and Rubber Co., called for closer relationships between the academic and business worlds.

Herbert C. Gabhart, president of the Baptist school, presided at the dedication.

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