



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hasty, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

June 24, 1981

81-97

Bi-Vocational Pastors On Increase Since 1976

By Jim Newton

ATLANTA (BP) — The number of Southern Baptist churches with bi-vocational pastors who "moonlight" in secular jobs increased by 4.57 percent between 1976 and 1980.

A total of 9,845 churches reported bi-vocational pastors on the 1980 Uniform Church Letter, the denomination's annual statistical report filled out by 35,420 churches. It was an increase of 430 over the number of bi-vocational pastors reported in 1976.

Data on the number of bi-vocational pastors was compiled by the research services department of the SBC School Board at the request of J. T. Burdine, national consultant on bi-vocational pastors for the rural-urban department of the SBC Home Mission Board.

Burdine said the data reflects what inflation is doing to Baptist churches and pastors. "Some of our churches are finding they just can't afford to pay a full-time salary," Burdine said.

Interpreting the data, Burdine added the research indicates a lot of older SBC churches which could afford full-time pastors in the past have had to employ bi-vocational pastors now because of inflation. "Some of them want to perpetuate a dream that is not a reality," he said.

He added, however, it is not necessarily "bad" for a church to call a bi-vocational pastor. In many cases, a bi-vocational may do as good a job or even be more effective than a full-time pastor, Burdine said.

He made a distinction, however, between bi-vocational "pastors" and bi-vocational "preachers" who just go out and preach on Sunday. A bi-vocational pastor really seeks to minister to the needs of the people, even though he may earn his salary in secular employment, Burdine said.

He pointed out data reported on the statistical study does not include the number of bi-vocational pastors who serve the 1,833 "church-type" missions sponsored by SBC churches. In addition, there are 411 churches which sent no statistical report to the SBC last year.

The statistical report also lacks data on the number of bi-vocational "church starters" who work with the Home Mission Board's church extension division in starting new missions. The board is currently seeking to enlist 5,000 such bi-vocational church starters throughout the nation.

Burdine estimated the number of bi-vocational ministers in all these categories probably exceeds 11,000 nationally, or almost one-third of the 35,831 churches in the SBC.

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Where bi-vocational churches are located is almost as interesting as how many there are, Burdine observed.

There are 15 Baptist state conventions listing more than 200 bi-vocational pastors, and all are in "older" state conventions in the South, Southwest and mid-America.

Alabama and Georgia reported the largest number of bi-vocational pastors in the SBC, each with more than 1,000.

Another list ranked the states in order of the percentage of churches reporting bi-vocationalists. Seven state conventions reported more than one-third of their pastors are bi-vocational: Alabama, Oklahoma, Illinois, Tennessee, Missouri, Kentucky, Georgia and Arkansas in that order.

Burdine also pointed out the largest percentage of increase—32.14—in the number of bi-vocational pastors from 1976 to 1980 occurred in churches with 500-999 members in cities, not in smaller churches with less than 300 members in the country or small towns.

When categorized by location, bi-vocationalists in cities with populations exceeding 2,500 increased 43.7 percent, compared to an increase of only nine percent for churches in small towns and open country.

Burdine cautioned against viewing the data with alarm. "Historically, bi-vocational pastors have played an extremely important role in Baptist life. With inflation hitting our churches so hard, it is likely that bi-vocational pastors may even become more important in the future," he said.

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Scientologists Lose Again
In Supreme Court Appeal

Baptist Press
6/24/81

WASHINGTON (BP) — In the latest round of its continuing legal war with the federal government, the Church of Scientology failed to convince the U.S. Supreme Court to review its charges against four federal employees it accused of violating its constitutional rights.

The high court justices unanimously let stand two lower court rulings against the Scientologists, who claim a memo circulated in various government agencies in 1967 abridged the church's free exercise of religion.

The memo, allegedly written by a Department of Labor employee, contained damaging and what the church called "knowingly false" information about the Church of Scientology and its controversial founder, L. Ron Hubbard. According to the Scientologists, the memo was based on information provided the Labor Department by two employees at the Internal Revenue Service and was sent to the State Department, an action which led to the revocation of the visa of a minister of the church from overseas.

Beyond that, the claim continued, the memo was part of a "long-term pattern of unremitting discrimination and harassment" by government officials and agencies, culminating in IRS revocation of the church's tax exempt status in 1969.

Church officials, who filed suit against the government in 1977, said the long delay was due to their inability to obtain government documents relating to their case before 1975, when the church obtained records under the Freedom of Information Act.

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Because the District of Columbia has a one-year statute of limitations on defamation suits, the U.S. District Court for D.C. rejected the Scientologists' suit. After a three-judge panel from the Federal Court of Appeals here initially overruled that decision, the full court affirmed the district court's rejection of the case.

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Jewish Worker Wins Review
Of Job Discrimination Claim

Baptist Press
6/24/81

WASHINGTON (BP) — A 63-year-old Jewish immigrant from Poland succeeded in convincing the U.S. Supreme Court to hear his claim he was dismissed from his job because of his religious and ethnic background.

Rubin Kremer, who moved to this country in 1970, was fired by Chemical Construction Corporation of New York, allegedly because of his Jewish faith and national origin.

Kremer first filed a complaint alleging the discriminatory treatment before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a federal agency charged with protecting the rights of workers, which referred the matter to the New York State Division of Human Rights.

That panel, after studying Kremer's charge, denied the challenge. Kremer then took his case to the New York State Human Rights Appeals Board, which upheld the ruling.

After failing in an attempt to have a New York state court review the findings, Kremer was issued a letter from EEOC authorizing him to sue his employer in federal court.

But at both the federal district and appeals courts levels, Kremer was unsuccessful in seeking further review.

In papers filed with the nation's high court, Kremer argued that the key issue in his case is his right to a new federal court hearing. He noted that neither lower federal court would agree to review the findings of the New York panels, in spite of the fact that his claims were based on Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, a section of the law forbidding job discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion or national origin.

In a separate document filed with the Supreme Court, the government's chief lawyer also urged the justices to review the case.

Arguments will be heard sometime after the high court reconvenes next October for its new term.

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Annuity Board
Appoints Two

Baptist Press
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DALLAS (BP) — Two key positions have been filled at the Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board.

D. William Dodson Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Martin, Tenn., and immediate past chairman of the Annuity Board trustees, has been named vice president and director of endowment, effective Aug. 1.

James D. Haynes, who has been controller at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, became the board's controller, effective June 1.

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Announcement of the appointments was made by Darold H. Morgan, president of the SBC's retirement and insurance agency.

Dodson, who has been pastor in Martin for 10 years, also has been pastor of churches in Alabama and Florida. He has been active in Tennessee convention activities, serving as president of the pastors' conference, a member of the executive board and other posts.

He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College and Southwestern Seminary, and attended the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. He and his wife, Janelle, have four daughters.

Haynes, an ordained minister and certified public accountant, has been pastor of churches in Texas and Wyoming and an accountant for several businesses in Texas. He was seminary controller for eight years.

He is a graduate of Howard Payne University and Southwestern Seminary and attended the University of Michigan. He and his wife, Barbara, have two children.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Annuity Board.

Strike Does Not End
Church Mission Effort

Baptist Press
6/24/81

PINCKNEYVILLE, Ill. (BP)—What does a church do about its mission gifts during a miners' strike, when many of its members find it necessary to cut their own giving?

The Beaucoup Baptist Church near Pinckneyville, Ill., faced that problem when its budget offerings dropped as much as half from its pre-strike level of about \$3,000 a Sunday.

Pastor George A. Strickland said the church decided it could not afford for any of its programs to suffer during the strike. Instead, the treasurer is authorized to borrow necessary funds each month to meet normal requirements of the budget.

"Beaucoup Church gives 23 percent through the Cooperative Program, 3 percent to Nine Mile Association, 1 percent to the Baptist Children's Home, plus \$100 a month toward the new Calvary Chapel in Pana," Strickland said. "And we're continuing those gifts, even if it means borrowing to do so, as well as meeting our local expenses."

The Beaucoup Church is also aggressively involved in "Each One Enroll One" campaign to increase Sunday School enrollment.

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Ponder Resigns Florida
Evangelism Position

Baptist Press
6/24/81

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)—James A. Ponder, director of evangelism for the Florida Baptist Convention for 11 years, has resigned, effective Aug. 15, to become president of the Jim Ponder Ministries., which will focus on crusade evangelism, church revivals and conferences. He also will direct and lead the staff of consultants to help churches in the areas of church growth consultations, church revivals and Christian family ministries.

For the past 27 years, Ponder has been director of evangelism—first in Illinois, then in Florida—and has been a pastor in Texas and Illinois.

Ponder has worked with the Home Mission Board in evangelism and is co-founder and co-director of the Church Growth Institute in Florida.

He is a native of Fort Worth, Texas, and a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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Valentine Urges Extension
Of '65 Voting Rights Act

WASHINGTON (BP) — Declaring that racial discrimination has not been eradicated, a Southern Baptist executive has urged a House subcommittee to extend the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Foy Valentine, executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, told the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights that the voting rights act was "a vital part" of the civil rights legislation Congress enacted in the 1960s.

With key provisions of the act scheduled to expire in August, 1982, Valentine called for its extension, saying it had "not just worked," but had "worked amazingly well."

The crucial and most controversial provision of the act requires certain counties and states to get Justice Department approval before changing local election laws.

While some opponents charge the act is no longer needed, Valentine told the panel "discrimination persists" and "institutional racism is finding new and subtle ways to rear its ugly head."

The federal government, Valentine contended, should still "prevent voting changes which would have the effect of unlawfully discriminating."

Emphasizing the need for the act, Valentine said more than 800 proposed voting law changes have been rejected as discriminatory since the law was enacted and that more than half of the Justice Department's objections have come in the last five years.

Concluding that the mills of improved race relations in America "are grinding slowly" but "are grinding in the right direction," Valentine urged the committee "not to allow the dismantling of this program that has served our nation well."

The committee was scheduled to conclude hearings on the subject June 24 and begin marking up a bill after the July Fourth recess.