

How Much Should We Pay the Pastor?

Pulpit & Pew Report: Clergy Pay Causing Problems for Churches

Competitive, free-market approaches to determining clergy compensation — used to varying degrees in virtually all Protestant denominations — are harming the church and distorting its mission, according to a study by Duke University researchers.

Such approaches leave clergy financially vulnerable, change ministry from a “calling” to a “career,” encourage congregations to grow for purely economic reasons and make it more difficult for pastors to offer leadership that challenges and transforms congregations, concluded the study’s authors. The study is part of the ongoing Pulpit & Pew research project on pastoral leadership based at Duke Divinity School.

“We’re not saying that churches necessarily need to run out tomorrow and pay their clergy more, although that may be the

case,” said Becky McMillan, a labor economist, co-author of the study and associate director of Pulpit & Pew. “But it is time for them to step back and think purposefully about how they’re paying their pastors and why.”

Low clergy salaries make it difficult for pastors to be true to their calling, the study contends. And this lack of income is causing many talented seminary graduates to enter other professions or other forms of ministry.

The issue of clergy salaries is, at its core, as much about how congregations view their pastors as it is about money, McMillan said.

“The fact that we use the free market to determine how much to pay clergy suggests that we view them as paid employees who compete for the position, and not as people

who are called and compelled by God to spread the gospel,” she said. “Our study suggests that looking at clergy as paid employees is a problem.”

The study, titled “How Much Should We Pay the Pastor?: A Fresh Look at Clergy Salaries in the 21st Century,” recommends that Protestant churches reconsider how they set clergy pay. Rather than turning solely to the free market for guidance, they should instead narrow the salary gap between pastors at small and large churches and provide all pastors with sufficient compensation to enable them and their families to live a decent life — in essence, providing them with a “living wage.”

To do so, however, will require many churches to surrender some degree of autonomy in order to share resources and act collaboratively with other churches, particularly in providing benefits such as health coverage, retirement and educational debt repayment.

The study was conducted by McMillan and Matthew J. Price, former associate director of Pulpit & Pew and now director of analytical research at the Episcopal Church Pension Group in New York City. The complete report is available at the Pulpit & Pew web site, www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu.

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Frankly speaking



I started college at Mercer University with the knowledge that I wanted to enter the ministry. It was not long before I realized that getting the proper academic credentials was only half the battle. The other half was experience.

Through faculty members like Robert Otto and Harold McManus, and administrators like P. Harris Anderson, I was introduced to other Baptist leaders around the state. One of those leaders was Jack Harwell, editor of *The Christian Index*. Two or three times a year I would make the drive to Atlanta and visit with Dr. Harwell. He always had time for a student.

These little visits opened the door for me in many ways. I began to understand the larger Baptist world. It was also the connection to my first full-time church position. I can't remember if Dr. Otto wrote Dr. Harwell or if Dr. Harwell wrote Dr. Otto but the end result was that my resume went to Sparta Baptist Church in the spring of 1967. Guy Walton was pastor. It was a wonderful experience.

The civil rights movement was in full swing with marches in Birmingham,

Atlanta, Macon, and yes, Sparta. Tension was everywhere. Not only could one get one's feet wet in the ministry, but one could drown! Thanks to God's grace and the pastoral leadership of Guy Walton, things went well. It was a life-changing summer.

Whenever I get the chance, I talk with students about making connections. It is never too early to start. Though the systems have changed, the underlying issues are still there. By change I mean that it is not just a male thing and it is not just about the pastorate. There are many more options for males and females. Yet it is still important to make connections.

CBF of Georgia is trying to be the kind of organization that helps people make connections. We want to be of service to the local church and to those looking for a place of service. We are not the only way to make connections, but we are trying to be one of the best ways.

—Frank Broome, CBF of Georgia Coordinator

Emerging Trends in the Pastor Search Process

In a rapidly changing society, which increasingly impacts policy and practice in the churches, there are a significant number of emerging trends in the pastor search process. Compared to yesteryear, "the times, they are a-changin'." Here is a "grocery list" of some of those trends:

- Committees are asking prospective candidates for video tapes of an entire worship experience, not just an audio tape of the sermon. If interest continues, the committee may ask for one or two additional video tapes (soon to be CDs only).
- From the prospective candidate's

point of view, salary and benefits are to be discussed in the initial conversation with the committee, not the third or fourth step in a continuing series of deliberations.

- Committees are less likely now, compared to the past, to show up unannounced at a Sunday morning worship experience to hear a candidate of interest. Because few secrets are honored these days, many committees may never visit the candidate's church.
- Few committees assume that God has already selected the candidate and all the committee has to do is find him/her. Many are aware that perhaps

Things Ministerial Candidates Wish Every Search Committee Knew

I have found my work in the area of reference and referral for CBF that, like snowflakes, no two search committees are alike. Each has its own personality and its own methods of going about a search process for a senior pastor or other staff minister. It seems that, especially where a senior pastor search is involved, committees are composed of folks who have never undertaken such a task.

Perhaps this is because, while serving on a pastor search committee can be an extremely rewarding experience, it is also often a difficult and very time-consuming job, requiring months or even years of commitment. This sometimes means a one-time experience for those dedicated lay people who agree to serve on a search committee.

They say that, when delivering a baby, the pain is soon forgotten. Perhaps this is not the case in “delivering” a new pastor to one’s congregation. However, there are resources and suggestions that are helpful in educating a search committee regarding the best ways to go about their task.

In my work, I have sought the input of clergy who have gone through the search process one or more times and asked for their suggestions about things they wish search committees knew. Here are a few of these hints:

- When you bring a candidate to the field for an interview, do not expect or require him or her to stay in the home of a committee member. The candidate needs “down”

time to think, pray and reflect without having to feel like he or she is “on” all the time.

- Ministry may be a calling, but it is also a job. Though it may seem “unspiritual,” money does matter to the candidate. Begin discussing financial issues as early in the process as possible.
- Be honest with the candidate. If a church has a history of running off pastors, the candidate has a right to know. If the church has a family who holds all the power or the purse strings, the candidate has a right to know. If there are feuding factions in the church, the candidate has a right to know. Full disclosure is the only moral choice.
- Be ready with smart questions. Think creatively. And always remember — the first question you ask reveals a lot about your committee and the church you represent.
- Be ready to answer questions as well. Know your church’s strengths and weaknesses.
- If you question the spouse in the interview, keep it brief. You are not hiring a “two-fer,” and it is unfair to imply to a spouse that he or she will have to “perform” for the church.
- Supply the candidate with as much written information about the church as possible. Give him or her a list of references — preferably with phone numbers and addresses.

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any one of several committed and experienced ministers may serve as pastor.

- The new-generation, moderate pastors are looking for opportunities to serve in the larger cities. That means that small, rural churches have an increasingly difficult time attracting candidates.
- An increasing number of seminary-trained women are exploring opportunities to serve as pastor. Many are open to smaller, rural churches.
- Search committees are more likely to carefully check out the background and experience of the candidates. They may ask for the candidate to provide a credit check, a criminal background check, and a

transcript check. Also, they are more likely to explore rumored difficulties in the candidate’s history with other churches.

- Search committees are rather likely to ask on which side of the SBC/CBF fence the candidate may stand. Yet some will expect the pastor to straddle the fence anyway, which by the way, may ensure that the pastor will be “gored” from both sides.
- In general, moderate pastors are looking for CBF related churches, not just centrist churches.
- An increasing number of committees are interested in discussing a covenant agreement (contract) with the prospective pastor. The agreement will most likely include basic

responsibilities, fringe benefits, and up-front conditions upon separation. There are an increasing number of prospective pastors who want to discuss covenant agreements as well.

— Robert Richardson, CBF of Georgia
Volunteer Assistant Coordinator for
Reference and Referral

For assistance from the CBF of Georgia office you may contact Robert Richardson at 478-742-1191 ext 23, or rrichardson@cbfga.org, or go to www.cbfga.org and click on “reference and referral.”



Bannister Creek Church Grows in Number and Spirit

If you are a person who dreads routine and lives a little on the edge, you may want to consider church planting. No two days are alike and no two worship services are routine. You will become a person who deeply believes in the power of prayer and becomes familiar with God's sense of humor. These are good things, by the way.

The CBF of Georgia's first church plant, Bannister Creek Church, is growing. Celebration Sunday was February 1. We were advised by our church planting coach not to put too much emphasis on this one day. As he so wisely put it, "It's just a Sunday followed by another Sunday, followed by another Sunday..." He was right. But what he couldn't describe was the feeling of seeing people we did not know walk through the doors! Now there is the joy of knowing their names and seeing them return.

The work of making a portable church is almost complete. Part of our church planting training involved visiting as many other portable churches as we could to learn and listen. We came away from that experience determined to put the start-up money where it could best be used. First, we invested in a first-class sound and audio-visual system. Secondly, we purchased a portable stage that we share with Liberty Middle School. And thirdly, we purchased quality 4 1/2-inch lumbar supported chairs! (Have you sat in a plastic middle school cafeteria chair lately?)

However, the most important element of a church start we experienced was something we couldn't duplicate or improve. That element was the spirit of the people. The

Lisa Stephens, Joe Sichting and Leslie Reese enhance Bannister Creek worship with their musical virtuosity.



Justin Gilliam and friends taught juggling to the children gathered at the Bannister Creek kickoff in October 2003.

people we met were wonderful, kind, and open people. They were genuinely excited and thrilled that we came for worship. This is the spirit of Christ we pray for at Bannister Creek Church. I believe, once again, that God has answered our prayers.

One cannot help but wonder what similarities we have as a church plant with the first century church. We know that we have been called to be the presence of Christ in northwest Forsyth County. We know that it is our desire to bring a sense of community to a large group of new residents. We pray that we will continue to find favor with God, Liberty Middle School, and the community.

We are grateful to our CBF of Georgia family. As well as financial gifts, churches have adopted us as prayer partners. The William Lacy R.A. boys from Morrow First Baptist adopted Bannister Creek as one of their mission projects. Along with their constant prayers and wonderful letters of support, the young boys made table decorations for our Thanksgiving Community Service. Gainesville First Baptist has offered any staff member we may need on a particular Sunday. Currently we are looking for a mission team who would come this summer and lead a Backyard Bible Club.

If you know of someone who can be our guest, direct them to www.bannistercreekchurch.com or pass on their information to the church by calling 770-888-3588.

—Natalie Adams, pastor of Bannister Creek Church, Cumming

How Much Should We Pay the Pastor? *Continued from page 1.*

Using salary figures compiled in a 2001 national clergy survey, McMillan and Price sought to examine how free market forces shape clergy compensation and how that, in turn, affects the church. They looked at clergy salaries by church “polity,” or organizational structure, particularly regarding the amount of independence individual congregations have in setting salaries.

In all but the very largest Protestant churches, salaries for pastors in “connectional” polity churches (those subject to some degree of centralized authority such as Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians and others) are consistently higher than clergy salaries in “congregational” polity churches (those with local church autonomy, such as Baptists, Pentecostals, United Church of Christ and others), the report stated. That disparity occurred even when controlling for pastor education, experience and church members’ income.

About 60 percent of Protestant pastors serve in small churches, with an average weekly attendance of 100 or less. It was in these churches where the impact of church polity — and the free market — was most apparent, according to McMillan and Price. The median salary, including housing, for pastors serving small churches was \$36,000 in connectional churches and \$22,300 in congregational churches.

In large churches (with 351 to 1,000 in attendance, comprising about 5 percent of all Protestant churches), median salaries were \$66,003 for pastors in connectional churches and \$59,315 for pastors in congregational churches.

The same disparities exist in regard to fringe benefits, the researchers found. Pastors in congregational churches are much less likely than their connectional counterparts to receive pension benefits and health care coverage. Only 30 percent of small congregational churches, for example, provided retirement benefits for their pastors, compared to 80 percent of small connectional churches.

McMillan and Price attributed the differences in compensation primarily to centralized decision-making in connectional churches, which promote minimum salary guidelines and requirements to pay pension and health care benefits.

Regardless of polity, however, only a small percentage of pastors earn what most Americans would consider a professional-level salary, the study found. The median salary, including housing, for all full-time pastors in the study was \$40,000.

Catholic clergy salaries do not create the same tensions, the researchers reported.

With no spouse or children to support, Catholic priests are generally paid less than Protestant clergy, the survey stated. Those lower salaries are offset by the provision of other benefits, including health care, retirement and theological education.

The range of salaries is much narrower for Catholic clergy. The median salary paid to Catholic priests varied only slightly regardless of the parish size, the survey showed. Median salaries for priests ranged from \$20,883 for those serving small parishes (with less than 100 people in weekly attendance) up to \$26,633 for those serving in the largest parishes (with over 1,000 in attendance).

Rather than being determined by market forces, Catholic clergy salaries are set by the diocesan bishop and are typically comparable across a diocese. As a result, parishes that might not otherwise be able to afford a priest are often aided financially.

Freed from financial constraints, priests can more easily move between small and larger parishes as needed, the researchers said. Under such a system, excellence in ministry is driven not by financial incentives, but by faithfulness to one’s call.

Reprinted from www.dukenews.duke.edu/newsrelease of Wednesday, February 05, 2003.

Things Candidates Wish Committees Knew *Continued from page 3.*

- If some members are feeling “reluctant” about the candidate, be sure they do not monopolize the interview in an inappropriate way.
- Make the interview process as comfortable and casual as possible. Let the candidate know what appropriate dress for the meeting is. Include a possible tour of the church and a driving tour of the neighboring area. And certainly, reimburse any expenses incurred by the candidate.
- Once you have reached the interview stage with a candidate, be sure you keep him or her apprized of the process and the time frame in which you plan to operate.

- Know that all candidates are not in the will of God. Both candidate and committee must be intentional and prayerful in seeking God’s will. Unfortunately, this is not always the case with every candidate. Committee members need to be prepared to take the spiritual high road and make sure they are in God’s perfect will for the church they serve.

For assistance from the national CBF Resource Center, contact Clarissa Strickland, associate coordinator for leadership development, at 770-220-1635 or cstrickland@thefellowship.info.



News

CBF Receives \$2 Million Gift for Missions from Georgian

An anonymous donor from First Baptist Church of Gainesville has made a \$2 million contribution to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship for CBF Global Missions. A \$200,000 portion of the gift will be shared with CBF of Georgia because of the donor's commitment to home and foreign mission causes.

New on the Web

CBF Announces New Web Site www.thefellowship.info

CBF launched a new web site on February 2 to provide an easier and smarter way to access information on the web, and make time on the web more productive. They have included a search engine and shortcuts engine so you can type in key words to rapidly find topics you are interested in learning about.

Journey to the Cross www.journeytothecross.org

This site is provided by Passport, Inc. for Lent. The materials are written with youth in mind, but people of all ages visit every day. Last year there were over 50,000 visits to Journey to the Cross.

Financial Picture

2003-2004 year-to-date as of February 29, 2004

Budget requirement	\$372,148.47
Undesignated Receipts	\$396,011.25
Designated Receipts	\$288,665.70



GENERAL ASSEMBLY ... The CBF of Georgia State Gathering at the 2003 General Assembly was a great place to meet old friends and make new ones. Michelle Brooks, Andrea & Brent Jones, and Tommy & Rachel Shapard enjoyed the time-out from a busy assembly schedule.

opportunities & reports



CURRENT RETREAT ... Present and former Georgians Ryan Clark, Chris Burns, John & Jennifer Uldrick, Marty Anderson and Cameron Edgar compared notes at the CBF *current* Network Retreat for young leaders in Dallas, TX, during February 2004.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NETWORK RETREAT ... Children's ministers got in the spirit with a Texas-style bash at the 2004 Children's Ministry Network Retreat in Dallas, TX. Pictured are Georgia children's ministers Brenda Dedmon, Janet Anthony, Devita Parnell of CBF of Georgia, Prissy Tunnell and Edie Whitaker.

Thank You ...

Memorial Gifts

In Memory of Audrey W. Bateman

H.R. Bateman

In Memory of Joy Carter

Burton L. Bridges

Alta Bruce

In Memory of Tonnor Jolley

James H. Haygood

In Memory of Elizabeth McCollum and Pat Smith

Joanne B. Harwell

In Memory of Ted McCollum and Charles Smith

Joanne B. Harwell

In Memory of Jerry Smith

George and Helen Mims

2004 GA General Assembly in Pictures

March 5-6, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carrollton

Photos by Bruce Minett



The musicians of Tabernacle Baptist Church called us into worship on Friday evening.



Panel members Kyle Matthews, Robin Anderson, Alan Culpepper, Sonny Gallman and Jeremy Lewis led in a Saturday morning discussion of "The Future of the Church."



Kyle Matthews led an extended seminar in "Ending the Worship-Style Wars" and performed during worship services.



Host pastor Jimmy Gentry extended a warm welcome to CBF of Georgia. The flowers were given in honor of CBF of Georgia by Jimmy, Jackie, Emily & Nicholas Gentry.



Bernie Moraga led a breakout entitled "Starting a Hispanic Ministry in Your Community."

2004 General Assembly

June 24-26
Birmingham, Alabama

Join with other Fellowship Christians at the 2004 General Assembly as we celebrate the ministry opportunities of today, awaken to the challenges of tomorrow and strive to be the presence of Christ together.

Our Assembly is a missional journey...

to Hear – Speaker John Kinney, Musician Chris Rice, and a Celebration of Missions

to Experience – Interactive Workshops, Communion and Worship, and Bible Study

to Learn – through Congregational Leadership with Speaker Craig Van Gelder and Pre-Assembly Events

to Connect – through Spiritual Formation with Tilden Edwards and the Thursday afternoon CBF of Georgia State Gathering

There is no charge to attend the General Assembly. However, separate pre-registration, advance reservations and fees may be required for some auxiliary events. Pre-register online at www.thefellowship.info. For more information, call 800-352-8741.

Hotel accommodations can be made online at www.thefellowship.info. All requests for room reservations must be made in writing or by the Internet. For more information, contact S. Stewart & Associates at 770-619-9671.

 Being the
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Today...Tomorrow... Together

CBF of Georgia...enabling the people of God who are committed to historic Baptist principles to carry out the Great Commission under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a fellowship where every Christian has the freedom and the responsibility to exercise God's gift and calling.

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CBF GA coming up!

April 17

Baptist Women in Ministry of Georgia Spring Meeting

Rocky Creek Baptist Church, Forsyth, 10:30 a.m.
Susan Burnette, speaker. Worship, lunch, business and awards are featured.
Contact Devita Parnell, 478-742-1191 ext 28 or dparnell@cbfga.org.

May 6-7

Theology of Hope - 40 Years Later with Jurgen Moltmann

Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta
Program information is available at www.candler.emory.edu or you may contact Peter Paulsen at 404-727-4481.

May 11

CBF OF GEORGIA COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING

CBF of Georgia, Macon, 10:00 a.m.

May 27-29

Baptist Footsteps in the Northwest The Baptist History and Heritage Society Annual Meeting

Vancouver, Washington
Contact Pam Durso at 800-966-2278 or pdurso@TNbaptist.org.

June 14-18

CBF OF GEORGIA TOUCHING TALIAFERRO WITH LOVE BASEBALL CAMP

To volunteer, contact Twyla Nelson at 706-886-8152 or tnelson@cbfgamissions.org.

June 20-25 and June 27-July 2

CBF OF GEORGIA TOUCHING TALIAFERRO WITH LOVE DAY CAMP

To volunteer, contact Ann Peisher at apeisher@arches.uga.edu.

June 23

Bountiful Feast: A Spiritual Formation Network Dinner

Sheraton Birmingham Hotel, 6:00 p.m.
Tilden Edwards, speaker. Contact Toni Draper 770-220-1654 or tdraper@thefellowship.info.

June 24-26

CBF 2004 General Assembly

Birmingham, AL
Hotel reservations can be made online at www.thefellowship.info.

June 24

CBF OF GEORGIA STATE GATHERING

Georgians meet and greet and share what's going on in CBF of Georgia.

July 13-16

CBF OF GEORGIA NEW HORIZONS CAMP

Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center, Covington
New Horizons Camp offers a personal experience for children to learn and grow in Christ. Camp director Dixie Ford may be contacted at 678-413-1145 or dixieleeford@mac.com.

July 18-22

Soulfeast

Lake Junaluska, N.C.
Upper Room Ministries spiritual formation conference for all ages. Call 1-800-972-0433 or visit www.upperroom.org/soulfeast.

July 26-30

Preaching Workshop with Craddock, Taylor and Long

Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta
Contact OCME@emory.edu.

November 14-15

CBF OF GEORGIA FALL CONVOCATION

Christian Fellowship Baptist Church, College Park
Carolyn Gordon, speaker.

events, dates, times & places