

“HAVE CHRISTIAN PULPIT MINISTERS RECEIVED WHAT THEY DESERVE?”

By Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.

	DENOMINATION "A"	DENOMINATION "B"	DENOMINATION "C"
1) SALARY	\$30,321	\$34,803	\$41,969
2) HOUSING ALLOWANCE WITH FULL UTILITIES	14,239	9,490	11,075
3) MEDICAL INSURANCE	10,757	9,490	11,075
4) RETIREMENT AND LIFE INSURANCE	9,490	4,745	5,061
5) CHURCH PAYS THE EM- PLOYER'S SHARE OF SOCIAL SECURITY, WHICH IS 7.65% OF SALARY & THE FAIR RENTAL VALUE OF THE DWELLING	3,408	3,389	4,058
6) AUTO EXPENSES 50.5 CENTS PER MILE (30,000 MILES)	15,150	15,150	15,150
7) MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	1,491	----	----
8) CONTINUING EDUCA- TION EXPENSES	1,292	1,292	1,292
9) CONTINUING EDUCA- TION TIME OFF	7 DAYS	10 DAYS	14 DAYS
10) VACATION	4 WEEKS	4 WEEKS	4 WEEKS
TOTAL PACKAGE	\$ 86,148	\$ 78,359	\$ 89,680

While conducting a revival in southeastern Ohio, I conversed with a minister, from a denominational church. He wore "two hats". He preached locally and also served as a "coordinator" for twenty-three congregations of the denomination. His responsibilities varied. One area in which I conversed with him about was "internal problems" of a congregation.

He informed me that he served as a "**CONSULTANT**" for ministers and congregations. Thus, he often served as a mediator or referee concerning disputes. He seeks to be unbiased and weighs the evidence presented by a congregation or minister. He then makes a decision, that can be accepted by both parties or appealed to a higher church official.

He is often disliked by some disgruntled, power struggling church member or Church Board, due to his decisions. This is especially true when his decision is in favor of the minister who someone is "picking on", for no valid reason. In other words the local minister is not at the mercy of some unhappy church member who is attempting to get him "thrown out" of his ministry.

Another area, which we discussed was **REMUNERATION** for the "man of God in the pulpit". He informed me that at the present time, a minister serving in S.E. Ohio, in a congregation with an average attendance of eighty (80) would be paid a minimum salary and several benefits. However, "any minister" with any experience and anything "on the ball" at all is paid a great deal more. This challenged me to write an article pertaining to such.

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Then later I **corresponded with several denominations** as to their "Pay Package" for their pulpit ministers. As I interviewed several church personnel, I discovered that most of their congregations had some negotiation privileges with their minister, but the denomination sets various minimums. The conclusion is listed in the above stated figures. Most of these "Pay Packages" put to shame the "Pay Packages" of ministers of the Restoration Movement.

Another area of mistreatment toward a minister, too often, is seen in the **upkeep of the church owned parsonage**. Frequently, a parsonage has needs that are ignored or "put on the back burner", such as water heater or carpet replacement. A minister's family is often at the mercy of a committee of some kind.

Several years ago, I recall being told of a denominational church that was "in between" ministers. A denominational official visited the congregation. He told them that, "**Before we send you a minister you will make some changes**, two of which were: replacing the carpet completely in the parsonage as well as replacing the washer and dryer. When this is completed, then we will talk about sending you a minister".

Now, too many of our pulpit committees are "good" at **making promises** concerning parsonage upkeep, but "not so good" in carrying out the promises. One would think that the word of a: person, committee, Board, would be "good", wouldn't you? Seemingly, due to our independent status among "**Restoration Churches**", many have adopted the philosophy that we (committees, boards, etc.) are **not accountable to anyone**. We do not fear any church hierarchy, God ordained ministers, or possibly even God Himself. Some parsonages are a terrible disgrace and a poor witness in a community.

Now, **the denominational church's "Pay-Package"** for their "man of God" in S.E. Ohio, which is a low income area **far out-does** the "**Restoration Movement Churches**". Those ministers located in more prosperous areas are paid much more. Also, the more one has in his background in education and experience is also considered in the pay-package. This is the requirement, if a congregation desires a minister - **not an optional matter!**

Now, we of the "**Restoration Movement**" (Christian Churches and Churches of Christ) need to take some lessons from our denominational neighbors on **HOW TO TREAT GOD'S SERVANTS**. God said a laborer is worth his keep (Mt. 10:10; I Cor. 9:14; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:14; I Tim. 5:18). What a shame a congregation brings on themselves when they underpay a preacher. Many congregations need to repent of this terrible sin. **God will not bless a flock who is trying to starve God's workers**. We want a Christian College trained minister (**current cost of a four year degree is approximately \$70,000**). We want him 24/7, and then do not want to pay him.

Is it any wonder we of the "**Restoration Movement**" see many good young men "**dropping out of the ministry**" because they are unfairly picked upon and have no one to stand up for them? There are many who attempt to send them "down the road" and try to "starve" them by underpaying them a livable wage. A "pulpit minister" was told by his son, "I am never going to be a pulpit minister because you never have any money to do anything as other fathers do!". **Fifty percent** of Pulpit Ministers depart the preaching ministry within seven years after graduation from a Christian college. Shame on us when the congregation wonders, "Where have all the ministers gone?".

May God help us to see that at least a couple of reasons we have well over a thousand empty pulpits across our land is due to the above comments. **We can, if we want to, change both of these situations.**

May it be understood that the writer of this article is not one who is being mistreated (picked on undeservedly or underpaid), but he is aware of many of God's men who are undergoing great stress due to the above abuse.

How can we expect men to preach the Gospel if they are not "taken care of"? The old adage, "If you can't go, send someone!", is still true today. Are **YOU** going, or sending? Tithing is still in God's plan!

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