

# The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

— THE ORGAN OF THE —  
REFORMED BAPTIST ALLIANCE

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## SPECIAL NOTICE

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## EDITORIALS

### THE PASTOR'S SALARY

The writer is a pastor. It is therefore a bit awkward for him to write concerning the pastor's salary. Some may think it inappropriate. But when the facts concerning the writer's financial position in relation to the topic are understood, I believe that any objection which might have been raised will be dispensed with.

I do not write on this subject out of any sense of personal dissatisfaction with regard to the support I am receiving. On the contrary, it is because of my present favourable circumstances in this respect, that I feel free to write. To be specific: my church has just voted to increase my support substantially, bringing my salary up to a level which allows for freedom from deficit financing in this day of inflationary trends. This voluntary action on the part of the church which I am privileged to serve, action which I appreciate very greatly, should take care of any tendency to infer from this editorial that I am guilty of the offence of publishing personal complaints.

Adequate financial support is a vital need of the workman of God. The lack of it will bring the pastor and his family under the pressure of embarrassment and strain which will have an adverse effect on them and the people they serve. It should be the concern of every church and every church member that the pastor who serves them be paid a salary which will enable him to maintain a decent standard of living and have the means needed to provide for himself and his family.

A friend stated recently that the many financial demands of a minister's life were a surprising discovery, made after a minister had married into the family. Intimate acquaintance with the pastor and the parsonage revolutionized their thinking in respect to what a man really needs to take care of his financial obligations.

It would seem that some people, when talking of what a minister's salary should be, are still thinking of the cost of living as it was thirty years ago. They do not seem to realize that it takes three dollars to-day to buy what one dollar would a generation ago. As a consequence, the salary level of some pastors is pitifully

if not disgracefully low.

The cost of food is just one item of the pastor's expenses. Clothing (and the minister must wear Sunday garb most everyday of the week), educational expense, dental and medical care, cost of fuel, light, telephone, book purchases, and many other items must be entered into the list of things necessary to a minister's life and home. And, most expensive of all items needed, an automobile. It seems that it is all but impossible for a minister to do his work to-day without an automobile. And anyone who has been involved in the purchase and operation of these vehicles realizes the terrific financial demand made upon the owner. It would take from 25 to 50% of the salary of your minister to take care of the purchase and maintenance of his car, the percentage reckoned according to the salary received.

The May issue of the "Reader's Digest" carries an article entitled "Must the Parsonage Be a Poorhouse?". The writer reports that a study of the salaries of 5000 ministers reveals that "some of the figures are so shocking that they may help to jar many a congregation out of its complacency". Two thirds of the ministers reported that they are in "substantial debt". About 25% of these reported that "their debts were increasing; nearly 50% that they were unable to reduce their debts". It is further stated that "many ministers' wives have been forced to go to work to meet the rising cost of living. A number of ministers reported that they were forced to cash their life insurance to educate their children". At the beginning of the article a newspaper advertisement is reproduced, in which the "Help Wanted" column called for: "A plumber, salary \$120.00 a week; a novelty joke salesman, \$100.00 a week; a janitor for an apartment building, \$75.71 a week; a minister, with 7 years of college training, \$70.00 a week". The writer explains that the first part of the ad, is factual, the last item, calling for the services of a minister, was only added for comparison. "Any parish in the land", he comments, "would be ashamed to run such an ad. But there are thousands which do not seem to be ashamed to pay their ministers only \$70.00 a week".

A check of our last year's Alliance "Minutes" will reveal to anyone that none of our ministers received this salary level which the writer suggests is "shamefully low". The average salary reported from the investigation made was \$4436, or \$85.30 per week. The minimum salary of one of our Canadian Church Groups is \$3340. I was asked recently by a minister of another Group what our minimum salary for ministers was, and I evaded the necessity of answering, for I was ashamed.

We have a consecrated group of ministers. They are not in the work of the Lord for financial gain, nor will they leave it because of financial lack. But this spirit of consecration should not be abused by an indifference, on the part of the lay people, of the pastor's financial needs. Much is expected of the minister of to-day by way of training and service. It is only fitting that due recognition be given to the workman in respect to his salary. If a church cannot provide a salary that is fair and adequate, the people are clear of blame, but it should be the concern of the people to raise and maintain at reasonable level the salary of their minister if and when they are able.

A man engaged in secular work can put a price on his services. He may accept a position or retain one according to his satisfaction with the salary he receives. A Christian minister cannot do this. Such an attitude would be fatal to his status and influence as a preacher of the Gospel. Therefore, he is entirely dependent on the conscience and concern of his people in this important matter.

It might be timely for our churches to review the

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