

Pastor dismissals in SBC mostly over 'control' Forced terminations have dropped: Forced terminations have dropped

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The number of forced terminations of pastors and church staff in Southern Baptist congregations has dropped. For 2006, the last year tabulated, 680 full-time and “bivocational” pastors were forced from their positions, in addition to 265 staff members. Since the denomination began tracking church firings in 1996, it has found that the primary reason for firings involves issues of “control” of the congregation.

The nationwide survey by the Southern Baptist Church-Minister Relations Association was reported January 16 by the Nashville-based Baptist Press.

The next most common reasons for dismissal were: the church’s resistance to change; poor people skills on the part of the pastor; a pastor’s leadership style seen as too strong; congregational conflict at the time the pastor arrived.

Kenneth Keene, who will become president of the association in July, called forced departures “one of the most serious difficulties” in Southern Baptist life. “It sends a negative message to the community.”