



A GUIDE TO INTERIM OR TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENGAGING AN INTERIM OR TRANSITIONAL MINISTER

Though the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (CBWC) recognizes that the selection of pastors is a task incumbent on the individual church, and that this extends to hiring of an Interim or Transitional Minister, the CBWC is usually involved in the process, often from the very start.

Interim ministers could be defined as those who help a church sustain its ministries until a new pastor is called by the church. Transitional ministers are individuals who have considerable positive ministry experience who have also gone through some specific training provided by the CBWC in assisting churches on transformational processes.

This document is intended to help a congregation identify for all concerned some guidelines which have been found to be helpful.

DEFINITION:

Interim Ministry:

- is an arrangement between a congregation and an individual pastor
- whereby the pastor agrees to provide pastoral services for a short term (usually measured in months rather than years)
- allowing the church to adequately prepare for the call and coming of the next full time pastor

Transitional Ministry:

- is an arrangement between a congregation and an individual pastor
- whereby the pastor agrees to provide some basic pastoral services for a short term (usually measured in months rather than years) with an emphasis on addressing defined ministry goals agreed upon in advance, which may include the following:
 - assessing church needs
 - assisting a church through developmental stages
 - assisting in revisioning process and formation of new directional goals
 - church governance or church policy review
 - intentionally addressing a certain congregational issue
 - supporting recovery of church health due to conflict or other upset
 - proactively addressing maintenance mentality or other holdup to growth
- allowing the church to adequately prepare for the call and coming of the next full time pastor

SUGGESTIONS:

Regional Ministers or the Settlement Coordinator can often make suggestions of names of qualified ministers who are known to be willing, able and available to engage in interim ministry or transitional ministry for a limited length of time.

A written agreement should be drawn up which sets out:

1. The **duration** of the arrangement – Some denominations use the guideline of a month of interim ministry for every year the previous pastor served. There are no fixed CBWC guidelines

on this matter. It is often best to secure an interim minister for set blocks of time, such as four months renewable. For transitional ministers a longer period of time approximating a “church year” (September to June) or longer may be best to allow the design and completion of a specific “Transitional Ministry Plan”. In certain circumstances, such as intentional interims handling a particular issue for a church or for ministry following a lengthy pastorate, this might be extended to twelve months.

2. The specific **ministry expectations**

- Number of days or hours per week
- Types of services to be provided and ministries to be involved in
- Preaching and Bible Study expectations
 - Visitation expectations
 - Other expectations

3. The **accommodation arrangements** - Hotel, Apartment, Room & Board, other

4. The **compensation arrangements** (depending upon length of tenure)

- Daily or monthly salary
- Ensure employment status clarification (i.e. employee/employer or contract worker)
- Expenses – travel and other related expenses
- Benefits – education and book allowances, medical plan, RRSP
- Vacation, Days off and Statutory holidays

ETHICAL STANDARDS INVOLVING INTERIM OR TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

The call to ministry is different from other hiring practices since both the congregation and the candidate are seeking to discern God’s leading. It is appropriate, therefore, that those invited to interim service not exert undue influence in the process even though they are temporarily part of the congregation. It should be clearly understood and agreed upon that the Interim Pastor will:

- resist the temptation (or pressure) to apply for the permanent position while in the interim relationship and will state this intent in the employment agreement.
- refrain from any activity (overt or covert) to influence the work of the Search Committee
- refrain from initiating significant changes to the policies and practices of the Church, unless the congregation has clearly invited such involvement by stating it in the ministry plan or job description, or in subsequent negotiations
- refrain from any activity (overt or covert) that could have the effect of weakening the church's ties with the CBWC.

Interim or Transitional Ministers should at all times refrain from seeking permanent ministry in the Church they are serving despite the messages of affirmation they might receive from the church.

Interim or Transitional Ministers should decline to have their names considered by the Pastoral Search Committee recognizing that it is a “conflict of interest” to present oneself as a permanent candidate while serving in a temporary staff role in the church.

HOUSING FOR INTERIM OR TRANSITIONAL PASTORS

- **GENERAL**

The options for housing are as follows:

1. Provide the unoccupied church parsonage – arrangements will need to be made to supply furniture and household items, such that the interim pastor (and spouse) can live comfortably, recognizing the temporary nature of this arrangement.
2. Provide accommodation in a local hotel/motel at the church’s expense.
3. Provide room and board in a parishioner’s home. The latter is not likely to be acceptable if the ministry is for any extended period of time.
4. Provide furnished accommodation in an unoccupied home owned by one of the parishioners.
5. Provide a rented furnished home or apartment at the church’s expense.

In most cases an Interim or Transitional Pastor goes to live temporarily in the church community. It is important that while the stay may be only for a few months, the interim or transitional pastor - and possibly spouse - be made as comfortable as possible. (Note: options for housing may affect the pastor’s status for claiming a “clergy housing tax deduction”).

- **HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS**

It is assumed that the accommodation will be private, well heated, clean and comfortable. Appliances or household equipment left by a previous resident should be checked to ensure that they are all in working order. If the accommodation provided requires ongoing outside maintenance (i.e. lawn care, snow shoveling, etc.), an agreement should be reached as to who will be responsible for this. If furniture or household items have been borrowed or donated, a detailed list of items and who provided them would greatly assist in making it easier to return items when the Interim Pastor leaves.

- **ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS**

Appoint two people
(may be a couple)

- to have prime responsibility to see that the housing arrangements and items are provided
- to be the main contact person for the church in relation to the Interim

Pastor in all housing needs

- to serve as co-coordinators and contact persons with the Interim Pastor, both before they arrive and while they are serving at the church.

Special helps

- a directory of members and addresses and phone numbers would be especially helpful to an Interim Pastor
- a city map where needed
- phone numbers of essentials services
- a list of hospitals, funeral homes, doctors, dentists, etc.
- an introduction of the Interim Pastor to various services in the community, particularly those geared for senior citizens
- Church Constitution
- Church membership record
- Directory of church officers
- List of shut-ins and the sick
- An equipped office in the church including computer and printer
- Internet connectivity and IT support where needed
- Orientation to church office equipment (phones, copier, computer network, etc.)
- Orientation to church policies which affect the functioning of the pastor (building use policy, marriage & funeral policy, child safety policy, etc.)
- Orientation to other pastoral and support staff roles including Job Descriptions for all church staff

A Sample Agreement

This agreement is provided as a sample only to show the types of information which should be covered in an employment contract. Information will vary depending on the individual church situation and the specific agreement entered into with the Interim Pastor. Sample clauses have been included for both an employee/employer relationship and an independent contract worker relationship. Churches are advised to seek independent legal advice if necessary. The same information could be provided in letter format.

Interim Ministry Agreement

This Agreement is made as of the ____ day of _____, 20__ between:

ABC Baptist Church

123 Any Street
Anytown, BC Z9Z 9Z9

(referred to in the Contract as the " Church")

And,

Name of person

123 Address Road
Anytown, BC Z9Z 9Z9

(referred to in the Contract as the "Pastor")

The Church and Pastor agree as follows:

1. Engagement

1.1 Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement, the Church retains the services of the Pastor to perform the duties as outlined in Appendix "A" entitled "Position Description", and which forms part of this Agreement.

1.2 The Pastor will be available _____ days per week (including Sundays) and will perform the duties as described in the Position Description under the direction of _____ (insert the appropriate Board/Committee).

2. Term

2.1 The term of this Agreement shall be for _____ months, beginning on _____ and ending on _____.

2.2 Subject to satisfactory review and agreement by both parties, this agreement can be extended for further periods of time.

2.3 Should the church secure a permanent pastor during the tenure of this agreement, the church may provide the Interim/Transitional Pastor with a minimum three month notice of termination of this agreement.

2.4 The Interim/Transitional Pastor shall not be considered for any permanent staff role in the church during the tenure of this agreement.

3. Remuneration (for contract worker)

3.1 The Pastor shall receive a fee for service of \$xxx per day.

3.2 The Pastor shall invoice the Church for services rendered on a monthly basis and will be paid within _____ days of submitting an invoice.

3.3 The relationship between the Church and the Pastor shall be that of principal and independent contractor. Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute the Pastor to be considered an employee of the Church. As a contract worker, the Pastor shall be responsible for all taxes owing as a result of remuneration received from the Church.

-OR-

3. Remuneration (for employee/employer relationship)

3.1 The Pastor shall receive a salary of \$xxx per day, payable weekly/semimonthly/ monthly. The first pay cheque will be payable on _____ (insert first pay date).

3.2 The Church agrees to pay all taxes and submit all deductions payable as prescribed by law (including, but not limited to employment insurance, income tax, Canada Pension Plan).

3.3 The Church agrees to provide _____ weeks' vacation during the term of this Agreement. Should the pastor decide not to take vacation during the term of this Agreement, the Church agrees to pay the vacation pay, less deductions, at the end of the Term.

3.4 The Church agrees to deduct as appropriate and remit both the employee and employer's share of CBWC pension contributions on a monthly basis or will match contributions to the pastor's personal RRSP.

3.5 The Church agrees to provide disability premiums and medical and health benefits through the CBWC, by remitting the cost of these benefits to the CBWC on a monthly basis.

Note: Articles 3.4 and 3.5 would only be inserted if the contract was for more than six months, and the Pastor is eligible for pension and benefit coverage. If in doubt, please check with Victor Ku, CBWC Director of Administration and Finances, at 403-228-9559 or vku@cbwc.ca.

4. Accommodation (if provided)

4.1 Accommodation will be provided as outlined below at the church's expense.

5. Expenses and Allowances

5.1 A travel allowance of \$ _____ will be provided monthly to cover the cost of transportation to and from the Pastor's permanent residence. This amount should be included in the monthly invoice (for contract worker) - OR – This amount will be paid as a taxable benefit (for employee/employer relationship).

5.2 Travel related to providing services as outlined in the Position Description will be reimbursed at the rate of _____ per km. It is the responsibility of the Pastor to maintain a travel log in accordance with the Income Tax Act.

5.3 Approval and reimbursement of travel and other out-of-pocket expenses related to this agreement will be made in accordance with guidelines and procedures established by the church.

5.4 Other Benefits: Book, Education, Denominational meetings and pastor's retreats.

6. Expectations

6.1 It is understood and agreed that during the term of this Agreement, the Pastor will:

- (a) resist the temptation (or pressure) to apply for the permanent position while in the interim relationship;
- (b) refrain from any activity (overt or covert) to influence the work of the search committee;
- (c) refrain from initiating significant changes to the policies and practices of the Church, unless the congregation has clearly invited such involvement in the initial invitation or by subsequent agreement. Normally, the Pastor will not initiate new ministries apart from the specific direction of the job description;
- (d) refrain from any activity (overt or covert) that could have the effect of weakening the church's relationship with the CBWC.

7. Termination

7.1 The Church may terminate this Agreement by giving the Pastor notice, in writing, to this effect under one of the following circumstances:

7.1.1. When there is an extreme change in circumstances, such as the withdrawal of funding.

7.1.2. In the event that the Pastor is not available for a period in excess of _____ consecutive days.

7.1.3. Incompetence or Other Cause. A case of incompetence or cause directed against the Pastor shall be determined by a panel consisting of _____ Name at least three positions (i.e. Chair of Deacons, Chair of Management Board, etc.).

7.1.4. Ethical or moral failure: A case of ethical or moral failure will be reported immediately to the CBWC for disposition.

7.1.5. Notwithstanding the above, this Agreement can be terminated by either party on _____ weeks' written notification, delivered to the other party.

7.2 In the event of such termination, the Pastor will be paid for services satisfactorily performed to the termination date.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20__ in _____ (name of city/town).

(Name & position of person authorized to sign contracts)

(Name of contractor)

ABC Baptist Church

Information Helpful To Interim Pastors

OFFICE HOURS of the Predecessor (days and hours scheduled to be in the church office)

DEADLINES

Item	Date Due	Contact Person	Pastor's Responsibility
Bulletins			
New Media Ads			
Newsletter			
Other			

MEETING SCHEDULES

Boards and Committees

Expectation of Interim / Transitional Pastor

Church Business Meetings

Church Groups

Local Ministerials

Name	Dates	Contact
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Denominational And/Or Association Events

Name	Dates	Contact
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Helpful People in the Church and Community

Name	Function	Phone #
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Assistance Contact Person

Name	Phone #
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

*Make 2 copies of this Evaluation and Report Form
Have the Interim Pastor and a Church Representative each complete a copy of this Form*

**EVALUATION AND REPORT
OF THE INTERIM / TRANSITIONAL PASTOR**

Name of Interim/ Transitional Pastor _____

Address _____

Telephone # _____

Church Served _____

City _____

Province _____

Date Began _____

Date Ended _____

Weekly Duties Performed

Special Unplanned Ministries which arose

Blessings experienced though this ministry

Concerns or problems observed

Evaluation based out of the goals from the Transitional Ministry Plan:

The person completing this Evaluation Form above is one of:

The Interim Pastor-

Name _____

Signature _____

Or

The Church Representative -

Name _____

Signature _____

When completed, photocopy this Form – one copy for the pastor and one for the Church. A copy shall also be sent to the CBWC Regional Minister responsible for settlement.

