

## **Sabbatical Leave Plan**

Dear Church Treasurer:

One of the many ministry resources that the CBWC provides to its churches and pastors is our Sabbatical Leave Plan. It was originally approved by Assembly motion in 1984, at which time funds were transferred from the CBWC's budget to a Trust Account set up for this purpose.

Professional development is essential to the well-being of our pastors. The Banff Pastors and Spouses Conference and the Regional Pastors Retreats are only two examples of how the CBWC assists in professional development. It is also the responsibility of the local church to ensure pieces are in place to promote the mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of its pastors as part of ongoing pastoral care.

The Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, as mentioned above, offers participation in a Sabbatical Leave Plan, which is understood to be leave from employment responsibilities for the purpose of personal renewal and academic pursuit. The Sabbatical Leave Policy is not considered a mandatory benefit. The application process starts with the local church contacting the CBWC office to set up a sabbatical account in the name of their pastor/staff person.

Sabbatical leave is defined as any period of up to four months exclusive of vacation time, mutually agreed upon by the church and the pastor. There are recognized benefits of pastors taking smaller sabbatical breaks more frequently (every second or third year) rather than waiting for a five-to-seven-year accumulation. Longer sabbaticals can increase the likelihood that a pastor will find it difficult to return to their former position and churches may evaluate their ministry in a different light during the pastor's absence. Shorter sabbatical breaks offer opportunity for mental and spiritual renewal for the present calling.

An employee may be eligible for such leave after seven (7) years of full-time service in the CBWC or its associated churches and following five (5) years in the particular situation where the sabbatical is approved.

A separate trust fund in support of sabbatical leave is administered by the CBWC. Contributions are received as follows:

- a) One half of one percent of the pastor's salary deducted at source.
- b) One half of one percent of the pastor's salary to be contributed by the employer.
- c) One half of one percent to be contributed by the CBWC.
- d) Amounts in a, b, and c are placed in a separate trust account and are administered by the CBWC.
- e) Amounts granted to each person in any particular year will be based on the accumulated contributions of that person.
- f) While 2/3 salary is the minimum payment requirement of the employer, we encourage churches to pay the full salary of the pastor while they are on leave.
- g) The amount made available for such leave shall be used at the discretion and in mutual agreement of both the church and pastor, with the pastor referred to as the applicant. Expenses paid must contribute to the approved purpose of the leave.

A written application made at least six months prior to the proposed effective date shall be filed by the employee with the employer for approval, provided it agrees with the terms of employment. If the pastor has not yet served seven years in the ministries and/or churches of the CBWC but still wishes to go on sabbatical, he/she would only be able to withdraw his/her own sabbatical leave contributions and applicable interest. If the Pastor has served more than seven years in the ministries and/or churches of the CBWC, he/she would be able to withdraw all the funds in his/her account.

In the event of the death of a pastor who has not yet served seven years in the ministries and/or churches of the CBWC, the pastor's portion only (plus interest) is payable to the spouse or estate of the deceased. If more than seven years, all the funds in the sabbatical account (plus interest) are payable to the spouse or estate of the deceased.

The pastor must be made aware that any sabbatical funds paid to him/her by the church or the CBWC, other than what has been deducted from his/her salary, is a taxable benefit. If the sabbatical is used for academic pursuits, the pastor may deduct these costs from his/her taxable income when completing or filing income tax forms after year-end.

To complete the withdrawal process, the CBWC must receive two pieces of supporting documentation before funds can be released:

- 1) A completed Sabbatical Withdrawal Application Form
- 2) A copy of the church Board's motion approving the employee's sabbatical leave, on church letterhead
- 3) Written/email approval of the pastor's sabbatical leave plans from his/her Regional Minister to the CBWC Head Office

Victor Ku

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