

**Policy on Gratuity for Senior Pastors
of the Open Bible Standard Churches of Trinidad & Tobago Inc.**

RATIONALE

The National Board of Directors has been giving due consideration to the improvement of salaries and other benefits of the ministers in the organization. In 1999, with the assistance of the Salary Review Commission a salary scale policy for the standardization of salaries for full time and part time ministers was introduced and approved by the National Convention. Subsequently, a pension plan was put into effect as well as a medical plan.

The introduction of a gratuity plan for senior pastors resigning a local church is the latest initiative in improving and upgrading the benefits of ministers working with the Open Bible Standard Churches of Trinidad and Tobago Inc.

- ❖ It has been brought to our attention that many of our churches have been unprepared and unable to give an appropriate/substantial parting gift to its minister upon his/her resignation from the church.
- ❖ In one instance, it took a church nine months to raise the necessary funds to provide the pastor with a parting gift. Additionally, a church might be involved in some project or the other at the time of a pastor's resignation, thus being unable to provide an adequate farewell gift for the pastor.
- ❖ Some older senior pastors did not qualify for either the pension plan or the medical plan due to their age or physical condition.
- ❖ It was felt that a gratuity would be an excellent way to motivate and encourage ministers who work faithfully in the ministry over the years.
- ❖ Every church should have the opportunity to express its gratitude to a minister for his/her service to the congregation upon his/her resignation from the said church.

PROCEDURE

- A meeting between the church Board, the Regional Superintendent and the District Superintendent is to be held to discuss the plan. N.B. The Secretary and Treasurer should be present at this meeting. (Where the pastor is either the Regional Superintendent or the District Superintendent, he shall not take part in the discussion).
- The church is encouraged to contribute up to 5% of the pastor's salary (monthly) or less based on his/her length of service.
- Once the church has decided to initiate the plan, the church board shall give the senior pastor an official letter informing him/her of this decision. A copy of the same letter shall be sent to the Regional Superintendent and the National Office to the National Secretary-Treasurer.
- The monthly contributions shall be placed on an interest bearing account or mutual fund of a commercial bank or the Unit Trust Corporation (First Unit Scheme).
- The signatories to this account shall be the official signatories of the church.
- This account shall not be opened or closed without the knowledge and approval of the National Board of Directors.
- The National Secretary-Treasurer shall issue a letter of authorization to the financial institution at which the gratuity fund account shall be established.
- Along with the senior pastor, another beneficiary shall be named, who shall be able to receive the gratuity in the event of the death of the senior pastor.
- Monies in the gratuity fund shall not be withdrawn for personal or for church projects by the senior pastor. Monies in this fund shall be solely for the purpose for which it was established.
- The gratuity shall only be given to the senior pastor upon his/her demitting office as pastor of the church or maybe transferred to another similar fund if /he/she is being reassigned to another church, department or institution within the organization.
- When withdrawn, the benefit becomes taxable, if it is given to the pastor before reaching age sixty (60).
- Notwithstanding this policy, the church may decide to give a parting gift(s) to the resigning minister in addition to a gratuity.