

FIRST-YEAR CERTIFICATION FORM

Ministerial Financial Assistance for Students Preparing for a Church-Related Vocation Baptist General Convention of Texas

Dear Student and Church Leader:

In recognition of the special call of God sensed by those who minister, churches affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) provide financial assistance to Baptist* students who are preparing for church-related vocational ministry at a Texas Baptist university.

Four participants are involved in the Ministerial Financial Assistance (MFA) program – (1) **the student** who, responding to God’s call to a vocation in church-related ministry, is set aside by (2) a **local Baptist church** that pools resources with other cooperating Baptist churches and entrusts these resources to (3) the **BGCT** and its (4) partner **universities**.

Each applicant for the MFA program must show evidence of a divine call to church-related vocational ministry, must demonstrate a life-style of commitment to the principles of Christian life, and must be an active member of a Baptist* church.

The student is required to provide certification from his or her church in **one** of the following forms:

- a certificate of ordination to the gospel ministry, **or**
- a certificate of license to the gospel ministry, **or**
- a statement of certification recognizing a call to church-related vocational ministry (such as pastor, church staff, missionary, or chaplain).

The student is also required to provide a letter of recommendation from his or her pastor (or other church approved leader if student is the pastor).

In certifying a student, the church joins the Baptist General Convention of Texas and related universities in being faithful stewards of mission funds entrusted to them by Texas Baptist churches to provide tuition assistance for students.

Thank you for joining in this sacred trust.

The Theological Education Council, BGCT

TEXAS ★ BAPTISTS
BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF TEXAS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHURCH LEADERS (Page 3 & 4)

Complete and sign the *Church Certification* and *Church Information* sections.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS (Page 5 & 6)

Sign and date the *Student Covenant*, complete the *Student Information Section*, and return completed forms to:

School: _____

Address: _____

* *First year students must be certified by a Baptist church. Annual renewal of MFA will require certification by a cooperating Baptist General Convention of Texas church.*

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Baptist General Convention of Texas

To be completed by PASTOR OR CHURCH LEADER

CHURCH CERTIFICATION SECTION

(Check ✓ and complete the appropriate sections below)

Statement of Certification:

If the church has not ordained or licensed this student, the following statement must be affirmed by the congregation.

We hereby certify that _____
(name of student)

- *is an active member of our church*
- *has shown evidence of a divine call to church-related vocational ministry*
- *has shown sincere commitment to a career in church-related ministry*
- *has demonstrated a Christian life-style*
- *is the kind of person our church would be comfortable recommending as a minister to serve in a church-related vocational position*

This congregation affirmed this student's involvement in our church as noted on page 5 of the form. This congregational certification has been acted upon by:

(check all that apply)

- Ordination of student on _____.
(date)
- Licensing of student on _____.
(date)
- Adoption of statement of certification above by congregation on _____.
(date)
- Adoption of statement of certification above by others (specify below) representing the congregation on _____.
(date)

Representing the congregation:

- Church Committee
- Deacons
- Elders or other governing board
- Council of church staff members
- Other (please describe): _____

I have talked with this student to discuss (1) the student's sense of call to church-related vocational ministry and (2) ways that the student might be involved in service at our church.

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I affirm this student's application for Ministerial Financial Assistance.

Pastor's or Church Leader's Name (Printed) _____

Position at Church _____

Telephone Number _____

Signature _____

Date _____

CHURCH INFORMATION SECTION

Church Name and Address

Name of Church: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Denominational Affiliations

Baptist association _____ City, State _____

Baptist state convention _____

Baptist affiliations, national _____

Signed: _____
(Pastor or church approved leader if student is pastor)

Signed: _____
(Church Clerk)

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To be completed by STUDENT

STUDENT COVENANT

Whereas *Texas Baptist* churches have committed their cooperative missions funds to providing financial assistance to men and women who are preparing for ministry vocations in the church and,

Whereas *Texas Baptist* universities have committed to providing theological education that prepares students for vocations in church-related ministries and,

Whereas I have sensed the call of God in my life to prepare for a vocation in a church-related ministry (such as pastor, church staff, missionary, chaplain);

I hereby enter into a covenant relationship with the churches of the *Baptist General Convention of Texas* to honor the sacred trust they have placed in me through their financial support and,

Should I come to a point in my understanding of God's will for my life that I no longer sense a call to a church-related vocation, I will immediately inform university officials and no longer accept this financial assistance provided by the churches of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

(Student Signature)

(Date)

STUDENT INFORMATION SECTION

Name of Student: _____

Permanent Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of Church: _____

Church Address: _____

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To be completed by STUDENT

During the preceding academic year I have been an active member of a Baptist church and have been involved with, supportive of, and committed to the ministries of this church in the following ways:

Paid leadership responsibilities: _____

Volunteer leadership or service: _____

Other involvement or means of support: _____

Sign the following affirmation, give this form to your pastor or church approved leader if student is pastor to complete (*pages 2 & 3*), then return the completed forms along with any other materials required by your institution:

I hereby affirm my covenant with the churches, my sense of calling to a church-related vocation and my desire to receive the Ministerial Financial Assistance provided by the churches of the Baptist General Convention of Texas; and I promise to remain in compliance with the requirements of the BGCT and this partner institution.

Student's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

First year students must be certified by a Baptist church. Annual renewal of MFA will require certification by a cooperating Baptist General Convention of Texas church.

Testimony of Personal Call to Ministry

On separate paper please offer a summary description of your call to vocational ministry as you understand it at this point in time. Include why you desire to participate in the BGCT Scholarship program.

Pastor/Minister Letter of Recommendation

Please include with your application a letter of reference from a pastor or other minister who will affirm your call to ministry. This letter should be on church letterhead and may be submitted with the completed application.

Attestation

Please note that your signature below constitutes your agreement to complete the following in order to continue receiving the BGCT Scholarship:

- Register for and complete CHRI 3325 The Christian Vocation by the end of the spring semester of junior year
- Register for and complete CHRI 4383 Baptist History by the end of the fall semester of senior year
- Maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0
- Attend CEMC Forum every semester
- Attend at least one School of Christian Thought lecture every semester
- Take advantage of Spiritual Emphasis Week (during fall semesters)
- Schedule an appointment with the Director of the CEMC at least once every semester
- **Meet with the endorsing pastor annually before every endorsement**
- Maintain active church and ministry involvement including: active membership in a Baptist church and in HBU Student Ministries activities
- Develop/maintain personal spiritual growth

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

I, the undersigned minister, do agree to help the student achieve and maintain the requirements listed above.

Minister Signature: _____ Date: _____

All Applications Due 14 days before the semester begins

SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO:

School of Christian Thought
Houston Baptist University
7502 Fondren Road
Houston, TX 77074-3298
Fax: 281-649-3451

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

This application was received by _____ on _____.
(Name) (Date)

This application was approved by _____ on _____.
(Name) (Date)