



CHURCH ENDORSEMENT POLICY

Prospective seminary students must be endorsed by their local church to be eligible for study at the seminary. The concept of church endorsement is based upon a collection of biblical principles that give the local church place and priority in New Testament ministry and ministry preparation (Acts 13:1-5; Ephesians 4).

When a church endorses a student for theological study the church is affirming the fitness of the prospective student for ministry preparation. In other words, the church and its leadership discern character qualities (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1), perhaps in incipient form, that are essential for ministry. These character qualities are the result of a submission to the Holy Spirit of God, a life of high moral standards, and a genuine appetite for spiritual truth. In order for the church to offer this kind of endorsement, the church should have a history of personal involvement with the prospective student, which, must in this case be a minimum of six months.

Second, when a church endorses a student it is affirming the doctrinal integrity of the prospective student for ministry preparation. At this point in the student's life the local church and the student must embrace in good conscience the Trinity of God, the deity of Christ, salvation by faith alone based upon the finished work of Christ, the death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, the inspiration, inerrancy, and sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the literal return of Jesus Christ.

Third, when a church endorses a student it is affirming that it will remain as actively involved as possible in the academic and spiritual life of the student.

Fourth, when a church endorses a student it is acknowledging the missional objectives of the seminary and it is expressing a willingness to support those objectives during the student's enrollment.

Church Endorsement Policies

In the event that a student does not have an endorsing church and because of VBTS's commitment to the primacy of the local church, the student has two options.

1. The student could join a local church in the area of his current residence and serve there for six months, secure a church endorsement, and then make application to seminary.
2. The student could move to the Virginia Beach area and join Colonial Baptist Church of Virginia Beach. After six months the student may request a church endorsement and then make application to seminary. Since special situations may merit consideration, the prospective student can appeal to the Seminary Dean who will consult with the Admissions Committee (President, Academic Dean, Faculty Member, and Executive Committee of the Seminary Board).

Once the student is accepted and enrolled in a program at VBTS he or she will have one semester to join a local church.

In the event that a current student chooses to join a church whose doctrine and practice differs from the endorsing church the student must take the following steps.

1. The student must consult with his endorsing church and secure in writing approval for the desired church affiliation. The letter approving the membership situation must come from the pastor and the leadership of the endorsing church.
2. If the endorsing church is unwilling to approve of the student's desired church affiliation the church could release the student from the accountability of the endorsement. A letter of release must be issued by the pastor and the church leadership and included in the student's file.
3. Once the student is released from the accountability of his endorsing church, the student must secure a new church endorsement in accord with the endorsement concept and policy. Students will not be permitted to register for classes for six months until the church endorsement process is completed.

CHURCH ENDORSEMENT

Applicant:

I willingly waive my right of access to see this recommendation knowing that this waiver is not required as a condition for acceptance.

Applicant Signature: _____ Please print or type your name: _____

Church Official:

Please read the attached church endorsement policy before completing the following section:

At a meeting of _____ Church, in the city of _____

held this date of _____ the church (or board) endorsed the above member by vote as a candidate for training for Christian ministry. The church (or Board) believes this candidate to be a true Christian who is spiritually, morally, and intellectually equipped for Christian ministry.

Church Officer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Return to:

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