

# The Mission/Church Assistance Fund

## Financial assistance for churches with limited budgets

The Mission/Church Assistance Fund provides financial assistance for ministers of small Southern Baptist missions and churches.

Sometimes referred to as MCAF, this fund offers an incentive for small congregations to take on the important responsibility of helping their minister prepare for retirement. If your church and minister are eligible, the fund will contribute up to \$3,000 in financial assistance over a five-year period into a 403(b) retirement plan for your minister.

If your church or mission is eligible to participate in MCAF, GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention is ready to lend a hand.

Since 1918, GuideStone has assisted Southern Baptist churches in providing for the retirement needs of their ministers and employees. One of GuideStone's retirement products is a 403(b) plan designed for ministers and employees who receive taxable income from a Southern Baptist church or association. In this plan, state conventions may provide eligible participants with special benefits that include:

- A disability income benefit up to \$500 a month.
- A survivor protection benefit up to \$100,000.
- Matching state convention contributions.

If you are eligible, the Mission/Church Assistance Fund makes a \$50 monthly contribution directly into the retirement account of a minister.

These contributions can continue for up to 60 months of eligibility, thus providing a minister up to \$3,000 in total retirement contributions over a five-year period of time.

### The eligibility requirements

- A minister must receive taxable income from a Southern Baptist church.
- The church must have an annual budget of less than \$75,000.
- The church is limited to 60 months of MCAF assistance.

## How the Mission/Church Assistance Fund works

An eligible church enrolls their minister in the 403(b) retirement plan. In the first year, the mission or church is required to make a monthly contribution to the retirement plan equal to at least 2% of the minister's housing and salary. A larger percentage can be contributed if so desired. Over the next four years of MCAF participation, the mission or church is asked to annually increase this contribution by 2%, moving toward a recommended "employer" contribution goal of 10% of salary and housing. Participants can also make contributions.

Years of MCAF participation	Contribution% recommended from church	Annual maximum contribution from MCAF
1	2% or more	\$600
2	4% or more	\$600
3	6% or more	\$600
4	8% or more	\$600
5	10% or more	\$600

Each month (for up to 60 months) an employer or participant contribution is made, the minister's account also receives \$50 from MCAF. This adds \$600 a year as an incentive to help a mission or church get their minister started in GuideStone's retirement plan.

With MCAF, a pastor can receive retirement contributions from up to four sources: church, participant, MCAF and the state convention. Rollover contributions from other retirement plans or IRAs are also possible.

### First-year example

New Life Baptist Church has total receipts of less than \$75,000 a year, making them eligible for MCAF. Their pastor, Rev. Jones, receives a salary of \$1,000 per month. In the first year of MCAF participation, the church makes the required 2% retirement plan contribution of \$20 a month, and Rev. Jones decides to have an additional 1% or \$10, withheld from his pay as a participant contribution. MCAF contributions equal \$50, giving Rev. Jones a total of \$80 a month. With this amount he is eligible for the convention-provided disability and survivor benefits, and a partial monthly matching state convention contribution. (See the *Church Retirement Plan* brochure for details.)