
AD INTERIM COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

37th General Assembly

Members of the Ad Interim Committee on Ministerial Education are TE Nate Atwood (Mid-Atlantic), RE Bob Howard (Great Plains), TE Fred Lian (Chairman, West), TE Mark Toone (Pacific), RE Ed Wedin (Gulf South) and TE Luder Whitlock (Florida). Ex Officio members are Stated Clerk Jeff Jeremiah (Pacific) and GA Moderator Bill Dudley (Southeast). TE Bill Enns (Mid-Atlantic) and TE Ed McCallum and TE Jerry Iamurri also participated in our meetings. The committee met during the 36th General Assembly on June 23, 2016, and in Orlando on September 26-27, 2016, January 11-12, 2017, and May 16-17, 2017. There was also a videoconference on March 16, 2017. The Chairman was present at the Ministerial Vocation Committee gathering on September 12-13, 2016 to participate in a presentation of ICME's work regarding the Mentored Apprenticeship Program.



*Fred Lian
Chairman*

The members of the sub-committee of ICME are TE Nate Atwood (Chairman, Mid-Atlantic), TE Paul Bammel (Great Plains), TE Jim Barstow (Pacific), RE Rosemary Lukens (Pacific), TE Kent Matthews (Great Plains), and TE Doug Resler (West), and TE Fred Lian (ex officio -West). The committee met during the 36th General Assembly on June 22, 2016 and had a videoconference on April 4, 2017.

A Reminder of Our Charge

The 33rd General Assembly, held at Cherry Hills Community Church, adopted Recommendation #10, "That the Assembly establish special committee appointed by the Moderator for the purpose of studying *Book of Government* 12-2.G, 12-2.H, *Acts of Assembly* 82-07, 83-07, the Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees and any other appropriate documents that address the academic requirements for those seeking ordination as teaching elders in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. In addition, the special committee will:

1. Evaluate the academic requirements of seminaries used by EPC candidates to determine if our academic requirements are in alignment with those seminaries.
2. Consider the appropriateness of "EPC specific" academic requirements and other models of Masters of Divinity degree instruction. This special committee will make a report with recommendations no later than the 2015 General Assembly." (Note: the 35th General Assembly approved an extension of three years for the committee to complete its work.)

The Work of the Committee

This past year ICME has committed its time and effort to three areas: (1) developing courses that will meet the new academic ordination standards that were approved by the 36th General

Assembly, (2) defining and beta-testing the Mentored Apprenticeship Program (MAP), and (3) addressing the call of Commissioned Pastor.

1. Beginning January 1, 2017 every incoming candidate for ordination is now subject to new educational requirements. This involves a fourth written ordination exam in original language exegesis and specified coursework. To help candidates meet these requirements an association through ICME has been cultivated with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary to develop courses to fulfill the academic requirements that are now required, if their degree program did/does not offer these. (Please see the Attachment ICME-A for further information.)

There are 4 blocks of courses in Old Testament, New Testament, Church History and Theology, and 8 individual required courses, primarily with practical ministry applications.

The eight “practical” courses that are available, or are currently under development, are: Ministry as Mission (not missiology), Apologetics, Preaching, Ethics, Discipleship, Evangelism, Leadership, and Pastoral Care/Counseling. These 8 3-credit hour courses will each include video lectures, readings, assignments and papers (or “coursework”) plus an in-the-field project supervised by the student’s pastor-mentor. The coursework will involve approximately 50% of what it might otherwise be expected. The project will account for the other 50% of the work, and represent the same percentage of the grade awarded. The project for each course will involve the application of principles related to that specific course.

At its May meeting Stated Clerk TE Jeff Jeremiah appointed TE Kent Matthews to serve as the grading instructor and professor of record at GCTS (MAP Director).

Also at the May meeting, the following proposal was unanimously approved: “For the duration of this pilot program, the tuition for MAP courses should be set at \$750 per course. The MAP director should receive \$250 per course per student. This arrangement will be reviewed periodically, and after the conclusion of the pilot program in January 2019.”

There will likely continue to be a certain number of candidates for ordination who have already completed their M.Div degree. According to our new standards, they will still need to take any required courses they are missing. These courses will be made available for an auditing fee. It is to be noted that these same courses are/will be available to candidates in the Candidates Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP).

2. The Mentored Apprenticeship Program is currently being tested by several churches, large and small, from coast to coast. The ICME sub-committee continues to evaluate, communicate the strengths, deficiencies and the individuality of each church’s involvement with candidates, and refine the process as reports are shared. It is the goal of MAP to provide a flexible template in which pastors receive training to become effective mentors to best equip the future generation(s) of pastors.

3. The Commissioned Pastor. Since 2013 ICME has interacted regularly with the permanent Ministerial Vocation Committee (MVC) and the Ministerial and Candidates Committee Chairs of our presbyteries.

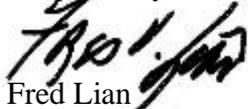
It is acknowledged that the cost and time commitment for traditional ministerial education is often a deterrent to some gifted individuals who may have the calling to ministry. In the EPC, the call as Commissioned Pastor is a relatively recent development and allows a Ruling Elder who does not have an M.Div. degree, but senses the call to ministry, to provide pastoral leadership in various ministry settings.

Presbyteries have sometimes struggled with how to equip, examine and oversee their Commissioned Pastors. ICME hopes to clarify and promote the position of Commissioned Pastor for use in those situations where it can help the local church and presbytery advance the mission and vision of the EPC, and offer guidance to our presbyteries in equipping, examining and overseeing its Commissioned Pastors.

Recommendations to the General Assembly

None

Respectfully submitted,



Fred Lian
Chairman

June 2017

NEW EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS. Recent education changes for ordination specify 66 hrs. of required coursework, which, if the 3 blocks of hours in Bible, Theology and History (totaling 42 hours) are taken out, leaves 8 individual 3-hour required courses (totaling 24 hours).

They are: **Discipleship/Disciple making** **Ministry as Mission**
Ethics **Apologetics**
Leadership **Preaching**
Pastoral Care/Counseling **Evangelism**

All 8 of these courses are ministry-related and skill-based, yet only Preaching is uniformly taught with practical application required. When students study evangelism, leadership, discipleship or pastoral care, would it not be wise that they be required to “do” them at the same time also?

We think they should. This is the reason the Ministry Apprenticeship Program (MAP) was created. The MAP courses are currently being developed in a pilot program and administrated by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (Charlotte). 5 courses will be available this Fall; the remaining 3 in 2018 ... **ALL AT HALF THE NORMAL COST OF TUITION.**

All MAP courses involve online video lectures, readings, assignments and papers (or coursework), plus an in-the-field project supervised by the student’s chosen pastor-mentor. The coursework involves approximately 50% of what might otherwise be expected in a graduate class, while the project accounts for the other 50%.

THE PROJECT for each course will involve the application of principles relating to that specific discipline. For example, a project involving actual personal evangelism or training others to participate in evangelism, might be a logical project for a course in evangelism.

THE PASTOR-MENTOR. Every student must be somehow connected to a local church, or other ministry, and recruit a pastor or other ministry leader to serve as his/her mentor. The two meet at regular agreed-upon times so that the student may process what s/he is learning in the course and from the project, and so the mentor may share personal wisdom and experiences. The two thereby discuss (1) what the student is learning academically, (2) what the student is learning through practical experience, and (3) what the student is learning about him/herself and ministry in the process.

The INTERIM COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL EDUCATION (ICME) was charged with implementing 3 core values:

Value 1, Necessary **ACADEMIC EDUCATION**

Value 2, Appropriate **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

Value 3, Diverse **PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE.**

A fourth core value has been identified; namely, that the second and third values can best be implemented in a **MENTORING RELATIONSHIP** with a seasoned pastor-practitioner. The MAP program facilitates each of these goals. Even a student’s academic preparation is enhanced by discussing what he is learning, and thus taking greater ownership for it.

SO, WHO BENEFITS FROM THIS PROGRAM?

- 1. CURRENT EPC SEMINARY STUDENTS**, who will only need to pay one-half tuition for 24 of their credit units. At an average of \$500 per credit unit, or \$1500 per 3-credit unit course, that would be \$750 savings per course. If they take all 8 courses in the MAP Program, they will save \$6000. And if they take the 6 field education credits associated with any 6 MAP courses, they save an additional \$1500 ... **or \$7500 OVERALL SAVINGS.**
- 2. FUTURE EPC PASTORS**, who will be able to study ministry-related, skill-based courses the way they should always have been taught—applying what they are learning while they are studying.
- 3. EPC CHURCHES**, which will be able to call pastors who haven't just acquired information from lectures or books, but have gained practical experience applying what they've learned.
- 4. The ENTIRE EPC DENOMINATION**, which will develop a growing sub-culture, and believes that the current generation of pastors should help to mentor the next generation of pastors.
- 5. EPC PASTOR-MENTORS**, as they discuss courses and projects with their students, learn important things about themselves and “relearn” important things about ministry. Processing subjects out loud that they haven't studied for years—talking about their past experiences and current challenges—provides a refreshing continuing education program for mentors.