
Mentored Apprenticeship Program

Interim Committee on Ministerial Education

Presentation to the 37th General Assembly, 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/Disciplemaking** **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 studying evangelism, leadership, discipleship or pastoral care, wouldn't it be appropriate that students be required to "do" them at the same time as well?

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). Five courses will be available this fall; the remaining three 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%.

Project

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 the training of others to participate in evangelism might be a logical project for a course in evangelism.

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.
- (3) What the student is learning about him/herself and ministry in the process.

Core Values

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

- 1) Necessary **ACADEMIC EDUCATION**.
- 2) Appropriate **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**.
- 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.

Benefits of the MAP

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.

Application to take MAP courses is free of charge. Students make take as many or as few as they like.

Certificate Program

A student completing 6 or more of the 8 MAP courses will earn a certificate of completion from Gordon-Conwell. This Certificate Program is available to those either with or without a bachelor's degree, who simply want to improve their skills and knowledge. This is an ideal program for any non-ordained church or parachurch staff person.

Doctor of Ministry Program

Gordon-Conwell has developed a D.Min. path that will build upon the work of pastor-mentors. The first cohort will be organized February 2018. "Pastoral Theology in Practice" will be the emphasis of the track, with modules focusing on preaching and teaching one year, then leadership, then pastoral care and counseling in subsequent years. This will allow for much personal development, but the various projects for each module will also allow focus on how we, as individuals and as a denomination, might better prepare the next generation of preacher-teachers, leaders and pastoral counselor-caregivers.

Post-M.Div. Students

There will continue to be a certain number of candidates for ordination who have already completed their M.Div. degree, but may have not taken all the courses required by their denomination. The EPC has made special arrangements to have all 8 MAP courses available for anyone willing to register without credit or transcription at \$350 per course.

For More Information

For further information, contact Kent Mathews, MAP Director, at 785-418-1635 or 704-527-9909 (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charlotte Campus).

NOTE: The Association of Theological Schools, the accrediting board for seminaries, requires that all schools must accept transfer credits from other ATS schools. So any student at any other seminary may take MAP courses through Gordon-Conwell (Charlotte) and expect their credits to transfer. However, it is important to request that your school assign individual MAP courses to the appropriate requirement slots in its degree program before taking the course.