

7th General Assembly, 1979

GUIDELINES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

IV. THEOLOGICAL SUB-COMMITTEE

In accordance with the instructions of the 1978 General Assembly on page 219 of the Assembly *Minutes* the Committee sent the following letter to all presbyteries in March:

"The purpose of this letter is to elicit a written response from each presbytery in the matter of its plans and intentions with regard to implementing the Uniform Curriculum adopted by the Sixth General Assembly as a part of its obligations in preparing candidates for the Gospel ministry for ordination. Specifically, the material requested is needed in order that this Sub-Committee may carry out the injunction to give preliminary approval to presbytery training programs so that the presbyteries may be able to elect representatives to the certification committees (*Minutes of the Sixth General Assembly*, Item III, 13, 61, p. 87).

"Please review actions taken by the Sixth General Assembly which are pertinent to this matter: *Minutes*, Appendix G, Section IV. Theological Sub-Committee on Uniform Curriculum (pp. 214-217); the Report on the Committee of Commissioners, Recommendations III, 9 - 13 (pp. 86-87). Part IV of the Report of the Committee of Commissioners on Judicial Business contains material regarding necessary changes to the *Book of Church Order* to implement a mandatory year of licensure and probation before ordination (pp. 115-119). This material should also be studied as it is integrally related to the concept of ministerial training.

"As you study the Uniform Curriculum which has been adopted and compare it with the stipulated course requirements set forth by any of the four recognized seminaries, you will observe that the Uniform Curriculum is broader in scope than the graduation requirements of these seminaries. In addition, upon examination, many seminary graduates are found to be weak in some particulars to such a degree that remedial studies are indicated. These two conditions illuminate the fact that each presbytery is going to have to plan for some academic instruction, as well as practical instruction, to be carried out during the period of supervised probation.

"Another factor to be considered is that the Uniform Curriculum must now be met unless an individual is to be ordained under the extraordinary clause (*cf. Minutes*, Item III, 13.4, p. 87). However, a presbytery cannot certify that a candidate has met the Uniform Curriculum requirements until the presbytery program itself has been approved by the Certification (Accrediting) Committee. Presbytery programs will initially gain certification by the 22-man Theological Education Sub-Committee. This preliminary approval will give the presbytery the right to place a man on the Certification (Accrediting) Committee, which becomes the permanent overseer of quality and uniformity in regard to each presbytery's program.

"To gain this initial approval, presbytery must present a written plan to this Sub-Committee. To assist you in drafting this preliminary plan, some guidelines have been approved by this Sub-Committee. These are designed to help you understand your options and to indicate some of the categories to which consideration must be given in preparing your plan. These guidelines include

typical models of the 3 + 1 and 2 + 2 plans, as well as some planning criteria. Enough detail should be included in your submittal to allow this SubCommittee to determine the adequacy and the quality of your activities in the preparation of probationers for ordination."

The Committee also recommends that each presbytery supervise this program through joint efforts of the Christian Education Committee and a membership/candidates committee.

The introductory portion has explained the direction and purpose of this suggested guideline paper. It is suggested only because each presbytery may wish to include a different type plan altogether which would then be submitted to the 22-man Sub-Committee for tentative approval or the Certification (Accrediting) Committee which will finally replace the 22-man Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee has suggested three possible models for each presbytery to consider in developing its own program: If the *Book of Church Order* is changed to require the one-year mandatory training period of probation then every presbytery will be required to have its particular plan.

A. **Model One - Three plus One.**

The first suggestion of a model will deal with the 3 + 1 plan. This indicates that a candidate has received his M.Div. from a particular seminary but then is required to have one year of probationary training under the presbytery that would seek to ordain him at the end of that period or at some later period.

The presbytery would have the responsibility to examine the candidate in the required areas of training. If he is found to be deficient in any area, e.g. English Bible, then during that year the presbytery would have the responsibility to work with him in that particular area as well as in the pastoral areas.

The candidate could be assigned to a supervising pastor or pastors having expertise in certain areas. Remuneration for this year of probation is left to the discretion of the presbytery and candidate. He could work as a licentiate in serving pastorless churches, or as an assistant to another pastor.

During this year there are eight areas that would need particular attention from the presbytery. They are:

- 1) **English Bible.** He would be given opportunities to apply his knowledge in supervised, live teaching situations. Knowledge of the original languages is assumed because of his M.Div. degree.
- 2) **Devotional Life.** The licentiate should have regular times of prayer with his supervising pastor/pastors. The pastors should disciple the licentiate in his personal devotional life and his family's as well.
- 3) **Worship.** The licentiate should have training in leading and preaching in worship services. He should be critiqued by the supervising pastor. Instruction in baptism, Lord's supper, weddings and funerals must be given.
- 4) **Evangelism.** The candidate should have an opportunity to observe supervising pastors in personal evangelism and be given opportunities to participate in personal evangelism and other expressive methods of evangelism.

- 5) **Missiology.** He should study the area of church growth both at home and throughout the world. He should demonstrate a working knowledge of the mission programs of the PCA.
- 6) **Presbyterian Polity.** The candidate should be given opportunity to sit in on major committees of Presbytery, and attend General Assembly. He should be developing a working knowledge of the *Book of Church Order* as he attends the meetings of the courts of the Church. *Robert's Rules* is another area in which the licentiate is to demonstrate a working knowledge. He is to be exposed to good church administration during this year and take responsibility in developing administrative abilities.
- 7) **Counseling.** He should be given opportunities to sit in on counseling situations and given some opportunity under direction to do some actual counseling.
- 8) **Christian Education.** The candidate should during this year also have an opportunity to work with the Sunday School program, to participate in teaching training courses, in instructing the youth in catechism and having some input with the youth work.

B. Model Two - Two Extensions plus Two Serving.

If the Presbytery has allowed a man to go the 2 + 2 route, i.e. two years of academic training at an established institution, then he would receive two years of tutorial training. We suggest one of two methods in fulfilling the 2 + 2 program. First:

The presbytery may allow a candidate first to attend an extension seminary in his area or some other approved area. During this time he remains closely connected to the local church and could even continue employment in other areas. Then after two years, he would attend a resident seminary.

Those already using this method do something like this:

YEAR ONE

First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter
Bible Content	Bible Content	Bible Content
Greek Grammar	Greek Grammar	Greek
Church History	Church History	Church History
Reformed Theology	Reformed Evangelism	Personal Life

YEAR TWO

First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter
Bible Content	Bible Content	Bible Content
NT Interpretation	History of Reformation	Teaching Bible Courses
Polity	Principles of Preaching	Pastoral Administration
Pastoral Care	Hebrew	Hebrew
Hebrew		

The last two years of resident training would follow this general course direction, as adapted from the 1977-78 Catalogue of *Reformed Theological Seminary*. Courses listed in the *RTS Catalogue* in Junior Year.

YEAR THREE

First Quarter

Hebrew Exegesis
Advanced New Testament
Interpretation
Church History
Evangelism Clinic

Second Quarter

Hebrew Exegesis
Prophets
NT Introduction
Educational Ministry
Preaching Clinic

Third Quarter

Old Testament Theology I
New Testament History
Missions
Ministry of Teaching
Pastoral Counseling Clinic

YEAR FOUR

First Quarter

Old Testament Theology
Introduction II
Systematic Theology
History of Christianity
in America

Second Quarter

Old Testament
Introduction I
Poets
NT Theology
Systematic Theology
Ethics I

Third Quarter

Old Testament
Theology II
Systematic Theology
Ethics II

C. Model three - Two Seminary plus Two Tutorial.

This approach would allow a man to attend a resident seminary for the first two years and possibly work towards a Master of Religious Arts, such as is available at Westminster Theological Seminary, or the Master of Theological Study at CTS, or equivalent at RTS or TPTS. The Presbytery would then pick up the third and fourth years of tutorial training.

It would work like this. On page 215 of the 1978 *Minutes of the Sixth General Assembly*, where the approved curriculum is located:

To be taught by:.

Under Scripture:

I. Bible Content	Presbytery
II. Languages	Seminary
III. Methods of Interpretation	Seminary
IV. Supervised Practical Opportunities	Presbytery

Under Doctrine:

I. Church History	
A. Survey of Church History	Seminary
B. American Church History	Presbytery
C. History of Reformation	Seminary
D. Presbyterian Church History	Presbytery
II. Apologetics	Seminary
III. Theology and Ethics	
A. Systematics	Seminary
B. Ethics	Seminary
IV. Polity	Presbytery
V. Practical Theology	Presbytery
	Except possibly Christian Education and Missiology

As the presbytery picks up the third and fourth years of tutorial training it would follow this progression:

Third Year

Prophetic Books
General Epistles & Revelation
The Reformation
Doctrine of the Holy Spirit
Sermon Content
Pastoral Theology
Poetic Books
Modern Age
Doctrine of Christian Life
Church Mission and Ministry
Sermon Delivery

Fourth Year

Bible Content (English)
Supervised Practical Opportunities
American Church History
Presbyterian Church History
Theology of the Church
Theology of Westminster Standards
Polity and Parliamentary Procedure
Practical Theology
Personal Theology
Pastoral Administration

The Sub-Committee has met with the presidents of the above four seminaries and reviewed these plans. A general spirit of cooperation and encouragement was given to the Committee in its assignment and execution of it.

Not only do the seminaries have the regular three-year M. Div. degree program that would continue to be used, but several of them have a two-year degree program that would meet the 2 + 2 approach, if that is the method desired.

The Committee offers as its recommendations the following: see numbers 16-21.