The Practical Missions Program

The Nature and Scope of the Practical Missions Program

Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary seeks to train for effective service those whom God has called. Therefore, evangelism at home and cross-culturally is the Seminary’s theme and mission. Practical mission work is the demonstration of what the student learns in the classroom. Students are expected to fulfill the biblical command to witness and thus are required to meet mission assignments each week, share their faith, and report on the work completed. This linking of the classroom and the practical aspects of ministry and evangelistic zeal is one of the unique identities of Mid-America.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Cordova campus and Wednesday or Thursday at the Northeast campus, fifteen minutes of the chapel service is dedicated to report hour. During this period, the president, the practical missions director, and various professors report on their evangelistic witness for the week. Following these reports, the students share the fruit of their witnessing. Students are involved in hands-on missions work throughout the Memphis-metro and outlying areas. Each year students witness to thousands through their practical missions activities and their personal evangelism, and each year students lead thousands to profess faith in Christ.

Practical Missions Assignments

Each full-time student (twelve or more hours per semester) must complete two mission assignments per week during the semester. Each part-time student (eleven or fewer hours a semester) must complete one mission assignment per week during the semester. A mission assignment consists of approximately one hour of ministry time and normally provides the student with the opportunity to present the type of witness described in this section. The total number of practical mission assignments that a student may complete during any given week is computed on this basis.

Each first-year student at the Cordova campus not currently serving as a ministry related staff member is required to participate in one of the different practical missions opportunities associated with the Seminary. These opportunities include work with the prison ministries, urban outreach, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Campus Crusade, hospital ministries, rescue mission ministries, church survey work, Evangelism Explosion, and Continuing Witness Training. Similar ministries are available at the Northeast campus. These activities are designed to orient the beginning students to evangelistic ministries outside the local church.
The first-year full-time student is to participate in one evangelistic ministry through the local church and one non-church-related practical mission ministry. The first-year part-time student is to participate in one evangelistic ministry through the local church. The Practical Missions Department may grant special permission for the first-year student in unusual circumstances to do a specialized evangelistic ministry.

Personal Witnessing

All enrolled students must witness to an average of at least one person per week during the semester. To constitute a personal witness, the interview is to include a presentation of the plan of salvation to a person believed to be unsaved and an invitation for that person to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The essential elements of the Gospel—faith in Jesus Christ alone and repentance of sin—are what the Seminary holds to be necessary for salvation. In order to fulfill the personal witnessing requirement, no other element should be involved in the Gospel witness (i.e., baptism, church membership, etc.)

Chapel and Report Hour

All students are required to attend report hour and chapel in its entirety every Tuesday and Thursday. Each student is required to report his or her practical missions activities online weekly. A student is not allowed more than six unexcused absences from chapel and report hour during a semester. Students at the Northeast campus must attend chapel and report hour during the regular chapel time on either Wednesday or Thursday, unless the student has a night-only schedule.

A student unable to attend chapel and report hour on a regular basis as the result of a schedule conflict with essential outside responsibilities may petition the director of Practical Missions for excused absences for the semester. Requests are submitted to the Practical Missions office and must be renewed each semester (August and January).

Minimal Requirements for the Practical Missions Program

In order to meet the minimal requirements for the Practical Missions program each semester, students must satisfy three criteria:

1. Full-time students must complete an average of two practical missions per week, and part-time students must complete an average of one practical mission per week. With each semester’s registration, students must list the practical missions in which they will be involved on SonisWeb in order to clear the practical missions hold they will have on their student account each semester at the time of registration. Full-time students must complete at least 75 percent of the practical missions required that semester from each of the practical missions they list in SonisWeb. The remaining 25 percent of the practical missions due for that semester may be from practical missions other than those for which the student registered.
2. Students must witness to an average of at least one person per week during the semester.
3. Students must not have more than six unexcused absences from chapel and report hour during the semester.

Relationship of the Practical Missions Program to the Academic Programs of the Seminary

The Practical Missions program is an integral part of the training for every student enrolled at Mid-America. No academic credit is given for the practical missions requirements. However, no academic credit is given to any student for the semester if he or she does not satisfy the minimal requirements for the Practical Missions program for that semester. No student is permitted to graduate from the Seminary without completing the Practical Missions requirements for each semester enrolled.

Students failing to complete the requirements for the Practical Missions program are subject to probation or dismissal by action of the faculty upon recommendation of the Academic Council. The semesters of dismissal, as well as possible readmission at a later time, are the same as those noted under Disciplinary Regulations in this catalog.

Practical Missions Probation

Students who do not fulfill and report requirements correctly and on time for each semester are subject to a probationary period. If students fulfill their Practical Missions requirements in the following semester, they are removed from probationary status. However, if students persist in delinquency during the probationary period, they may be suspended from classes for one semester by action of the faculty. Students failing to complete their total practical missions requirements by 4:30 on the third business day after the last exam day of a semester may not receive academic credit for that semester.