

Rick Warren Launches Church Planting Apprenticeship

Rick Warren has launched a new initiative to help young Christians lead a purpose-driven life. The founder of Saddleback Church has announced a partnership with Vanguard University to train church leaders.

“If you’re considering a Christian school and you really want to be a world changer, this is where you need to be,” *The Daily Pilot* quoted Warren as saying. “We have partnered Saddleback Church and Vanguard for a leadership training program unlike any others, particularly in the area of church planting.”

Dubbed the Saddleback MTS Program, the initiative combines Vanguard’s Master of Theological Studies (MTS) with a year-long ministry apprenticeship through Saddleback Church Leadership Academy. Students can complete the program in 16 months.

“Vanguard shares Saddleback’s Christ-centered vision,” says Vanguard provost Jeff Hittenberger. “The MTS/Church Planting program offers students who have already earned their undergraduate degree a chance to prepare for ministry and earn their Master’s degree in just four semesters compressed into 15 months. A student starting the program in May 2012 can be finished by August 2013.”

Saddleback Leadership Academy is a key element of Warren’s 10-year vision to start culturally relevant churches in strategic cities around the world.

“The partnership with Vanguard will allow us to offer future church ministry leaders thorough, practical training in an accelerated format,” says Dave Alford, director of the Leadership Academy. “We’ll be able to get qualified leaders

into ministry faster.”