

2008-2009

Introduction

Anglican School of Ministry-Little Rock

Getting to know the mission and values of ASM-LR





Introducing the Anglican School of Ministry-Little Rock

In keeping with the Anglican Mission in the Americas' mission to reach the 130 million unchurched Americans with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Anglican School of Ministry-Little Rock (ASM-LR) exists to prepare Christian leaders to equip the church for the work of the kingdom of God in fulfillment of the Great Commission, in a manner which glorifies the Holy Trinity.

What is the Mission of the ASM-LR?

In order to grow new generations of fully-equipped, ordained and lay, Anglican leaders for effective Gospel-centered ministry, the mission of the ASM-LR is *to bring high quality ministry education, formation, and training to students in their local congregations.* In fulfilling its mission, ASM-LR provides flexible training for current and future leaders in the church.

Our commitment to “new generations” reflects belief that the school will continue to produce Anglican leaders for the generations to come, leaders who are “fully-equipped” by a balanced program of leadership preparation which reflects our H³ approach (see below). We are dedicated to ensuring our graduates are biblically and measurably “effective” in their leadership roles in ministries which are “Gospel-centered,” that is, they reflect the fact that the Good News is at the center of all ministry. It is important to notice that ASM-LR’s programs are primarily delivered in the context of the local congregation, so that the school is tied in to where actual ministry takes place.

What are its Core Values?

ASM-LR’s core values indicate those qualities which define all the school’s policies, procedures, and programs. We are committed to ...

- *Historic Christianity* as summarized in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral.
- *Anglican Tradition* as expressed in the 39 Articles, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and its Ordinal.
- *Integrated Ministry* as reflected in the Three Streams: Scriptural (Evangelical), Sacramental (Catholic), and Spiritual (Charismatic)
- *Leadership Development* in context of the local congregations.
- *H³ Model of Ministry* is ASM-LR’s commitment to providing high quality, excellent programs which prepare the Head, Heart, and Hands

(hence the H³ model) for leadership in the church.

Education for the mind (Head): Gaining knowledge and understanding in Bible, theology, and the theory of ministry by a combination of distance learning and short-residency courses.

Formation for the spirit (Heart): Growing in grace and wisdom through spiritual formation under the guidance of a mentor, leading to the development of Christian character and Christ-likeness.

Training in practical skills necessary for ministry (Hands): Acquiring experience and wisdom in a variety of ministry settings through supervised internships.

- *Flexible, responsive programs* designed to meet the unique needs of the students.
- *Excellence in every aspect* of the school's decision-making, policy implementation, and programs; the school will always seek to improve.
- *Effectiveness in Ministry by students and graduates*, that is, measurable, Biblical ministry outcomes "to equip the saints for the work of the ministry."
- *Gospel-centered ministry* focused on the truth that salvation is by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ which results in good works which glorify the name of Christ. This truth is always proclaimed in love: love of God, love of God's people, and love of the lost.

Who is ASM-LR for?

ASM-LR's programs are designed for candidates for ordained ministry, clergy desiring continuing education, and for current or future lay leaders for whom the traditional, in-residence seminary education is not the best process. Specifically, this would include qualified students who are:

- Pursuing ordination as a "second-career."
- Older retirees who do not possess the necessary prerequisites to attend a traditional seminary.
- Working full-time to support a family and cannot afford the expense of seminary.

Why is this program needed?

- At a time in their family life when relocation is not feasible.
- Already involved in parish ministry and leaving that position would not be in the best interest of the church.
- Someone entering a discernment process for possible ordination.

The bottom line is simply this: the AMiA needs more trained ministers of the Gospel than traditional clergy education programs can provide.

The growth of the AMiA and the need for more clergy presents the Mission with a challenge similar to that faced by the American churches on the western frontier in the 19th century: too many new churches, missions, and converts for the current clergy population of the Mission to service.

The traditional requirement by most of those 19th century churches for ministers to receive a traditional liberal arts education followed by further studies in theology meant that those denominations were anywhere from four to seven years behind in their ability to meet the needs of the church in a vibrant, geographically vast mission field of what history proved to be of enormous importance.

Because of this, the denominations which at that time required little to no formal education of their ministers were able to quickly respond with an expanding pool of available ministers and gained most of the increased numbers of new Christians and new congregations.

The AMiA obviously does not want to replicate the “little to no formal education” scenario but neither does the Mission wish to be a victim of rigid processes which are no longer nimble enough to meet the missional needs of the church. Therefore, some alternative process for training lay leaders, men and women for the diaconate, and men for presbyterate had to be found.

Today, other denominations have identified a similar need within their ministries. For example Methodists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians have developed alternative processes for training people for the ministry. This is not only true in the United States—the highly regarded (and Anglican-founded) Australian College of Theology has a number of non-traditional programs to meet the needs of the church in that country.

The Anglican tradition actually has a long-held practice of allowing clergy to be trained informally (a practice called “reading for orders”), especially

those who have previous education and accomplishments in other fields. It was not (and still is not) uncommon to find men who were teachers, lawyers, doctors, and so forth who became second-career clergy, training for the ordination exams by means other than a traditional seminary education.

This is not to say that the traditional approach is no longer to be followed. Especially for those who have no previous career or who wish to pursue the more academic element of ordained ministry, the traditional seminary education still provides one of the best means of theological training, and candidates for the ministry are strongly encouraged to consider the traditional method of ordination preparation before pursuing ASM-LR's programs.

