

Formation of a school for lay leadership training and vocational diaconate in Asian and Multicultural Ministries in Canada (AMMIC), a ministry of Anglican Network in Canada (ANIC)

By Bishop Stephen Leung

(Proposal approved 20190421, with revised Curriculum 20200511)

I. Purpose and rationale

1. I have raised the discussion of lay leadership training and the revitalization of the Vocational Diaconate for about a year in the House of Bishops, who give me encouragement and support for further substantial program proposal.
2. There have been enquiry from AMMiC church plants, such as Chinese, Filipino and Sudanese church plants, regarding how to give proper training to lay leaders (e.g. lay administrators) and how to raise up vocational diaconate to assist the priest in charge, particularly in church plants to share the heavy workload of a solo clergy at work.
3. The Anglican Church in developing countries relies on the strong commitment of lay, parish workers and evangelists, who in turn assist the tremendous growth in their dioceses. Anglicanism relies on both ordained and lay ministry.
4. The increasing cost for an ordained clergy in Canada makes it very difficult for visible minority groups to afford a stipend clergy, particularly clergy who arrive in Canada recently from the agricultural regions or refugee camps. In fact, the high cost in hiring a stipend clergy will create a big financial gap between the income of an ordained person and the average person in the congregation. This may scare the congregation away if we ask them to earn financial independence all by themselves. Therefore, lay evangelists or church planters or non-stipend vocational deacons can be the workable solution for the first stage of development in visible minority church plants.
5. The huge rising cost of seminary training (in tuition and student living cost) also turn the visible minorities away from theological training. On the other hand, unfortunately, a western scholarly model of theological training does not give much help to equip the lay leaders training or even permanent diaconate.
6. The present suggested low cost, basic biblical-theological teaching & pastoral care training are more relevant to the current AMMiC context and situation for church-plant/parish growth. We have to wait until the pool of human resource grows, particularly arriving at a point that attracts the second gen leaders, then we can take one step higher towards a more academic theological training in future.

II. Curriculum for lay leaders and permanent diaconate

Courses: Generally, all courses are open for lay learning. At present, either GSV or AMMiC center can be the teaching center. Every course is designed for 6 to 8 sessions, depending on the teacher course planning. This will be conducted in classroom teaching with webinar or video recording for students outside BC.

Fees: \$50.00 per course. (If in need, can apply to be half-subsidized by church plant/parish or scholarship from AMMiC/ANIC.)

Instructors: clergy, lay with qualified theological education or seminarian. Some courses can be taught by a team with mentoring by different field workers, e.g. church plant study.

Languages for teaching: English or native language (Cantonese/Mandarin or Japanese etc.)

Required courses:

1. Survey of Scripture
2. To Be a Christian: An Anglican Catechism (ACNA Approved Edition 2020)
3. Spiritual Formation (e.g., learning through the lives of the patristics (early church desert fathers))
4. Survey of Church History (*required only for permanent diaconate*)

Elective courses (at least one):

1. Study of the ministry among Visible Minorities in Canada
2. Basics of Church Planting
3. Ministry of Word & Sacrament, and Pastoral Care
4. Biblical Preaching
5. Others

Compulsory courses for candidates applying for permanent diaconate (at least one):

1. History and Theology of the Diaconate (Trinity School for Ministry) OR Equivalent
2. Anglicanism and Liturgy (Regent College) OR Equivalent
3. Face-Shame culture and its implications for ministry and personal growth (AMMiC)
4. Anglican Faith in the 39 Articles (AMMiC)

Permanent diaconate is required to be mentored by a recognized Spiritual Director.

III. Licensing of Lay Administrator and ordination to Permanent Diaconate

1. AMMiC will encourage and licence those who have received basic lay training as Lay Administrator in church plant and parish. If the lay candidate has already studied the same subject matter or its equivalent in qualified theological institute, as approved by the priest in charge/rector and Area Bishop, the candidate will be exempt from such courses. For example, the candidate has taken diploma/certificate course in Moore Theological College, Regent-Carey College, Christ College Vancouver, etc.
2. If the candidate wishes to apply for ordination to permanent non-stipend diaconate, the candidate has to take at least four courses in lay training and a compulsory course for diaconate. If the candidate has already studied the same subject matter or its equivalent in qualified theological institute, as approved by the priest in charge/rector and Area Bishop, the candidate will be exempt from such courses. For example, the candidate has taken diploma/certificate course in Moore Theological College, Regent-Carey College, Christ College Vancouver, etc. The candidate will also do parish internship for one year, supervised by priest in charge or Rector or Rector-deputy.

The candidate has to apply for DOVE examination. With DOVE recommendation and approval by the Area Bishop, the Area Bishop will seek approval from the Diocesan Bishop to proceed with the ordination.

IV. Financial Support from ANiC

To provide a funding towards teacher honorarium.