
TEACHING LEADERSHIP AT ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY: THE MASTER OF ARTS IN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP (MACL)

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In the fall of 2000, Drs. Tom Tumblin and Rick Gray shared a dream for developing a new program in leadership at Asbury Theological Seminary. As the seeds of this vision germinated and grew, the two professors met with their Academic Dean and Dean of the School of Theology, Dr. Joel Green. After listening to the proposal set forth for a leadership degree, Dr. Green encouraged the two professors to write a comprehensive proposal for presentation to the seminary's administration and faculty. The development of this proposal involved investigative research to discover existing programs that might be similar, the development of core learning objectives for the major and the substance of the new courses that would need to be designed. Before the meeting's end, Dr. Green also shared that once the proposal for the new degree program was completed, it would have to be approved by the full faculty. After faculty approval, the degree plan would then be submitted to the Association of Theological Schools, the institution's accrediting body, for its approval. Only after an approval by ATS would Asbury be able to announce the new masters degree. All of the necessary approvals were obtained. Thus, in the fall of 2002, Asbury Seminary announced its first new master's degree in two decades, the Master of Arts in Christian Leadership.

THE MACL AND THE MISSION OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Asbury Theological Seminary was founded in 1923 to meet the need for a graduate theological seminary committed to the historic Wesleyan interpretation of evangelical Christianity: "to prepare and send forth a well-trained, sanctified, Spirit-filled, evangelistic ministry" and "to spread scriptural holiness throughout the world." The contemporary form of this mission commits the Seminary to maintain a multi-denominational, multi-cultural community that:

1. Pursues the union of sound learning and vital piety through excellence in graduate, professional, and continuing studies for ordained and lay ministries; and

- provides resources for scholarly leadership in the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition;
2. Nurtures men and women called of God for parish ministry and other forms of servant leadership in the experience and practice of personal and social holiness as defined by Scripture and Wesleyan theology;
 3. Encourages its members, in their teaching, scholarship, and service, to live out the witness of a Spirit-filled life formed by the authority of Scripture;
 4. Prepares women and men for prophetic ministries of redemption and renewal in an increasingly urbanized and secularized world.

The changing landscape of local church ministry today has consequences for the training of both lay and clergy ministers. Increasingly, the local church is either financially unable or strategically unwilling to fund more than one fully credentialed clergyperson per parish. Instead, congregations are choosing to *home-grow* laity staff members whose passion and gifts match one of the ministry needs in the church. Additionally, many of the denominations served by Asbury Theological Seminary do not require the Master of Divinity as part of the requirements for the ordained ministry. The MACL plan includes the course requirements for the Order of Deacons in The United Methodist Church. The Master of Arts in Christian Leadership degree is designed to address the need for preparing leaders for ministries in both the church and para-church organizations. Undergirding this new degree program are the theory and models of servant leadership.

Asbury Seminary's MACL program helps its majors grow into the understanding that a servant leader is:

A person with a servant heart whose God-given skills and talents are purposefully surrendered so the Holy Spirit might use them to influence a specific group of God's people towards God's purpose.

Asbury aims for these graduates to enter professional ministry as sacrificial servants, within and for the glory of the kingdom of God.

Guided by this vision, MACL students undergo a comprehensive program of education and training.

FOCUS OF THE DEGREE

The Master of Arts in Christian Leadership degree is designed to be both organizationally focused and multidisciplinary. Thus it becomes the ideal degree to teach students how to function effectively in Christian service. Students with the MACL degree are comfortable working in executive positions beneath a senior pastor within a parish context; others effectively handle the challenges of directing training institutes and/or para-church ministries. Because of the type of training provided through the MACL, students find that the degree complements the Master of Divinity and other degree programs in the institution.

Core learning objectives for the MACL are identified using the “Know-Do-Be” approach to formation:

➤ Know

- Understand the four classic organizational frames
- Know the basic disciplines for personal Christian leadership development
- Understand key strategies for developing other servant leaders
- Comprehend organizational change processes and how to resolve the inherent conflicts that accompany change

➤ Do:

- Practice the basic disciplines for personal and spiritual renewal
- Develop the ability to assess an organizational context
- Regularly cultivate other servant leaders
- Practice implementing organizational change and resolving the inherent conflicts that accompany change

➤ Be:

- Be an effective servant leader called by God
- Be a contagious representative of Christ
- Be an equipper of other servant leaders
- Be a biblically wise change agent committed to organizational excellence and relational health

The core formation for the MACL is conceptualized around five content categories. These include Bible and theology, history, social psychology, cross-cultural studies and theory and practice of organizational change.. Structuring the MACL around these categories helps to ensure that students receive a well-rounded seminary education.

CURRICULUM

The MACL is a professional degree designed to prepare women and men for competent leadership in specialized ministries in their faith communities. The professional Master of Arts seeks to develop the general theological understanding required as a basis for specialized ministries and to nurture the practical abilities and skills needed for the special form of ministry expected.

The MACL program requires 60 semester hours of study and normally requires a minimum of 30 hours of residency in the program. MA Core course requirements take up 24 hours and consist of the following:

IS 501 Kingdom, Church and World (3)

IS 502 Vocation of Ministry (3)

DS 501/502 Introduction to Biblical Studies (6)

DO 501 Basic Christian Doctrine (3) or ST 501 Method & Praxis in Theology (3)

CH 500 Turning Points in Church History (3)

Bible Content Examination (3)

In addition to the MA Core requirements, MACL students explore their chosen specialization through the 17-hour Leadership *core* that includes:

CL610 Theology of Servant Leadership (3)

CL611 Foundations of Leadership (3)

CL612 Christian Leadership Development (3)

CL613 Equipping the Laity (3)

CL614 Leading Groups and Organizations (3)

SM514 Supervised Ministry in Christian Leadership (1)

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The student also selects 7 hours from the following *core electives*;

- CL615/MS653 Cross Cultural Leadership (3)
- CL616 Leading Change (3) *or* MB730 The Change Agent in Mission (3) *or*
- MS620 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched (3)
- CL 617 Urban Leadership (3)
- CL 660 Advanced Seminar in Wesleyan Leadership (1)
- CL701 Research and Writing in Christian Leadership (1)
- SM714 S.H.A.R.E. mentoring program (1)

Finally, the MACL allows further breadth and selectivity through 18 hours of *general* electives.

Course Descriptions

CL 610 Biblical Theology of Servant Leadership

The biblical narrative provides ample understanding of what makes leadership Christian. Whether one follows the models of the kings and prophets or the kenosis of Christ and the ensuing Christ followers, the Christian leader is called to a distinctly different style of leadership. This course will explore the principles and practices that nurture life-long servanthood. We will also examine and seek to practice Christian community as the crucible for authentic Christian leadership.

CL 611 Foundations of Leadership

This course is designed to introduce students to the historical development of the leadership discipline. Special attention will be given to the theoretical constructs that undergird the major leadership paradigms beginning with the Great Man Era and ending with the Age of Complexity. This course will be sensitive to the interplay between secular management theory and its usefulness to a Christian context.

CL 612 Christian Leadership Development

This course is designed to move students into deeper levels of understanding of the significant concepts and theories that are shaping the contemporary study of Christian Leadership Development. From this base of understanding, students will be guided into discoveries of personal individual

styles, strengths and weaknesses in an effort to enhance personal leadership competencies with an intentional servant-hood focus.

CL 613 Equipping the Laity

This course will lay the foundation for a lay revolution within and beyond the local church. Using Ephesians 4 as the base, the course will flesh out the paradigm of pastor as equipper/coach and laity as unpaid servants doing the work of the ministry. The delineation between laity and clergy will be minimized. Issues addressed will include assimilation, leadership development and discipling disciplers.

CL 614 Leading Groups and Organizations

Transforming large and small groups, including associations of multiple groups (organizations), requires exceptional insight and skill. This course will examine the social psychological aspects of leadership from both the classic literature and from Christian parallels. Organic systems and the impact of belief structures will frame the discussion.

CL 615 Cross Cultural Leadership

This course is designed to examine the role of culture and cultural dynamics in the selection/emergence and functioning of leadership. Primary attention will be given to leadership dynamics within the multicultural North American context. Consideration will also be given to American theories and models and their usefulness in other cultural contexts.

CL 616 Leading Change

Change inevitably comes, particularly when an organization experiences healthy growth. This course addresses dynamics including first and second order change, transition, innovation, chaotic systems and conflict. Emphasis will be given to the leader's roles as catalyst, coach and counselor at the individual, group, organizational and enterprise levels.

CL 617 Urban Leadership

This course focuses on the basic principles of Christian leadership in an urban context. The city is explored from a

socio-cultural perspective while examining successful urban leadership/ministry models.

CL 660 Advanced Seminar in Wesleyan Leadership

This one hour seminar for students in Christian Leadership will integrate learned theoretical constructs of leadership with basic Wesleyan theology and practice.

CL 701 Research and Writing in Christian Leadership

A capstone course in the Master of Arts in Christian Leadership degree program, this seminar introduces the structure and resources for engaging in quantitative and qualitative research methods and for developing publishable materials in the field of Christian leadership.

PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives for the Master of Arts in Christian Leadership have been designed to be consistent with the core learning objectives for all MA programs. The MA core learning objectives state that:

MA programs are to provide students with foundational instruction in theological studies, biblical studies, and church history;

MA programs are to provide students with opportunity to address issues of cultural context and Christian formation;

MA programs are to model and require students to practice theological reflection on the academic fields and professions to which they are oriented;

MA programs are to integrate into their curricula the development and use of those linguistic skills and/or critical theories necessary for graduate-level competence in their specializations;

MA programs are to provide substantive exposure to central and contemporary development in the fields of inquiry and the profession to which they are oriented.

In keeping with the learning objectives for all Masters programs, students prepared for professional ministries of leadership through the MACL shall:

- Articulate the common objectives provided in the leadership orientation tutorial;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the four classic organizational frames and contingency leadership;
- Recognize selected organizational change processes and how to resolve the inherent conflict that accompanies change;
- Practice the basic disciplines for personal leadership development and demonstrate a comprehension of key strategies for developing other servant leaders;
- Use biblical and theological criteria for evaluating leadership style and practice.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE MACL

The MACL at Asbury Seminary differs from other leadership degree programs in very significant ways. First, leadership majors in Asbury's program are taught that their primary responsibility as pastors and executives is to the growth and development of those individuals over whom God has given them charge. As servant leaders, MACL students focus on the *liberation* function of Christian leadership. This is not to imply that the essential functions of *governance* (administration and management) or *direction* (vision casting) are neglected. Instruction in all vital areas occurs in courses throughout the program. However, Asbury's leadership majors are encouraged to surrender themselves to the Holy Spirit, in an attitude of sacrificial service, and utilize their positions of authority to help transform others for the benefit of God's kingdom. Students learn that governance gives pre-eminence to the maintenance of an institution, even at the expense of the individual. In the *missio Dei*, though, God already has cast the vision for our ministries. Asbury

intends that its MACL graduates, therefore, seek to fulfill particular goals. First, they discern their place within God's plan and communicate this insight to others. Then they guide their followers along a path also seeking higher levels of competence and Christian service. This understanding of the essential functions of leadership is, at present, unique to Asbury Seminary's leadership program.

Second, through the SHARE (**S**haring, **H**oliness, **A**cademics, **R**elationship, and **E**xperiences) mentoring initiative, MACL freshmen are given an opportunity from the beginning of their seminary experience to enter into formal relationships with senior leadership majors. The SHARE program was conceived by leadership students who recognized that their learning experience would have been enhanced had they had the opportunity to be involved in formal mentoring with a more experienced person. Individuals indicate their interest in the SHARE program by enrolling in SM 714. MACL faculty then work to make appropriate matches. Both individuals participate in a faculty-led orientation/training session, in which the semester-long expectations for the mentoring experience are laid out and agreed upon. Leadership seniors giving themselves away in mentoring relationships to entering leadership majors has added an invaluable dimension to the program.

Third, students in the MACL complete courses in biblical and theological studies as part of the seminary's core curriculum. These are taught with a Wesleyan-Arminian emphasis, as are core class offerings for the program major. Furthermore, these students are poised on the cutting edge of the academic frame of Christian leadership. Through CL 660, Advanced Seminar in Wesleyan Leadership, seniors work together to review existing theoretical constructs for both secular and Christian leadership. They also review the theological distinctiveness of Wesleyan thought, weaving these strands into a Wesleyan-Arminian theoretical construct of the Christian leader and his/her purpose. In this way, Asbury Seminary's MACL seeks to articulate a uniquely Wesleyan-Arminian perspective to the understanding and practice of Christian leadership.

Assessment of the Master of Arts in Christian Leadership

The appropriate Area and/or School for each degree program prepares program-specific assessment instruments in light of the Core Learning Objectives for that program. These instruments are administered annually, first : to the appropriate degree students in their first semester of the program, as part of the regular Advising Program; and second as a part of the Senior Survey, to those students who are completing the assessment cycle.

In addition to the normal annual cycle of assessment, the MACL underwent a comprehensive, systematic review at the end of its second year of accredited operations. The following excerpts were taken from the report submitted by the Degree Program Review Team at the conclusion of its assessment:

- Currently, there are 43 students in the MACL degree program. After two years of operation, this demonstrates a strong interest in this degree, which has continued to increase through inquiries from prospective students and actual applications. In addition, course enrollment figures have confirmed a desire and need for CL courses from students enrolled in other Asbury Seminary degree programs. While we are pleased with the growth of the program in such a short amount of time, the MACL Area is currently developing means of assessing the level of student enrollment necessary to constitute critical mass for purposes of formation and academic community.
- The MACL is still in the early stages of creating awareness of the program, and of the significance of Christian Leadership studies and practice across the seminary. MACL participants, faculty and students, meet once each semester to discuss pertinent topics which focus on the nature and purpose of Christian leadership as addressed in the curriculum and core learning objectives. These events need continued discussion by MACL faculty in order to foster an environment and opportunity conducive to the formation of participants. The MACL faculty is committed to expanding awareness of the program on the campus and outside the institution, and to provide better understanding of its offerings and availability. This must be regularly addressed as a long-term goal.

- The Degree Program Review Team (DPRT) is pleased to submit such a favorable assessment of the MACL after just two years of its operation as an M.A. degree program of Asbury Theological Seminary. With 43 students enrolled in the MACL, and with faculty and curricula in place, we have been able to answer the majority of the assessment questions in the affirmative, which only serves to demonstrate the vision, vitality, and potential of this program. This report has shown that the MACL is appropriate to the mission of the seminary, and that continued interest and numerical growth are anticipated. We also believe that the MACL will continue to draw the attention and involvement of students who are enrolled in other degree programs at the Seminary.

THE FUTURE AND THE MACL

As of summer 2005, Master of Arts in Christian Leadership completed its third year of accredited operations. The necessary structural foundation for the degree program is in place, and necessary courses have been developed, approved and taught. As individuals continue to look to the MACL as their major focus, attention is being given to the program's future areas of growth and development. The ideas that follow flow out of conversations with present and former MACL students.

1. MACL majors continue to express a desire for additional elective course offerings that will reinforce knowledge in the areas of governance, liberation and direction. By the end of the 2005 -2006 academic year the following courses should be added to the elective offerings for the program:
 - The Spiritual Life of the Minister/Leader
 - The Business of Ministry
2. In the fall of 2004, MACL faculty and students engaged in a semester-long round table to discuss and begin to structure a plan for a leadership institute. Questions addressed included: Who would such an institute serve? What would this institute be able to offer that was not

currently available through the MACL program? What role would MACL faculty and/or students play in this institute?

3. Over the next 18 months, the program proposes continued conversations concerning a leadership institute. Asbury's international students who return to their countries are being asked to set up leadership institutes. MACL faculty has already received requests or inquiries from returning graduates to Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, and South America.
4. Over the next 12 months, the MACL program proposes development of a vehicle that would enable our MACL graduates to stay connected to one another. Because ATS graduates are permitted to retain their seminary e-mail accounts, the development of a blog site might further address this need. Graduates have also expressed interest in forming a continuing association. They might gather every two or three years for fellowship and continued professional development, perhaps as a part of annual Minister's Conference.
5. At present, MACL faculty is in conversation with the Director of the Seminary's annual Minister's Conference about including a regular leadership track. We are positing the idea of having MACL alumni attendees join leadership faculty to conduct workshops and panel discussions, as a means of continued professional development.
6. The leadership discipline is growing, evolving and changing rapidly. Even so, the MACL program prepares its majors to function confidently as Wesleyan servant leaders on the cutting edge. Faculty and students agree that the program would benefit from a Leadership reading room. This area would serve a two-fold function (1) as a casual gathering place for majors and (2) as the repository of leadership publications such as *The Leadership Journal*, *The Journal of the Academy of Religious Leadership*, *Bass's Handbook of Leadership*, etc.
7. Interest in the MACL has been very high among

individuals presently serving in para-church ministries. However, they are usually unable to leave their ministries in order to study leadership on a geophysical campus. The MACL continues to investigate delivery systems that would make it possible for an individual to obtain the degree without leaving their ministry site.

8. Finally, the MACL continues to grow and expand. This has occurred because God blessed the program with a unique blend of talent. One key player in the program's success has been Dr. Tom Tumblin who presently gives half-time service to the program while serving as District Superintendent for the West Ohio conference of the United Methodist church. Within five years, the MACL program would like to see Dr. Tumblin return to a full-time status with the leadership program and assist with its administration.