

## Identity and Effectiveness in the Twenty-first Century

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*It is an urgent moment for the church, for its mission and its leadership. Mission has become the identifying framework and purpose of the body of Christ in the twenty-first century. Mission itself requires faithful, committed, and effective leadership. Such leadership has marks and characteristics that can be probed and enhanced. The Episcopal Church has a mixed record in developing and encouraging leadership for mission today. There is a general awareness that we must have effective leadership, and some good beginnings have been made. However, there is a gap between awareness and necessary development of leadership. The question: Will this church take leadership for mission more seriously and implement strategies for leadership development in a variety of meaningful ways? The moment is critical. The possibilities and opportunities are abundant. How can we envision and develop leadership that serves and expands the mission of the sovereignty of God?*

The two go together, hand in glove: leadership and mission, mission and leadership. Both reflect important issues of identity for the church and its members. Both are keys to effectiveness for the church and its members. Each needs the other. Mission requires leadership to serve and shape it, and leadership requires mission for focus and integrity.

Both leadership and mission are receiving new scrutiny and interest within the church today. Mission itself is arguably the post-modern and postdenominational interpretative frame and ecclesiological foundation for the life and work of the body of Christ in our

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twenty-first century. However, this really is nothing new. To read the New Testament is to encounter a story of mission, God's mission in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and in the very identity and purpose of the nascent Christian community. And the story of mission is in no way isolated to the early Christian story. The Hebrew Scriptures weave narrative upon narrative of the mission of God and of God's people.

Our time has brought a fresh reading and awareness to the mission identity and work of God and God's people. This has been true for the international and global church, and it is equally true for the church in North America. There is a realization that our identity, our ministry, and our future as God's people depend on a renewed sense and experience of mission practice and vitality for the church. There is a further realization—as ancient as the scriptural narrative and as recent as the experience of the twenty-first-century church struggling to accomplish its mission—that mission requires effective, passionate, and mission-directed leadership.

Mission as the priority comes “first” in many ways. It is the primary work of God, and it is the identity, purpose, and focus of God's church. There are many signs of this in the church today. The 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* includes the Baptismal Covenant at its very heart, a covenant that articulates the mission of God's community and individual members of that community. It envisions a mission of faith, service, prayer, evangelism, and moral life. Elsewhere in the Prayer Book the question is asked, “What is the mission of the Church?” An answer is clearly and directly given: “The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”<sup>1</sup> This enunciates the mission identity and core of the church, both of these things being further articulated in more recent products of mission-focused worship materials (especially the Litany for the Mission of the Church found in the 2003 *Book of Occasional Services*). However, there is much work to be done to frame a missional prayer structure for our church that is consonant with our growing identity and awareness.

In this case *lex orandi* certainly is called to reflect an emerging *lex credendi*. We do believe that God's mission defines the moment and work of the church globally and locally today. In his pivotal work

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<sup>1</sup> “An Outline of the Faith,” *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Hymnal, 1979), 855.

*Transforming Mission*, South African theologian David Bosch articulates the call to mission as the primary element of identity and theology for the church in our time. Mission is transformation itself. Bosch writes, “Transforming mission means both that mission is to be understood as an activity that transforms reality and that there is a constant need for mission itself to be transformed.”<sup>2</sup> Closer to home, Darrell Guder proclaims the mission identity, purpose, and transformation of the church in North America in this way:

Two things have become quite clear to those who care about the church and its mission. On the one hand, the churches of North America have been dislocated from their prior social role of chaplain to the culture and society and have lost their once privileged positions of influence. Religious life in general and the churches in particular have increasingly been relegated to the private spheres of life. The churches have a great opportunity in these circumstances, however. The same pressures that threaten the continued survival of some churches, disturb the confidence of others, and devalue the meaning of them all can actually be helpful in providing an opening for new possibilities. . . . The present is a wildly opportune moment for churches to find themselves and to put on the garments of their calling, their vocation.<sup>3</sup>

At its best in recent years, the Episcopal Church has understood this and attempted to embrace and be embraced by a missional focus. Both the 20/20 Vision and the work of the General Convention in global mission are examples of this mission energy and focus, as is the commitment of this church to the Millennium Development Goals (although the spiritual and theological reflection of mission is still underformed and underarticulated in the MDG movement). However, there is some cause for concern. The General Convention tends to take a “mission du jour” approach, with some new missional effort gaining energy on a triennial basis but without a consistent, transforming vision and strategy for our mission over the long haul (a leadership issue, to be sure). The energy for both evangelism and mission—domestic

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<sup>2</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991), 511.

<sup>3</sup> Darrell L. Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church: Evangelization as the Heart of Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 77–78.

and global—has waned to some extent, as the Episcopal Church has become distracted by ideological, financial, and property matters.

However, missional identity and purpose cannot be obscured. It is spiritually, practically, and theologically inherent and must be made coherent for the church in the twenty-first century. That identity and purpose is particularly apparent in local communities of faith as congregations become increasingly aware of the specifics of their own mission, and in dioceses where mission awareness is at the forefront of diocesan life and purpose. In a very real sense, mission comes first for the church today. It reflects our authenticity and most basic call as Christ's body. *And . . .* it requires leadership. Today, as in other epochs and moments of the significant call to mission, mission effectiveness requires leadership, leadership that is energetic, committed, and authentic itself. So the question is this: what does leadership for mission look like?

As a preface to addressing that question, it is important to look at the authoritative sources of reflection on leadership in the church today. I would suggest that those sources are threefold in a classically Anglican way. The first source is Scripture itself. As mentioned above, Holy Scripture is a powerful source of reflection on leadership and mission, *if it is read as the story of God's mission*. Similarly, there is a rich tradition of leadership for mission in the life of the church through the centuries and in the most recent past. We do well to consider the stories of leaders, of their vision, inner courage, and action to gain a sense of effective leadership. The Episcopal Church's Liturgy and Music Commission's report to the 2009 General Convention adds numerous commemorations of holy women and men to those found in previous editions of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*. These are stories of leaders throughout the ages who have shown courage and direction for the mission of the church. The third source of leadership reflection is reason/experience. There is a solid and growing reflection and literature in the area of authentic, mission-focused leadership in the wider world of learning and practice in our own day, and we neglect it at our peril. Authors like Ronald Heifetz, Daniel Goleman, Parker Palmer, Warren Bennis, and Peter Drucker have developed an excellent body of literature on the nature and practice of leadership. The *Anglican Theological Review* has participated in this growing reflection through its two leadership-focused issues, and especially through the review article offered by David Gortner, professor at Virginia Theological Seminary.

What is not helpful: a fabricated dichotomy between theology on the one hand, and leadership development and reflection on the other. There has been an unfortunate positing of theology over against some of the best learning in leadership development and education. Theology is presented in this construct as pristine and authentic, with a concurrent suspicion of leadership research and education as too practical and culturally conditioned. This attitude does not honor the triadic balance at the center of our Anglican approach to mission and life, and it inaccurately portrays theology as something speculative and historical, versus reason and experience and their expression in the practice of leadership today. To learn about effective leadership is to probe our biblical, theological, spiritual, and practical resources together. Good leadership is essentially integrative in its nature.

There are several marks of effective leadership for mission evident in Scripture, tradition, and reason/experience. The first is that of *mission clarity* itself. The effective leader must have a clear sense of organizational and personal mission. There is a strong consensus that mission-focus is essential to the community of faith and to the leaders of that community. In the Faith Communities Today (FACT) survey,<sup>4</sup> undertaken three times over the past decade, one of the essential marks of effective congregations was a “clear understanding of mission and purpose.” The same is true for the leaders of those communities. Although sometimes challenged for being too popularized a perspective, the bestseller entitled *The Purpose Driven Life*<sup>5</sup> has it right. Clarity about personal purpose, mission, and call generates effective life and leadership.

One of the shadows of our Anglican approach has been the tendency to be too broad and fuzzy in our sense of mission. We become distracted as the church and as individual leaders. There is a loss of zeal and energy for mission accomplishment. This will not cut it in the twenty-first century. We are in an alien culture, lukewarm if not openly hostile to a traditional construct of faith and church life. The result is waning participation in congregational life (it has been suggested that

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<sup>4</sup> Episcopal data and reflection on this survey effort may be found at the website of the Episcopal Church, in the Congregational Research section of the Evangelism and Congregational Life Center. See especially, “Episcopal Congregations Overview: Findings from the 2008 Faith Communities Today Survey”; [www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Episcopal\\_Overview\\_FACT\\_2008.pdf](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Episcopal_Overview_FACT_2008.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002).

only a quarter of Americans are present in congregations of any faith tradition on a regular basis) and ennui among religious leaders. One of the most important dynamics to counter both of these realities is a strong sense of mission, organizational and personal, for communities of faith and their leaders. The questions for missional leaders are these: How does the gospel and transform my/our life? What do I/we believe? About what am I/are we passionate? Do my/our actions further the gospel purpose and sovereignty of God in this specific community and the world? Whom do I/we serve? What is my/our purpose and call? Are my/our actions congruent with what I/we believe?

A second mark of effective leaders for mission is *confidence*. In many ways this mark of effective leaders and leadership mirrors the first. Strong mission awareness and clarity build confidence in leaders. Confidence does not mean arrogance or bravado. Rather, it is indicative of a soul rooted in God and God's strength. In one of the best and most spiritual essays on leadership, aptly entitled "Leading from Within,"<sup>6</sup> Parker Palmer describes five areas of light and shadow for leaders. The areas of light reflect souls and hearts that perceive the work and presence of God in the world and in their own lives. The shadows are the opposite, in which fear and timidity dominate the souls and hearts of leaders. The specific shadow that rings particularly true for this writer is that of "functional atheism," which is despairing of the efficacy of God and assuming the impossible burden of making salvation, life, and "everything" happen out of one's own efforts. The result, of course, is discouragement. Parker Palmer contrasts this perilous disposition and attitude with that of confidence, courage, and hope in leaders.

This analysis is buttressed by present research in leadership. Hopeful, confident leaders shape hopeful and confident communities of faith. They work from a sense of strength and goodness and exhibit attitudes and behaviors of optimism and flexibility. The effect on the mission of the communities they lead is profound. Such confidence allows leaders to recognize abundance even in times of challenge like the present moment.

Third, effective leaders for mission have *perspicuity and vision*. They live the reality articulated by the collect for the Third Sunday of

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<sup>6</sup> Parker Palmer, "Leading from Within," in *Let Your Life Speak* (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

Easter: “Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work.”<sup>7</sup> The eyes of leaders are open to the world around them. They see things accurately, look for God’s work in the world, know their community, and analyze their context. Most importantly, they know themselves and have done the interior and inner work necessary to understand who they are, what they believe, and how they are motivated.

Two critical leadership educators in recent years have described the capacity of delineation and definition that comes with such perspicuity. Warren Bennis maintains that leaders can see the difference between management and leadership itself. He writes succinctly, “Managers do things right. Leaders do the right thing.”<sup>8</sup> The clear insight of leaders can distinguish between management functions and those of leadership. In a similar way, Ronald Heifetz maintains that leaders must be able to differentiate between “technical” issues and problems and “adaptive” ones.<sup>9</sup> According to Heifetz’s analysis, there is a difference in the depth of these two types of issues and problems and the energy and focus necessary to address them. Heifetz goes further by asserting that it is clarity of insight and vision on the part of leaders that is required. He suggests that leaders, who spend most of their time on the “dance floor” of organizational life and challenge, must go up to the “balcony” so that they can see more broadly and clearly the pattern that defines what the reality of the organization actually is.

A fourth mark of effective leadership is that leaders for mission, with eyes wide open, look for opportunities around them. They spend the time to *envision future possibilities* and *develop strategies* for future mission. They also look to their own hopes and aspirations, defining their identity and commitments as they move into the future.

Leaders for mission persevere in a variety of ways. They are able to meet opposition and challenge through reframing and the assessment of options. The rapid nature of change in our new century requires flexibility and the ability to change course in disciplined and immediate ways. At this moment, resource challenges confront leaders, requiring creativity and perseverance. Leaders cannot become isolated

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<sup>7</sup> BCP 1979, 224.

<sup>8</sup> Warren Bennis, *The Unconscious Conspiracy: Why Leaders Can’t Lead* (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1977), 28.

<sup>9</sup> Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).

or distance themselves from the matters that confront them. Strong and regular spiritual practices are required to sustain and encourage leaders, but it is important that spirituality not become an escape for the leader.

*Learning* is also one of the marks of leadership for mission. Peter Vail, an eminent writer in organizational change and an Episcopalian, suggests that one of the primary responses for organizations and leaders in our own time of massive change is learning.<sup>10</sup> A stance of learning enriches the soul of the leader. It develops a breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding that form a leader's spirit, empower proclamation and the important work of teaching, and assist in the decision-making required of leaders. Leaders who cut themselves off from learning will experience frustration and diminishing capacity; those who consistently engage in learning will be strengthened for their work.

Recent research also shows that the same is true for communities of faith. One of the characteristics of vital and healthy congregations is learning. There is a direct relationship between learning for all ages and the growth of congregations themselves. Leaders need to learn and to develop learning in the communities of faith they lead.

Much recent learning about leadership itself is related to the category of emotional intelligence. Leadership can be blessed by intellectual and other forms of intelligence, but to a great degree it rises and falls on the strength of emotional intelligence. This leadership finds strength in and is strengthened by the quality and consistency of relationships. It requires gifts of empathy, self-awareness (and control), awareness of others, and relationship building.

Emotionally intelligent leadership is highly *relational*. It creates relationships, collaborations, and networks to further mission itself. It is a singularly critical ingredient to leadership for mission. Mission is created by leaders who inspire and create hope. They build networks and relationships to accomplish the mission itself. They sustain mission through careful listening and caring response. They help people to grow in faith and to work together to accomplish purposes of the gospel. These leaders also deal directly with conflict when it emerges and work to address and negotiate conflict. In a very real sense, these

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<sup>10</sup> Peter Vail, *Learning as a Way of Being* (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1996).

leaders help communities of faith to live into the image and reality of being the body of Christ, a network and organism of relationship, growth, and mission.

Finally, leaders for mission are both *entrepreneurial and evangelistic*. They seek new opportunities for mission, launch new initiatives, and are willing to take holy and calculated risks for the gospel. Proclamation is very important to these leaders. They find varieties of ways to communicate the Good News. If in preaching roles, they utilize different modes of communication while endeavoring to present a hopeful and life-related message. Invitation is at the very center of the purpose and practice of leaders for mission. They focus on modes of hospitality that intentionally invite and welcome people, especially in a culture where the Christian message is not as clearly understood.

Again, what is true for the leadership is true for the mission itself. The Faith Communities Today (FACT) survey discovered that such a focus on evangelism and its invitation and hospitality were found in vital and growing congregations. While the vast majority of Episcopal congregations indicated that they wanted to grow, the ones that had a clear plan and implementation for ministries of evangelism actually reflected energy and real growth.

Entrepreneurial leaders of mission look for opportunities for mission itself. They do not settle for the status quo but search for new possibilities and modes of mission. Such leaders seek partnerships and collaborations. They honor tradition but also look for new ways of ministry that connect to the realities of a new time.

These are some of the qualities, characteristics, and marks of leadership for mission. It is not an exhaustive list, to be sure. However, it presents a picture of leadership that is mission-focused, spiritually rooted, and intentional in its practices. This is the mission leadership of both the laity and ordained, a leadership that shapes community and mission for the local community of faith and that is expressed in broader manifestations of the church and in daily life and work. There is a strong connection between the effectiveness of leaders and that of the local community of faith. Strong and effective leaders shape strong and effective communities.

Where are we, then? How are we forming and empowering leaders for mission in the Episcopal Church today?

Six years ago, a group of researchers did a formal study, sponsored by the Episcopal Church Foundation, on the “state of leadership

among Episcopalians.” Entitled *The Search for Coherence*, their report still deserves a thorough read and connects with the interpretation of missional leadership described in this essay. The report is introduced with a helpful description of the desires and aspirations of Episcopalians entering the twenty-first century:

Episcopalians seek faithful direction for the church. . . . They long for a focus on mission. They envision innovative patterns of evangelism and education; they want fresh attention to families, children, and people in need. As they search for ways to address such issues, Episcopalians long to renew their unity and vitality as the Body of Christ. They seek leadership that will bring tangible hope.<sup>11</sup>

*The Search for Coherence* identifies the spiritual focus and emphasis of the church. The document itself reflects a significant spiritual theology. It names the deep interest in developing and shaping leadership that is effective and mission-focused. The challenge is that we lose our rooting and foundation, become distracted, and follow patterns that have lost meaning and energy for this century. Although the report concludes that there is a “creative incoherence” in this church’s approach to leadership, and, indeed, that this is a reasonable stance, the danger is that incoherence will become dissonance, incongruity, and discontinuity.

Truth is, we are in a mixed state when it comes to leadership for mission in the Episcopal Church. There is good news and very challenging news at the same time. While there is a greater awareness of mission as the framing dynamic and purpose of the church, we lack clarity and strategy for mission at various levels and manifestations of the church—clarity and strategy that address the present serious challenges of mission in a changing environment full of economic, cultural, and practical obstacles. Congregations, dioceses, institutions, and organizations continue to exhibit powerful expressions of mission, but the work on vision and strategy for the future often waits to be done.

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<sup>11</sup> L. Ann Hallisey, Thomas P. Holland, Susan Page Johnson, and William L. Sachs, *The Search for Coherence* (New York: Episcopal Church Foundation, 2003), 2. Available at [www.episcopalchurchfoundation.org/resource-library](http://www.episcopalchurchfoundation.org/resource-library).

Like other mainline denominations, the Episcopal Church is in a condition of systemic decline. We continue to lose Sunday attendance and membership year by year, even though there are many local communities of faith that reflect vitality and hope for the future. From the perspective of mission strategy and development, we have not done the work of or provided the resources for serious and intentional mission development and vitality. Avoidance and denial are responses that inhibit our focus on and development of mission for the future.

The same construct of good news and challenging news exists when it comes to leadership for our mission. We have become more aware of the need for effective leadership, but there is still resistance to a leadership focus in developing and equipping lay and ordained people for their action and ministry. Some examples follow.

The Episcopal Church has made progress in recruiting younger people for ordination in recent years, but there is still a “gate-keeping” mentality rather than a recruitment attitude in much of the process of identifying and developing ordained ministry for the future. From the first aspirant consideration through the General Ordination Examinations, a great deal of the analysis and decision-making regarding those who will serve as ordained leaders in the church is experienced as hoops, hurdles, and walls rather than discernment of gifts for missional leadership in a new time.

The same is true for the seminaries of the church. Although seminaries do receive unfair expectations, burdens, and criticism from many quarters, there is a fair and accurate critique about the paradox of leadership development as offered and experienced in these institutions. Seminaries have come to use the term “leadership” with increasing regularity, but this use is not necessarily reflected in curriculum or academic experience. Much of the seminary endeavor continues to favor historic approaches to Scripture, theology, and tradition rather than contemporary modes of leadership development. There are few leadership courses, and, even in the places where business and management schools exist as neighbors, there are few examples of serious joint efforts in learning about effective leadership. Excuses are made suggesting that there really is no interest in leadership issues until after ordination and experience in actual mission settings, and that the curriculum is already too full. However, these rationalizations hold little water, especially when examined in comparison to other disciplines of leadership and their preparation.

The result of this is a faithful ordained leadership that is prepared well in some ways but does not have a background in leadership and education for mission, and that often feels at sea in the actual practice of leadership itself. In the Faith Communities Today (FACT) survey, Episcopalians affirmed the gifts of ordained leadership as knowledge of the Bible, pastoral sensitivity, liturgical competence, and hardworking diligence. However, what was notably lacking is startling: charismatic leadership, evangelistic capacity, decision-making skill, and the ability to get people to work together for a common goal.

In the case of those who have been formed for leadership in “local preparation” settings, be it for the diaconate or the presbyterate, often every effort is made to offer learning and training for a ministry that builds community. However, a brief review of such programs shows there is a need for focused and intentional leadership education for effective mission. Building pastoral capacities and serving community is vital, and these approaches to training have developed some creative and useful ways of accomplishing ministry. As with “traditional” formation, however, leadership consideration and development need to grow in focus and experience for these “local” programs.

Ordained leadership has been encouraged by the advent of the CREDO program. Like other organizations that have done research into leadership (and as suggested above in this essay), CREDO has concluded that empowerment and capacity recognition are essential to effective and fulfilling ordained leadership. Using a term from the discipline of psychology, “self-efficacy,” CREDO rightly concludes that empowered leadership depends significantly on the sense of efficacy and agency that the leader experiences. Therefore, the CREDO learning process focuses on these matters through reflection on spiritual, physical, financial, and vocational wellness and well-being. The results have been extremely successful. From a leadership development perspective, the one area that is lacking is that which focuses on mission awareness and leadership skills development itself.

Leadership for mission is in no way isolated to those who are ordained. Mission and its leadership belong to the whole body of Christ and to all who are baptized. One of the most important areas of growth in leadership is for all baptized individuals and groups who are responsible for envisioning and shaping mission. Here our theology is ahead of our practice. In fact, the *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* have some distance to go before they become manifest in the *lex agendi*.

The 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* embodies a baptismal theology of mission and leadership. It articulates a strong sense of mission in the Baptismal Covenant and An Outline of the Faith, both of which make it clear that ministerial leadership belongs to the whole community of the baptized. However, our practice does not yet match our theological premise. Governance and leadership training is too sparse for lay leaders in the church. Although allowed by church canon, licensed lay leadership ministries are still underutilized. Too often, lay leadership is seen in ecclesiastical terms, fulfilling liturgical or legislative functions, rather than as inspired and vigorous leadership for mission.

There are some promising preliminary signs of missional leadership development in the Episcopal Church. At the 2009 General Convention, a first step in leadership education has been taken through a narrative reflection process. There are also recent developments in a proposed long-range planning process initiated by the church's Executive Council, a process that includes a general churchwide survey and that must consider the context of our culture, present major shifts, and education for mission and leadership. More dioceses are doing wardens/vestry and other lay leadership conferences and training events, and a few leadership efforts are gaining momentum through newly established programs and centers for leadership development. These are important preliminary steps, but there is much more to be done. Too often the present efforts fall into a focus on "technical" and legislative issues rather than on "adaptive" ones. What is needed is a strategy for leadership development and formation that is transformational and missional.

New initiatives for mission and leadership development hold potential and possibility for us. Some possibilities follow.

Leadership development for the ordained should include both preparation and continuing education. Whether formation and training happen in "traditional" or "local" settings, an intentional process of education for missional leadership needs to be part of every curriculum. This would include course offerings in mission and leadership, the training and utilization of leadership mentors for all people preparing for ordination (effective mentorship has been shown to be one of the key ingredients for future effectiveness for leaders), and ongoing theological/missional reflection. A leadership lens need to be brought to the whole ministerial preparation curriculum, including theology, Scripture, and other areas of learning.

Leaders need to continue in their mission and leadership learning as practitioners. Much recent research has shown that effective leaders who are mission-focused engage in continuing education that improves and enhances their practice and their skills as leaders. There is a need for leadership development as continuing education that is more than occasional and ad hoc. A diocesan collegium of leaders is more than a loosely affiliated group of clergy. It is a learning and mission development community.

Similar possibilities and needs exist for the development of lay leadership for mission. Wider church efforts (denominational, diocesan, organizational, and institutional) need to be developed offering strategies and curricula for mission and leadership development. Such efforts should be more than skills or “technical” development. They must be “adaptive” and mission-focused. Opportunities to learn about and focus on mission, both in the church community and individually, should be developed. Good models exist for serious learning about the soul and spirit of missional leadership and can be employed within the church. Education for governance and organization/congregational mission development must be offered for vestries and other boards within the church.

A mission and leadership approach will change the gatherings and focus of the wider church as well. Rather than being primarily legislative gatherings, the General Convention, diocesan gatherings, and other church meetings can focus on leadership and mission. Several years ago I assisted a similarly sized American denomination to do this for its biennial churchwide convention. The results helped to transform the denomination as it became more strategic in its mission goals and work. It is possible for the Episcopal Church to do precisely the same thing.

In the last analysis, the reader should understand this: mission and leadership are not “add-ons” or options. They are the work and the purpose of the church, and it is an urgent time for both. Mission-focus and vitality will renew and transform the church. Leadership for that mission will move us forward in that renewal and transformation. It is possible—and the time is now.