

## Introduction

ELLEN K. WONDRA AND C. K. ROBERTSON\*

In the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, a situation of inequitable pastoral care within the emerging Christian community resulted in internal conflict. What is interesting is that this conflict arose at a time of great success for the apostolic mission: “Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews . . .” (6:1). The apostles’ evangelistic efforts were bearing great fruit, not only in numerical terms but also in what we might now term holistic stewardship, spiritual formation, and management development. Yet internal struggles over newcomer inclusion and group definition, much more than outside resistance and hostility, threatened to divert attention from the crucial work of mission. The apostles were blunt in their response to the complaints brought before them by the neglected Hellenists: “It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables” (6:2). Whatever one thinks of the specifics of their solution—challenging the Hellenists to select seven of their own to deal with their struggles—it is important to note their commitment as leaders to mission over and above all other matters, including intra-church discord.

Despite the contextual differences between the first century and the twenty-first century, it is not surprising to see how internal issues and tensions today, like then, can prove distracting to our missional priorities. It is all the more important, therefore, to be intentional and strategic as leaders in mission. That is the focus of this issue of the *Anglican Theological Review*, entitled “Leadership for Mission.” Like its predecessor last year, “Toward a Theology of Leadership,” guest-edited by Christopher A. Beeley and Joseph H. Britton, this issue includes longer articles that address the theological dimensions of leadership. This issue also includes several shorter, more pragmatic pieces

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\* Ellen K. Wondra is Editor in Chief of the *Anglican Theological Review* and Academic Dean and Professor of Theology and Ethics at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois.

C. K. Robertson serves as Canon to the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. He has served as Canon to the Ordinary and Canon for Congregational Development and Stewardship in the Diocese of Arizona.

devoted to specific contexts of missional focus such as church planting, theological education, and emerging initiatives. The contributors herein are not all professional academics; but many are on-the-ground innovators in their respective fields. The intended audience for this issue of the *ATR* is also broader than is usually supposed. Indeed, it is hoped that this issue will inspire new and creative thinking on the part of all who would take on the challenge to be Christ's proactive witnesses.

In the first article, **Christopher Duraisingh** notes that the familiar touchstone of missional theology, the notion of *missio Dei*, is not without its problems, not least of which is the association of mission with imperialism and colonialism, both of which tend to assume that those arriving from Western Europe bring both God and culture with them. Rooting *missio Dei* in the second person of the Trinity narrows Christians' ability to recognize and join in with what God is already doing. At the same time, this understanding leaves the existing church with an understanding that its primary ministry is not missional but pastoral, aimed at those already within the fold. Duraisingh defines mission not as a matter of doing, but as a *habitus*, a mode of being in which Christians "step behind the Spirit who always goes ahead." This pattern may more helpfully be understood as a *concur-sus Dei*, "God's unceasing accompaniment with creation, calling and evoking its participation in God-movement as God leads it patiently and persuasively." Reframed in this way, missiology is characterized by a certain dialogic openness to plurality by the church, which understands itself as a "sign of God's purpose for all of creation."

Taking a realistic view of the Episcopal Church in the United States, **Stephanie Spellers** observes that today "affairs are truly soul size." Some key statistical indicators demonstrate starkly that the Episcopal Church is still highly privileged in wealth and education, still predominantly white, and increasingly old. Beginning from an overview of how Scripture sees the church as witness to the *missio Dei*, Spellers sees the missional church as a community of the reign of God, an assembly of radical welcome of The Other. And, she reminds us, there are always Others. The church is messenger of the reign of God, proclaiming the gospel in word and deed. And it is servant of the reign of God, promoting justice, peace, and love. But this means the church must take on a marginal identity, something for which Episcopalians are not trained. The need now is for leaders who are relational organizers, those who can bring people together in support

and pursuit of common aspirations and concrete practices that embody them. Spellers identifies six specific essential leadership practices for missional leaders in today's church. Her hope: "We can become practitioners of the reign of God."

**George Sumner** looks at Anglicanism in North America as an anthropologist might, observing the same realities as Spellers, and identifying the constant challenge for the church to understand its mission as something other than mere capitulation to culture, or as mere opposition to it. In the North American context, Sumner contends, we must build on our "intuitive sense" that what Anglicanism offers is apostolicity and catholicity that is also evangelical. Important to this is the countercultural recognition of the ubiquitous presence of human sin. This recognition provides an opening to the "amazing grace" that God offers and we receive. Thus, contemporary Anglicanism can build on three things: its provision of an apologia for tradition, its view of all ministry as midrash arising from the study of the Word, and its understanding of Baptismal Covenant as constant catechesis and formation. In this framing, "a sense of the incapacity of the church is itself a gift of grace," bringing with it both due humility and renewed hope grounded in the work of the Holy Spirit.

What is the effect on liturgy of the church's turn to mission? One might readily note the importance of inculturation. But, **Ruth Meyers** contends, more profound is the recognition that liturgy is itself a locus of God's mission. As the church prays and worships, proclaims the gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love, it enacts the Catechism's description of mission, "restor[ing] all people to unity with God and with each other in Christ." The church's participation in the mission of God is grounded in Christians' baptismal identity. Always, Meyers notes, liturgy has shown the marks of inculturation and it draws the language and ritual patterns of its cultural contexts into its orbit. At the same time, liturgy continues to be firmly rooted in the Christian tradition, using forms and patterns that are common even when literal language is not. Seen this way, Meyers suggests, liturgy facilitates adaptive change and encourages the authenticity of particular bodies, particular histories, and particular locations. Missional liturgy also encourages theological reflection on liturgical and other practices, making it "a primary aspect of a congregation's participation in the *missio Dei*."

**Susanne Watson Epting** links the baptismal identity that Meyers identifies as central to mission to the renewal of the diaconate over

the three decades of use of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. Renewed diaconal ministry continues to challenge the church to question what it means by service. The Episcopal Church is prone to seeing service as a form of “reaching down,” helping those in need. Diaconal ministry demonstrates the importance of reaching out in ways that evoke the gifts and nurture the leadership of those in need. In this and other ways, diaconal leadership focuses on the Baptismal Covenant’s emphasis on radical equality and prophetic voice. For Watson Epting, prophetic voice has a number of expressions that interact with each other: knowing language and culture, facilitating dialogue, advocacy, learning through and reflecting on service, and asset-based community development—all grounded in the prophetic tradition. The animating questions of diaconal leadership are these: “Where is the church needed? Who waits for us?” Deacons lead the church in recognizing and envisioning leadership that steps toward those who wait.

All this raises questions about the qualities and characteristics of leadership in and for mission, leadership that is effective and at the same time an authentic expression of Christian identity. In the concluding article of this section of constructive theological pieces, **James B. Lemler** identifies five marks of effective leadership: clarity of mission and purpose; confidence based on rootedness in God, characterized by hope; acute vision; adaptive change that draws on emotional intelligence; and evangelical entrepreneurship. These marks give an understanding of leadership on the basis of which Lemler assesses the current Episcopal Church. He discusses how some of the widely familiar activities of the church exemplify such leadership; he also proposes some additional possibilities.

As the issue turns to reflection by practitioners of missional leadership, we see these possibilities coming to life in very particular ways. The section “Practicing Theology” opens with an article by **Ken Howard**, who looks at religious realignment in the United States, suggesting how various paradigm shifts lead from familiar ideas and practices to newly reframed understandings and ways of being church. **Susan Snook**’s reflections on church planting draw on her own experience to formulate factors for success and the leadership practices that sustain them. In his article, **Ian Corbett** sets out six imperatives for domestic mission, building on learnings from global mission. **Michael Rusk** continues with what global mission offers the Anglican Communion in general and the Church of England in particular. In the context of

the United States, **Suzanne Watson** discusses the importance of rediscovering core purposes, and highlights how the work of the Church Center staff supports a variety of ministries that embody this rediscovery. **Pamela Wesley Gomez** weaves together reflections drawn from decades of missional leadership as a layperson, challenging the church to receive more willingly the gifts and skills of all the baptized. With **John Dreibelbis's** article, we turn our attention to some of the qualities found among effective church leaders. **Ian Markham** proposes changes in seminary education that can enhance these and other qualities, making improving denominational health a major criterion for assessing the quality of leaders' efforts. **Karen Ward** draws out some of the elements of entrepreneurial leadership that enlivens the church's mission as part of "The Great Emergence." Finally, **Bowie Snodgrass** describes the mission of Faith House, a community of people of many faiths whose mission is to discover and develop cooperation across lines of religious diversity and, at times, conflict. To round all this off, **David Gortner** continues his examination of relevant literature and practices in a second review article that complements his work in the Winter 2009 issue.

In bringing together this array of theological and practical articles, we have invited authors and readers to look beyond the intra-church challenges that seem to preoccupy North American Anglicanism, and to focus on the many ways those challenges can be met. If we return to those earliest believers in Acts, it is noteworthy that at least two of the appointed "table servers" in chapter 6, Stephen and Philip, quickly moved beyond their original job description of internal conflict management to take on a creative ministry of proclamation. Later still, Paul and Barnabas, operating out of Antioch, accomplished what the Jerusalem community, for all their early successes, did not: they intentionally, strategically reached out to outsiders and reached the ends of the earth with the gospel. And, as Luke reports with some degree of understatement, "It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians'" (11:26). May the pages that follow offer scholarly and practical tools for all who would be twenty-first century apostles of Antioch.

