

ARTICLE

The People of God, Discipleship and Ministry in the Anglican Church Today and Tomorrow

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Abstract

People of God is a well-known biblical term used to describe and understand the inclusive, holistic and serving nature of the Christian Church. Currently, members of the worldwide Anglican Communion are discussing discipleship and ministry. This paper explores the deep connection between describing the church as the People of God and the practice of discipleship and ministry. That exploration occurs through an examination of the considerable literature on the topic, and by discussing discipleship and ministry in light of understanding the church as the People of God. Discoveries made from the journey may surprise. Suggestions for church practice emerged with implications for: ecclesial language; parish ministry and mission; the processes of Anglican Diocesan Synods; and potential outcomes for the 2022 Lambeth Conference.

Keywords: discipleship and ministry, People of God, Anglican Church, parishes and Synods, Lambeth Conference

Introduction

The words ‘clergy and laity’ are taken for granted in Anglican church circles today. The Anglican Diocese of Adelaide Vision Statement 2019–2022 honours the ministry of the lay and the ordained person. It aims to ‘discern, equip and sustain lay and ordained leaders to develop and lead within teams’.²

The author, as a result of life experience, parish ministry and research on the parish as a learning community, no longer speaks the traditional language of the Anglican Church by using the dualistic term ‘clergy and laity’.³ The word ‘disciples’ is preferred. This change in ecclesial language may seem unusual but we live in a strange Covid-19 period of history when many may be pondering anew. For 30 of

¹The Reverend Dr John Littleton is a retired Anglican priest in the Diocese of Adelaide.

²Anglican Diocese of Adelaide, Action Plan, 2. Available at: <https://www.adelaideanglicans.com> (accessed 24 August 2020).

³John R.W. Stott, *One People: Clergy and Laity in God's Church* (London: Falcon Books, repr. 1971 [1969]), pp. 38–42, 46–47; Gideon Goosen, *Clericalism: Stories from the Pews – A Workbook for Parishes* (Victoria, Australia: Coventry Press, 2020), pp. 118–21.

his 79 years of life in the church the author was a member of the laity. On being made a deacon in December 1969 and ordained priest in February 1971, he became a member of the clergy and still belongs to the *laos*, the People of God, baptized 27 November 1941.

Members of the worldwide Anglican Communion are discussing discipleship and ministry. My concern about the term ‘clergy and laity’ coincides with the study of discipleship and ministry across the global Anglican Church. The paper was prompted by this happy coincidence and connects the two topics by drawing on an understanding of the church as the People of God. A conversation about discipleship and ministry depends on an understanding of the nature of the church. The paper explores the deep connection between understanding the nature of the church as the People of God and the practice of discipleship and ministry in the worldwide Anglican Communion and the Anglican Church of Australia.

Discipleship and Ministry in the Anglican Church

Discipleship is a key topic within the Anglican Communion at this time. ‘Growth in Discipleship’ is a main section in the Vision Statement 2019–2022, Action Plan for the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide, South Australia, for example. ‘Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making’ is the topic for the worldwide Anglican Communion. ‘Discipleship and the whole life of the whole people of God’ is a main theme.⁴ ‘Equipping God’s People-Going Deeper in Intentional Discipleship’ was the theme of the Anglican Consultative Council in Hong Kong 2019.⁵ ‘Whole-life Discipleship’ is encouraged through Anglican Communion consultations: discipleship in family, work, community and the environment.⁶

‘God’s church for God’s world: walking, listening and witnessing together’ is the theme for the 2022 Lambeth Conference to be held in England, 27 July–8 August. The biblical focus for the Conference will be 1 Peter. A Conference book *The First Letter of Peter: A Global Commentary* has been published.⁷ The Letter is about Christian identity as God’s People and emphasizes that all members of the People of God have a ministry of service.

The 1 Peter biblical focus for the Lambeth Conference provides an opportunity to remember the literature on the People of God understanding of the Church and revisit the topic through the lens of the learning community perspective and ministry experience of the author of this paper. The paper engages with this significant

⁴Anglican Consultative Council (ACC Zambia), ‘Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making – An Anglican Guide for Christian Life and Formation’ (London, 2016), p. 6. Available at: <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/220191/intentional-discipleship-and-disciple-making.pdf> (accessed 3 February 2021).

⁵Anglican Consultative Council (ACC 17), Hong Kong, 2019. Available at: <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/instruments-of-communion/acc/acc-17.aspx> (accessed 3 February 2021).

⁶Mark Oxbrow, ‘Intentional Discipleship – Catalysing Change’, 2019. Available at: <https://www.anglicannews.org/blogs/2020/02/intentional-discipleship-catalysing-change.aspx> (accessed 3 February 2021).

⁷Jennifer Strawbridge (ed.), *The First Letter of Peter: A Global Commentary* (London: SCM Press, Kindle edn, 2020).

understanding of the nature of the Church, takes seriously its meaning and implications, and contributes practical suggestions towards the development of Anglicanism in the twenty-first century.

The People of God

The word *laos*, a people, a people group, is used frequently – 141 times in the New Testament; 12 passages refer to a people of God (*laos Theou*), for example, Acts 15.14, 1 Pet. 2.9.⁸ The *laos*, the People of God includes all disciples. There is a basic equality of calling among all God's people.⁹ The early church understood *ekklesia* as a gathering or assembly of equals in discipleship.¹⁰ The church is to be understood as a community of equals through baptism with a diversity of ministries of service, recognizing co-responsibility and servant leadership by all.¹¹ Yves Congar and Hans Kung noted that in the vocabulary of the New Testament no distinction is made between lay people and clerics.¹² John Stott wrote that the 'overwhelming preoccupation of the New Testament is not with the status of the clergy, nor with clergy-laity relations, but with the whole people of God in their relations to Him and each other'.¹³

Laity (*laikos*) is not a biblical word.¹⁴ Hans-Ruedi Weber wrote that 'The first known Christian usage of the term is found in a letter addressed around AD 96 by Clement of Rome to the church in Corinth' (1 Clem. 40.5).¹⁵ In ch. 40, v. 5 of the letter, Clement described church order and provided the information that 'Lay people are bound by the rules laid down for the laity'.¹⁶ The term for laity (*laikos*) gradually entered ecclesiastical language from the third and fourth century onwards 'usually referring to what is profane, distinguishing the laity from the priests/clergy and deacons'.¹⁷

Understanding the Church as the People of God, *laos*, derived from and sanctioned by Scripture, is endorsed by five Lambeth Conferences, mentioned in six

⁸See Hans-Ruedi Weber, 'On Being Christian in the World' (Geneva, 7–10 May 1997), p. 6. Available at: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ecumenical-lay-formation/on-being-christian-in-the-world/index> (accessed 18 September 2020).

⁹Hans Kung, *The Church* (London: Search Press, 1968, 4th impression), pp. 125–27; Dorothy A. Lee, *The Ministry of Women in the New Testament: Reclaiming the Biblical Vision for Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), pp.11–12, 183.

¹⁰Steven G. Ogden, *The Church, Authority, and Foucault: Imagining the Church as an Open Space of Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 3–4, 115–21, 145.

¹¹John Macquarrie, *The Faith of the People: A Lay Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1972), p. 85; Gideon Goosen, *Clericalism: Stories from the Pews – A Workbook for Parishes*, pp. 14, 89–91, 101–102, 107, 111, 125, 147, 160–61.

¹²Yves M.J. Congar, *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of the Laity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1959), pp. 1–2; Kung, *The Church*, pp. 125–26.

¹³Stott, *One People*, p. 20.

¹⁴Kung, *The Church*, p. 125.

¹⁵Stephen Charles Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber, *The Layman in Christian History* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 30; Weber, 'On Being Christian in the World', p. 1.

¹⁶Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, pp. 1–2.

¹⁷Kung, *The Church*, p. 126; Weber, 'On Being Christian in the World', p. 1; Goosen, *Clericalism*, p. 27.

sessions of the Anglican Consultative Council and articulated in an extensive literature, both Anglican and ecumenical, through the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

Scripture

The first People of God originated through Abraham and their journey was described throughout the Hebrew Scriptures where the universal and missionary purpose for God's people was clarified, to serve God's purpose for the nations.¹⁸ The Book of Jeremiah recounts that God would make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, and 'they shall be my people' (Jer. 31.31-34). Hebrew Scripture passages about God's own people (Exod. 19.6; Isa. 43.20-21; Hos. 2.23) were fulfilled in the Christian church. In Christ a new People of God formed (1 Pet. 2.9-10). God 'spoke in a unique and decisive way in Jesus Christ'.¹⁹ In 2013 Pope Francis said that 'Being the Church, being the People of God, means being God's leaven in this our humanity'.²⁰

The Lambeth Conference book *The First Letter of Peter: A Global Commentary* provides many insights about the new People of God. The apostolic author of *The First Letter of Peter*, in the last quarter of the first century CE, wrote to the God's people, 'Christians living in diaspora (1 Pet. 1.1-2, 2.9-10).²¹

Peter encouraged them to be People of hope in their following of Christ even as they suffered for being Christians within their communities in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey. They experienced, as Christ did, hostility, rejection and alienation. The Commentary states 'We have to remember 1 Peter's context as a letter written to a small group of Christians who are a minority in their culture and who live in an empire that is hostile to them, fearful of their beliefs, worship other gods and view Christians with suspicion'.²²

The letter is about Christian identity as God's People. It is addressed to 'all of you' (1 Pet. 5.5) and 'all of you who are in Christ' (1 Pet. 5.14). It is a single calling. 'You are . . . God's own people' (1 Pet. 2.9). The elders, men and women, are members of the people of God and are to serve the community like lowly shepherds, following Christ the good shepherd. All members, together, are encouraged to be resilient, to have genuine mutual love, to do good, be hospitable, especially to strangers, live in a counter-cultural way and survive so that they are ready always to share their faith in

¹⁸WCC Commission on Faith and Order, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper No. 214; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2013), p. 11; Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1958, 2nd impression), p. 269.

¹⁹WCC Commission on Faith and Order, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper No. 111; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), p. 20; WCC Commission on Faith and Order, *The Church*, p. 11.

²⁰Pope Francis, 'Pope Explains Definition of Church as "People of God"', *Catholic World News*, 12 June 2013. Available at: www.catholicculture.org (accessed 28 January 2021).

²¹Strawbridge, *The First Letter of Peter*, Loc 299, Loc 1452; Donald Senior, 'The First Letter of Peter', Commentary in *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), pp. 2183-84.

²²Strawbridge, *The First Letter of Peter*, Loc 1388.

Christ by example and by speaking to anyone with ‘gentleness and reverence’ (1 Pet. 3.13-16); and to resist evil.

They are all encouraged in Christ to be humble, alert, disciplined and to ‘stand fast’ in the grace of God. The people of God ‘Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received’ (1 Pet. 4.10). Relying on the grace of God is a key theme (1 Pet. 1.2, 1.10, 1.13, 4.10, 5.10, 5.12). Christian people are invited to rest into God’s grace during difficulties and times of suffering. The God of all grace who has called them all in Christ will ‘restore, support, strengthen and establish you’ (1 Pet. 5.10).

The Commentary attends to the matter of leadership and ministry mentioned in ch. 5 of the Letter. It notes ‘that this letter was written before the solidifying of ministry into a three-fold order of bishop, presbyter and deacon’.²³ The elders are to exercise oversight as members of the People of God willingly and eagerly, not for status or greed, nor by compulsion, but, imitating Christ, with care and for service like a shepherd, ‘keeping the flock together and protecting them so they flourish in the pasture’.²⁴ The Letter emphasizes that all members of the People of God have a ministry of service, individually and together (1 Pet. 4.10, 5.1-4).

Historical Perspectives

The explosion of literature, from the 1950s, 1960s to 1970s and beyond, on the biblical understanding of the Church as the whole People of God, the *laos*, and on the vocation of the laity, is worth remembering and rediscovering to benefit the contemporary Anglican Church. In that literature the reaffirmation of the *laos* had ‘become an assumption of the discussion’.²⁵

In the 1950s Hendrik Kraemer and Congar wrote on the laity. Kraemer’s work on *A Theology of the Laity* provided an early and comprehensive outline of a theology of the whole people of God.²⁶ Kathleen Bliss, John Robinson, Simon Phipps, John Stott and John Macquarrie and others wrote on the revival of the vocation of the laity and the need for a theology of the whole church as the People of God.²⁷ The Roman Catholic Lay Apostolate movement initiatives were fostered through the World Congresses of the Lay Apostolate in Rome 1951, 1957 and 1967²⁸ and through Vatican II, 1962–65.²⁹

²³Strawbridge, *The First Letter of Peter*, Loc 1715.

²⁴Strawbridge, *The First Letter of Peter*, Loc 1737.

²⁵Mollie Batten, ‘Laymen in Society’, in Archbishop of Canterbury (ed.), *Lambeth Essays on Ministry* (London: SPCK, 1969), pp. 17-29.

²⁶Hendrik Kraemer, *A Theology of the Laity* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958).

²⁷Kathleen Bliss, *We the People: A Book about Laity* (London: SCM Press, 1963), pp. 76-77; John A.T. Robinson, ‘The Ministry of the Laity’, in *Layman’s Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), pp. 9-22; Simon Phipps, *God on Monday* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966); Stott, *One People*; Macquarrie, *The Faith of the People of God*; Board of Education, *All Are Called: Towards a Theology of the Laity* (London: CIO Publishing, 1985); Board of Education, *Called to New Life: The World of Lay Discipleship* (London: Church House Publishing, 1999; 2nd impression, 2000).

²⁸*God’s People on Man’s Journey*, Proceedings of the Third World Congress for the Lay Apostolate, Volume 1 (Rome: Permanent Committee for International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate, 1967). Volumes 2 and 3 also available.

²⁹Weber, ‘On Being Christian in the World’, pp. 4-5.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) Assemblies in Evanston 1954 and New Delhi 1961 included reports on the church as the *laos*, the vocation of the laity in daily life (ninety-nine per cent of the Churches' membership) and the WCC Department of the Laity.³⁰

The Roman Catholic Documents of Vatican II described the Church as 'The People of God' a term 'solidly founded in scripture' and referring to the 'total community of the Church, including the pastors as well as the other faithful'.³¹ The term laity was 'understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in a religious state sanctioned by the Church. These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and established among the people of God . . . and by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God.' The document on the Church emphasized that 'the laity are here defined not only negatively (as those not ordained and not in a religious state) but positively, in terms of their baptism and their active role in the People of God'.³² *The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 18 November 1965, re-emphasized the importance of the vocation of the laity.³³ More recently Pope Francis called for an end to clericalism and encouraged the development of a church culture where clergy and laity worked collaboratively, becoming co-responsible for the ministry and mission of the church.³⁴

Anglican Documents, 1958–98, Endorse a Whole People of God Understanding of the Church

Bishops from around the worldwide Anglican Communion attend the Lambeth Conferences in UK approximately every ten years. The Archbishop of Canterbury invites them to participate.

The Renewal of the Church in Ministry section of the 1968 Lambeth Conference stated that 'The whole people of God exists as the Church for God and for the world, not for the sake of the Church' and that 'All ministry is sacred ministry'. The Church is equipped by Christ with leaders and 'By their ministry they are to equip the whole Church for ministry, so the whole church, in all its lay members serving the world in their daily work, may become an effective sign and instrument of God's purpose to renew his whole creation'. The total ministry of Christ was described as the 'varied ministries of lay men and women, of deacons and priests, and of the episcopate'.³⁵

The 1968 Conference report commented that 'The various patterns of ministry, ordained and lay, are thus equal; we cannot rightly speak of an "inferior office" if

³⁰*Evanston Speaks*, Reports from the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, August 15-31 (London: SCM Press, 1954), pp. 99-115; *New Delhi Report*, The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches (London: SCM Press, 1961), pp. 202-207.

³¹Walter M. Abbott and Joseph Gallagher (eds.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), pp. 24-25.

³²Abbott and Gallagher, *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 57; Goosen, *Clericalism*, pp. 111, 117-18.

³³Abbott and Gallagher, *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 487.

³⁴Goosen, *Clericalism*, pp. 95, 103, 105, 111, 126.

³⁵Lambeth Conference 1968, *Resolutions and Reports* (London: SPCK/New York: Seabury Press, 1968), p.

that office is where God wants his servant to be'.³⁶ The equality of ministry was also mentioned in the 1958 Lambeth Conference. 'Ministry and laity are one. There may be a difference in function but there is no difference in essence.'³⁷

The ministry of the whole people of God, the *laos*, was endorsed in other official Anglican documents. Section 2 'The people of God and ministry' in the Lambeth Conference Report 1978 reiterated the importance of lay ministry.³⁸ A section on the ministry of the whole church is included in the 1988 Lambeth Conference Report.³⁹ The 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution III.22 on Discipleship Part (a) reads that this Conference 'affirms our trust in the power of God's Spirit to ensure that all persons are made full disciples and equally members of the Body of Christ and the people or *laos* of God, by their baptism'.⁴⁰

The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) serves the needs of the member churches, the 41 autonomous provinces of the Anglican Communion. ACC comprises members of the laity, bishops, priests and deacons, meeting approximately every three years.

The Anglican Communion, Anglican Consultative Council 1996 report, *Being Anglican* also emphasized the ministry of the whole People of God, the *laos*. The report discussed the growth of that ministry and how best to equip the *laos*.⁴¹ The theology of the ministry of the whole people of God was seen as 'the foundation of all other particular ministries of the Church' and 'the function of the ordained ministry is to serve, equip and enable that ministry of the baptised to take place'. That ministry is not chiefly 'sanctuary or churchly ministry, but rather a matter of being a Christian parent, employee, employer, unemployed person or a voter, etc., with integrity'; world-focused ministries after the pattern of 'Christ who had a world-focussed ministry'. The report lamented the tendency in the church today that we start with the ordained ministry and see lay ministry as in some way derived. The report asserted that 'the opposite is the better approach, with the ministry of the whole people of God coming first'. When we think of ministry as derived from those who are in ordained ministry 'our theology and practice can be stifled and inhibited'.⁴²

³⁶Lambeth Conference 1968, p. 93.

³⁷Lambeth Conference 1958, *The Encyclical Letter from the Bishops together with the Resolutions and Reports* (London: SPCK/New York: Seabury Press, 1958), p. 113.

³⁸Lambeth Conference 1978, *The Report of the Lambeth Conference 1978* (London: CIO Publishing), pp. 82-83.

³⁹Lambeth Conference 1988, *The Truth Shall Make You Free* (London: Church House Publishing 1988), p. 44.

⁴⁰Lambeth Conference 1998, *The Official Report* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing 1998), p. 403.

⁴¹James M. Rosenthal and Nicola Currie (eds.) *Being Anglican in the Third Millennium: Official Report of the 10th Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, Panama* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1996), pp. 151-60.

⁴²Rosenthal and Currie (eds.) *Being Anglican in the Third Millennium*, p. 153.

Discipleship and Ministry Further Consideration

The word disciple is a key word in the Christian faith. People who are Christian are followers or disciples of Jesus Christ who sent his disciples to disciple others (Mt. 28.19-20). As the Anglican Communion Discipleship Guide states ‘to be a disciple is to follow, and the nature of that discipleship is defined by the One we follow’.⁴³ The word disciple has its origin in the Latin word *discere* (to learn). A disciple is a follower of Jesus’ teachings and way of life. The Greek word for disciple *mathetes* means learner or apprentice. Christian disciples are learners in the Christian faith and life.

Disciples are on a spiritual journey with Christ individually and collectively. There will be various stages on the journey as people grow in their faith. Across the continuum there may be degrees of growing in faith: little, some, much, very much growth. But all disciples are on the journey. There is an equality amongst disciples. Some disciples are ordained ministers licensed by the bishop as a deacon or priest. Other disciples are authorized office bearers, lay readers or communion assistants, for example. In the early church community disciples were encouraged to carry out their ministry, *diakonia* (2 Cor. 5.18; 2 Tim. 4. 5). Some disciples were appointed to a diaconal ministry (*diakonia*) and exercised leadership with ‘authority and responsibility’ for ‘the work of ministry’ (Eph. 4.12, Acts 1.17, 25; Acts 6.3-6).⁴⁴ All disciples were urged to serve one another with whatever gift each received (1 Pet. 4.10). For example, in Australia, all disciples are part of the *laos*, the People of God⁴⁵ fulfilling their various distinctive ministries in a pluralist, multicultural and secular society.

Thinking about the discipleship and ministry of all church members began many years ago.⁴⁶ One concern expressed in the Anglican Church, and other churches, during the twentieth century was the need to nurture *all* Christian people as disciples in all the contexts of their lives, on Sunday and all week, at work and in daily life.

A former Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, recognized this issue of discipleship ministry responsibility in 1942 when he wrote, ‘Nine-tenths of the work of the Church in the world is done by Christian people fulfilling responsibilities and performing tasks, which in themselves are not part of the official system of the Church at all’. Temple mentioned specific achievements like the abolition of the slave trade and reforms of the penal system where individuals and groups appealed to Christian principles; people who carried with them ‘something of the Mind of Christ, received from Christian upbringing, from prayer and meditation, and from communion’. The influence of Christian principles on social problems caused

⁴³ACC Zambia, ‘Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making’, p. 5; Lee, *The Ministry of Women in the New Testament*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁴WCC Commission on Faith and Order, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, p. 21; WCC Commission on Faith and Order, *The Church*, p. 12; John Collins, *Are All Christians Ministers?* (Melbourne: E.J. Dwyer, 1992), pp. 18-19, 35-40; Charles Sherlock, *Australian Anglicans Worship Performing APBA* (Victoria: Broughton Publishing, 2020), pp. 234, 404, 406.

⁴⁵Board of Education, *All Are Called*, pp. 3, 5; WCC Commission on Faith and Order, *The Church*, pp. 11-12.

⁴⁶Neill and Weber, *The Layman in Christian History*.

Temple to conclude with others that the most important task and contribution of the Church 'is to make good Christian men and women'.⁴⁷

In the 1964 *God's Frozen People: A Book for – and about – Ordinary Christians*, Mark Gibbs and Ralph Morton argued for an equality of calling and equality of ministry, rather than hierarchy and clericalism which represented inequality, first-class (clergy) and second-class (laity) Christians.⁴⁸ Gibbs and Morton made an important but not an absolute distinction between the majority of disciples, 'worldly laity', who focused on life in the world, and a small percentage of disciples, 'churchy laity', who involved themselves in Church activities.⁴⁹

In 1971, Gibbs and Morton, from the UK, named another book *God's Lively People*, a more optimistic title than the 1964 *God's Frozen People*, in the hope that church leaders still had 'a good chance of producing, not a submissive, but an educated, alert, critical and lively laity'.⁵⁰ Forty years after *God's Frozen People*, Australian Anglican theologian Scott Cowdell referred to the Christian laity and their ministry as a 'sleeping giant'.⁵¹ He emphasized the importance of lay vocation in the secular world of work and everyday responsibilities. He reflected on 'how to wake the sleeping giant' so that, in the emerging church, the 'laity are awake, vocational, at work with God in the world'.⁵²

Hans-Ruedi Weber, from the World Council of Churches, distinguished (not separate) three different categories among the laity, the large majority of Christians: (a) professional church workers; (b) a few lay Christians using their free time in church activities – Sunday School, choirs, parish council; (c) most Christians spending life in worldly environments and work – families, neighbourhoods, politics, industry.⁵³

Prayer Books

Anglican Prayer Books suggest ways of describing discipleship ministry and provide insights into strengthening that ministry in the cause of God's purposes through Jesus Christ.

The American Episcopal Church's *Book of Common Prayer 1979*, describes the ministers of the Church as 'lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons'. The ministry of lay persons 'is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church'.⁵⁴

⁴⁷William Temple, *Christianity and the Social Order* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, repr. 1956 [1942]), p. 27.

⁴⁸Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton, *God's Frozen People: A Book for – and about – Ordinary Christians* (London: Fontana Books, 3rd impression, 1964), pp. 9-15.

⁴⁹Gibbs and Morton, *God's Frozen People*, pp. 20-21.

⁵⁰Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton, *God's Lively People* (London: Fontana Books, 1971), pp. 6-7.

⁵¹Scott Cowdell, *God's Next Big Thing: Discovering the Future Church* (Victoria, Australia: John Garratt Publishing, 2004), pp. 152-87.

⁵²Cowdell, *God's Next Big Thing*, p. 187.

⁵³Weber, 'On Being Christian in the World', pp. 1-2.

⁵⁴*The Book of Common Prayer* (The Episcopal Church, USA: The Church Hymnal Corporation and Seabury Press, 1979), p. 855.

A *New Zealand (Anglican) Prayer Book* 1989, describes the ministers of the Church as ‘lay persons, deacons, priests, bishops; all the baptised’.⁵⁵ From baptism, the vocation of lay persons ‘is to witness to Christ in the world using their gifts the Spirit gives them. Within the Church they share in the leadership of worship and government’.⁵⁶

In *A Prayer Book for Australia, The Anglican Church of Australia* 1995, those being ordained priest are asked the question ‘Will you encourage and enable those committed to your care to fulfil their ministry and mission in the world?’⁵⁷ Clergy disciples (1 per cent of the church membership) collaborate with others to enable and equip all disciples (99 per cent of church membership) for their ministry and mission in the church and the world.⁵⁸

In the concluding section of The Holy Communion Second Order Service in *A Prayer Book for Australia* these two headings attract attention: ‘The gifts of God for the people of God’, and ‘The Sending Out of God’s People’.⁵⁹

During the sacrament of Holy Communion disciples receive God’s gifts of bread and wine as effective signs of the reality of Christ’s living and real presence. Christ offers himself to the church, the People of God, to nourish and strengthen them for ministry.⁶⁰ Through worship in prayer, fellowship, Scripture, theological reflection and communion ‘God’s people are gathered, taught, fed and equipped for ministry’.⁶¹ God’s People are then dismissed and sent out to ‘go in peace to love and serve the Lord: in the name of Christ’.⁶² As Richardson and Varcoe wrote: ‘Our worship together is not primarily for our own sake, but for strengthening for the mission to which God sends us in life, in our homes, schools, work and leisure places’.⁶³ Ministry discipleship is set within the context of God’s mission, *missio dei*.⁶⁴

Discussion – Church Practices

Church practices are now discussed in light of understanding the church as the people of God: ecclesial language in relation to the words ‘clergy and laity’; parish ministry and mission; the processes of Anglican Diocesan Synods; and potential outcomes for the 2022 Lambeth Conference.

The following characteristics of the People of God, *laos*, derived from the literature presented in this paper, serve as criteria by which to reflect on church practices:

⁵⁵*A New Zealand Prayer Book* (Auckland, The Church of the Province of New Zealand: William Collins Publishers, 1989), p. 931.

⁵⁶*A New Zealand Prayer Book*, p. 932.

⁵⁷*A Prayer Book for Australia: The Anglican Church of Australia* (Alexandria, NSW: Broughton Books, 1995), p. 795.

⁵⁸The Board of Education, *All Are Called*, p. 10; Michael Oh, ‘An Apology to the Christian 99%, from the 1%’, *Christianity Today*, 13 June 2019. Available at: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/june-web-only/apology-christian-99-1-percent-lausanne-gwf-michael-oh.html> (accessed 24 August 2020). Michael Oh is Global Executive Director and CEO of the Lausanne Movement.

⁵⁹*A Prayer Book for Australia*, pp. 142-44.

⁶⁰Sherlock, *Australian Anglicans Worship Performing APBA*, pp. 224-34.

⁶¹Sherlock, *Australian Anglicans Worship Performing APBA*, p. 234.

⁶²*A Prayer Book for Australia*, p. 144.

⁶³Sherlock, *Australian Anglicans Worship Performing APBA*, pp. 293-94.

⁶⁴Alan Nichols (ed.), *Building Mission-Shaped Church in Australia* (Sydney: General Synod, 2006), p. 1.

- A common calling by God in Christ invites all disciples to be the People of God.
- Disciples rely on God's grace and serve others with their gifts and abilities.
- An equality of discipleship exists through baptism into Christ.
- An equality of calling and ministry is practised; there being a variety of ministries.
- All members make up the People of God and share the ministry of Christ as disciples.
- Leaders are members of the laos and serve the community like lowly shepherds following Christ the good shepherd; enabling ministry.
- The vocations of ninety-nine per cent of disciples, who represent Christ wherever they may be and share in the worship and governance of the church, are essential for the ministry of the whole People of God.
- All disciples need to be nourished, equipped, helped and sustained for their particular functions and ministries as everyday disciples, local leaders, deacons, priests and bishops.
- The People of God participate in the *missio dei*, God's purposes in and through Jesus Christ.

Implications for Ecclesial Language

The words 'layman' or 'laywoman' in the church context are misnomers and undervalue the vocation of a Christian disciples who constitute ninety-nine per cent of church membership. For a lawyer, a layperson is someone who has not been trained to understand or practise as a lawyer; someone who is an amateur, a 'bush lawyer', not an expert and without credible understanding and education in the law. Dictionaries define a lay person as a person who is non-clerical or not a member of the clergy, and a person who is without professional or special knowledge of a particular subject.⁶⁵ In 'the common language of today lay/laity mean the non-specialists' Weber wrote.⁶⁶

Even though laity may be highly respected in the church context, the language used still suggests that the laity are unqualified and unordained.⁶⁷ There is a danger of having first-class disciples (clergy) and second-class disciples (laity) in the church. As stated in one consultation report on the laity, 'In the course of church history the laity usually were seen as Christians who were not clergy'.⁶⁸ Inequality may exist among disciples who have a variety of roles and fulfil essential tasks. Let us define

⁶⁵Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary (Australia: Oxford University Press, 2009, 5th edn).

⁶⁶Weber, 'On Being Christian in the World', p. 1.

⁶⁷Board of Education, *Called to New Life*, p. 14; Charles Sherlock, *Performing the Gospel in Liturgy and Lifestyle* (Victoria, Australia: Broughton Publishing, rev. edn, 2018 [2017]), pp. 78-82.

⁶⁸Consultation on Laity/Laos, 'Towards a Common Understanding of Laity/Laos: Consultation Statement' (World Council of Churches, 1977), p. 4. Available at: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ecumenical-lay-formation/towards-a-common-understanding-of-laitylaos-consultation-statement> (accessed 21 September 2020); Norma Cook Everist, *The Church as Learning Community: A Comprehensive Guide to Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), p. 294.

the discipleship and ministry of ninety nine per cent of the church membership positively, by what it is, rather than by what it is not; not qualified and not clergy. Such a negative description exposes clericalism in the church where laity are compared with clergy in order to have discipleship ministry responsibilities. Clericalism elevates clergy above laity.⁶⁹

Members of the Anglican Church need to be liberated from clerical language. In Paulo Freire's terms a process of 'conscientization' is needed,⁷⁰ an awakening of consciousness by local leader and everyday disciples, an increasing awareness through praxis (reflection and action) of their vocation as disciples and ministers of Jesus Christ in their own right.

Church leaders may consider that the church has successfully and positively redefined the term laity by regular explanation about and usage of the word. Even so, the negative definition of lay – meaning not trained, not qualified and not ordained – remains to the detriment of understanding the essential vocation and ministry of ninety-nine per cent of church membership.

The percentage language distributes our attention to the discipleship realities more equitably. That language continues the discussion of discipleship in the manner of Temple's discourse, using percentage language (nine-tenths) and incorporates the categories of discipleship outlined in the *Prayer Books*. A People of God perspective would suggest a different way of describing church membership.

Ninety per cent of disciples relate to daily life in many contexts. Nine per cent of disciples relate to official church life, for example, parish councillors, wardens, Synod representatives, lay assistants. One percent of disciples are clergy in their leadership ministry role. The role of the ordained disciple and member of the *laos* is to mobilize the whole community of faith as an enabler and facilitator rather than a one-person leader; more like conducting an orchestra than a one-person band.⁷¹ All disciples need to be nourished, equipped, helped and sustained for their particular functions and designated ministries as everyday disciples, local leaders, deacons, priests and bishops.

Lest the percentage language is misunderstood, be clear that this paper advocates an integrated, inclusive and holistic approach; a both/and perspective rather than an excluding either/or distinction. The whole church, all the People of God are responsible for discipleship and ministry. The percentage categories are fluid and not meant to be exclusive. The ordained person, the one percenter disciple, also relates to daily life, for example. As Gideon Goosen mentioned, all disciples work for the Kingdom of God 'everywhere and everywhen'.⁷² The percentage categories are an integrated and general way of describing the discipleship life realities. The percentage language draws attention to the knowledge, understandings and practice of Christian discipleship and the competencies, capabilities and skills required in the various ministries of service within the People of God.

⁶⁹Goosen, *Clericalism*, pp. 27, 53.

⁷⁰Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin Random House, 1970), pp. 61-97.

⁷¹Richard Giles, *How to Be Anglican: A Beginners Guide to Anglican Life and Thought* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005, 2nd impression), pp. 48-49; Thomas John Harvard Littleton, 'Enhanced Faith Learning in Parishes', Thesis (DM), Adelaide College of Divinity, South Australia, 2016, pp. 59-60. Available at: <https://www.tjhlittleton.com> (accessed 4 August 2021).

⁷²Goosen, *Clericalism*, p. 120.

The proposed change in ecclesial language to the more appropriate word ‘disciples’ represents a shift, from a clerical perspective with a ‘clergy and laity’ dualism, to a *laos*, whole People of God perspective.

Implications for Parish Ministry and Mission

The parishes and congregations within the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide provide the context for the author’s ministry work as a retired minister who is a learning community practitioner and researcher with an ecumenical outlook.⁷³

A learning community practitioner and researcher understands that the opportunity for all learners to participate in learning is a hallmark of a learning community approach. There is equality of access to learning. All disciples, as learners, are equipped for ministry, learning to participate and contribute. Equality of discipleship is a characteristic in a learning community in a parish context.

The ninety percenter disciples represent Christ and his Church, bearing witness to Christ wherever they may be in the world. This aspect of ministry has been less well articulated and underestimated during conversations on discipleship in the Anglican Church of Australia.⁷⁴ A change in resourcing is needed. An increase in the time and resources devoted to worldly ninety percent discipleship is required.⁷⁵ Some resources are already prioritized towards churchy nine percent discipleship, people who share in the worship and government of the church. Most resources go towards one percenter disciples, the clergy, to equip them for their ministry of leadership.⁷⁶

Parish discussions on faith and work are essential for ninety percenter disciples. On being a Christian at work, in the family, in community engagement, in civic participation and response to social issues are key topics for a parish to consider. From a *laos* perspective ninety percenter discipleship ministry requires as much attention in parishes as other aspects.

Gibbs and Morton recommended five ways that a person should exercise discipleship at work: serve your neighbours, the people you work with; serve your customer; serve the organization you work with; serve the community where you work

⁷³Littleton, ‘Enhanced Faith Learning in Parishes’; John Littleton, *Enhance Learning in Parishes: A Learning Community Approach for Church Congregations* (Unley, Adelaide: MediaCom Education, 2017), pp. 13-17; John Littleton, ‘Enhanced Learning in the Parish Context: A Learning Community Approach’, *Practical Theology* 11.4 (2018), pp. 322-23. Findings from the faith learning research project conducted in the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide, 2013–14 (227 people from 45 parishes) demonstrated that a learning community approach enhanced faith learning in parishes. Research participants in parish learning community environments reported very much growth in their knowledge, understanding and practice of the Christian faith when the three learning community processes were intentionally practised together. For the purpose of the research project a learning community approach, customized for a parish context, was defined as ‘a visionary community of faith where leaders and members, while respecting a diversity of abilities and perspectives, practise holistic, collaborative and theologically reflective learning processes’.

⁷⁴Cowdell, *God’s Next Big Thing*, pp. 162-65. However, books on faith and life by authors who are ninety percenter disciples are available. For example, Julia Baird, *Phosphorescence: On Awe, Wonder and Things that Sustain You When the World Goes Dark* (Sydney: Fourth Estate, HarperCollins, 2020).

⁷⁵Mark Gibbs, *Christians with Secular Power* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 33.

⁷⁶Board of Education, *All Are Called*, p. 7.

and where you live; serve your calling – be the best teacher or mechanic or⁷⁷ Being biblically literate, theologically reflective, ethically intelligent and a member of a worshipping community could also be recommended.

The Anglican Consultative Council Report 1971 emphasized lay training and stated, ‘Very seldom will the puzzled builder or bank manager find the specific problems of [their] professional life tackled simply by going to church and listening to sermons’.⁷⁸ Cowdell wrote ‘All Christians, not just priests, need to be “formed”’.⁷⁹ Mark Gibbs argued that Christians working in the secular world ‘need opportunities for growing theologically and spiritually in the same serious way in which they continually develop their secular expertise and skills’.⁸⁰

Many work-based people like chaplains are available to consult. Chaplaincies exist for the police, schools, industry, retail, business, prisons, universities, hospitals, aged-care and Anglicare for example. Worker priests or bivocational ministers serve in the workplace.⁸¹

Parishes as learning communities nurture all disciples through a culture of learning which encourages conversations about the practice of whole-life discipleship. Findings from a research project conducted in the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide, 2013–2014, demonstrated that a learning community approach enhanced faith learning when leaders took time to intentionally assist individuals and groups to apply the Christian faith to daily life (for example, at work, school, college, family or . . .).⁸² In *The Church as Learning Community*, Everist included a practical section on missional learning where the ministry of the *laos* connected with life in the public and pluralist world.⁸³

The discipleship of parishioners in the workplace and in the community might be mentioned regularly in the Sunday public prayers, addressed through sermons and parishioners’ talks about their Christian faith. Occasions for theological reflection about ethical issues at work and in society stretch the minds and move the hearts of disciples through respectful conversation. Recognition of the societal activities of parishioners in a parish time and talent programme is very uplifting. Sunday Worship Services might include topics debated in society like water conservation, the environment, renewable energy, with reflection upon such topics in the light of biblical themes. Instead of prayers being asked for the Bishop of the Diocese; Clergy and People, prayers could be asked for the People of God in a Diocese, then particular roles and ministries mentioned.

Worker priests or the self-supporting ministers have a role alongside ninety per-center disciples,⁸⁴ encouraging by example and enabling through collaboration,

⁷⁷Gibbs and Morton, *God’s Frozen People*, p. 62.

⁷⁸Anglican Consultative Council, Kenya, *The Time Is Now* (London: SPCK, 1971; Australia: GBRE, 1971), p. 33.

⁷⁹Cowdell, *God’s Next Big Thing*, pp. 156–57, 160–67.

⁸⁰Gibbs, *Christians and Secular Power*, p. 33.

⁸¹Hartness M. Samushonga, ‘On Bivocational Ministry-focused Training in British Theological Schools: Dialoguing with British Theological Educationalists’, *Practical Theology* 13.4 (2020), pp. 385–99.

⁸²Littleton, *Enhance Learning in Parishes*, pp. 89–93.

⁸³Everist, *The Church as Learning Community*, pp. 257, 289–96, 317.

⁸⁴Lambeth Conference, 1968, *Resolutions and Reports*, pp. 102–103; Anglican Consultative Council, 1976, ACC-3 *Trinidad*, pp. 47–50.

theological reflection and conversation. In Adelaide, St Paul's City Ministry, 1984–2010, collaborated with ninety percenter disciples and many others in the city work places, creating space for reflection and the consideration of ethical choices.

Charles Davis, *God's Grace in History*, distinguished between the direct and indirect mission of the Church; direct mission through the work of the visible Church community; indirect mission 'in relation to the latent presence of grace' by Christians working with many others in a secular society on the issues facing humanity. Ninety percenter disciples are involved in this exceptionally important indirect mission.⁸⁵ More emphasis on ninety percenter discipleship ministry harnesses the contribution potential of many more members of the People of God in the cause of God's purposes in Jesus Christ.

Implications for Diocesan Synods

Some disciples gather together for an annual Diocesan Synod. For the worldwide Anglican Communion Bishop-in-Synod is a key aspect of polity. Polity is a form or process of governance; ways of organizing the church. In 1978 the Lambeth Conference affirmed the 'guardianship of the episcopate in synod as instrumental to the working of authority in each church'.⁸⁶ A parliamentary model is generally used in Anglican Synods, three houses – the Diocesan bishop, the clergy and the laity – with the bishop having a power of veto in certain circumstances. The parliamentary model for Synod has so far served the church well by involving church members in decision-making. However, the time may have come to reconsider this democratic parliamentary model for Synod. The Anglican Consultative Council Report 1981 asked this question. 'Do our parliamentary methods of procedure and debate come to grips with other methods of arriving at a consensus?'⁸⁷

In *A Polity of Persuasion*, Jeffrey Driver suggested that Synods may need to change from a parliamentary system of adversarial debate as a dominant way of doing formal business in favour of the greater application of consensus building modes of being together as Synod, like the small step of introducing group discussion and studies.⁸⁸

A shift to a *laos*, People of God-community of faith model for church polity is suggested in this paper. In the 1970s Christian educators like John Westerhoff in the USA sought to de-school Christian education. They wanted to move the discipline of Christian education away from a dominant schooling-instructional teaching model towards a community of faith model in parishes, maintaining the view that the whole life of a congregation offered times and places in which Christian learning

⁸⁵Charles Davis, *God's Grace in History* (London: Fontana Books, repr. 1967 [1966]), pp. 81–89.

⁸⁶Jeffrey W. Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion: Gift and Grief of Anglicanism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), p. 18.

⁸⁷Anglican Consultative Council, *ACC-5, Report of Fifth Meeting, Newcastle upon Tyne* (London: ACC, 1981), p. 51.

⁸⁸Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion*, p. 104.

may occur.⁸⁹ This educational approach was indigenous to a community of faith.⁹⁰ Just as Christian educators moved to a community of faith understanding, so, leaders of a Synod, might consider moving from a parliamentary model to a *laos*-community of faith model for conducting the business of Synod.

The processes of a Synod could be natural for a People of God-community of faith model rather than derived from a democratic parliamentary model. Equality of opportunity for access to learning, participation and making a contribution has developed in church life over many years. In 2021 equality among disciples may be better expressed by the participation of many disciples in a community of faith approach to the functioning of Anglican Synods. Generally, a parliamentary model may discriminate in favour of the decision-making power of the clergy and the bishop in a Synod, even though local leader disciples may outnumber disciples who are deacons, priests and bishop. There may be an inequality among disciples. A Synod may not be an assembly of equals in discipleship.

Driver saw the need for 'providence within the process'; where there is 'genuine openness and grace from all involved' in Synod.⁹¹ Driver proposed a broad but bounded space for grace, an opportunity for reflection, consultation and dialogue.⁹² Driver's suggestion about the need in Synod for reflection, discernment and 'space for the presence of grace' is, in effect, a People of God-community of faith approach.

The years 2021–22 may be the time to consider and plan to take another step in Anglican polity in relation to Synods. The processes of Synod could move from a parliamentary model to the processes of a Synod becoming more aligned with a community of faith model. Synod would be seen as a community of disciples where all have an equal vote after participating in a communal discernment process together. There would be no right of veto for a bishop, no voting by the three houses as a general rule. Examples of a synodical communal discernment process and a one vote per person are readily available.⁹³

With a communal discernment process Synods would enact a community of faith approach and be a learning community, with holistic, collaborative and theologically reflective processes. For example, to select one diocese in the Anglican Communion, Synod in the Diocese of Adelaide, overseen collaboratively by the bishop, as at present, with diocesan leaders, would involve local parish leaders/disciples elected and appointed according to the Ordinances of Synod, and have space to ponder and discern the presence and guidance of God-in-Christ through the Spirit. Synod could deliberate as *laos*, one whole community of people, with each formal member having one vote, the majority vote being decisive. A *laos*, People of

⁸⁹John H. Westerhoff, *Will our Children Have Faith?* (Melbourne: Dove Communications, 1976), pp. 6-7, 50; (3rd rev. edn, New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2012, pp. 21-22, 141-42).

⁹⁰Littleton, 'Enhanced Faith Learning in Parishes', pp. 19-23.

⁹¹Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion*, p. 120.

⁹²Driver, *A Polity of Persuasion*, pp. 101-105.

⁹³Uniting Church in Australia, *A Manual for Meetings* (The National Assembly, UCA: Uniting Church Press, 2015, rev. edn); Episcopal (Anglican) Diocese of Alaska, *Canons, 2017*, p. 7. Available at: <https://www.episcopalak.org> (accessed 15 February 2021). At the Convention there will be no vote by orders for any question other than the election of a bishop.

God understanding of the church provides a biblical foundation for the gathering of disciples in a Synod.

Implications for Lambeth Conference 2022

The biblical focus for the Lambeth Conference will be 1 Peter. A Conference book *The First Letter of Peter: A Global Commentary* has been published,⁹⁴ previously outlined above.

The image of people of God describes those who would be listening to the letter. ‘The phrase rendered “God’s own people” (1 Pet. 2.9) aims to communicate that the audience is a people who belong to God.’⁹⁵ Whatever their difficult circumstances the audience is encouraged to stand firm in Christ strengthened by God’s grace.

Through their study of 1 Peter the bishops at the Lambeth Conference will have the opportunity, in conjunction with the theme of intentional discipleship, to explore and discuss the theology and practice of the church as the People of God. Then on returning home share the fruit of their conversation with others for the benefit of their part of the Anglican Communion.

Conclusion

The journey of the Anglican Church towards prioritizing a theology of the *laos*, the People of God, the whole faithful community, as the basis for discipleship and ministry practice, must continue.

Five challenges are contained in this paper.

First, discipleship and ministry are to be based on an understanding of the church as the people of God, a *laos* perspective rather than a clerical perspective.

Second, church members are invited to stop using the ‘clergy and laity’ language and instead use ‘discipleship’ language, referring to disciples of different kinds who have a variety of designated responsibilities, leadership roles and functions.

Third, parish ministry is to be far more inclusive of all kinds of disciples and their ministries of service. The ninety percenter disciples, the nine percenter disciples and the one percenter disciples are to be equipped for their respective ministry responsibilities.

Fourth, members of a Bishop-in-Synod are encouraged to change the processes of Synod, from a parliamentary model to a *laos* People of God model, one whole community of faith, discerning and voting together as disciples, with one vote for each person and, in general, the majority vote would decide the issues before the Synod.

Fifth, the 2022 Lambeth Conference participants will have an opportunity to explore and discuss the inclusive, holistic and serving nature of the Church as

⁹⁴Strawbridge, *The First Letter of Peter*.

⁹⁵Strawbridge, *The First Letter of Peter*, Loc 716.

the People of God and invite the Anglican Communion to put it into practice even more.

The People of God's understanding of the nature of the Christian Church provides a strong biblical foundation for discipleship, ministry and mission 'in the name of Christ'.⁹⁶ The Anglican Church is challenged to move further towards practising a *Laos*-People of God, community of faith perspective, to better serve and enhance God's universal and missionary purposes in Jesus Christ.

⁹⁶A *Prayer Book for Australia*, p. 144.