



LAMBETH CALL DISCIPLESHIP

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A disciple is a learner in mind, body and spirit. In the Call that follows, the bishops assembled at the Lambeth Conference ask all Anglicans to learn and learn again the loving, liberating and life-giving way of Jesus Christ in every aspect of their lives and to follow him in this. The bishops are issuing this Call because 1 Peter calls all God's people to such disciplined and whole-of-life discipleship:

Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.' (1 Peter 1:13-16)

- 1.2 This is a demanding call because of the pressures that come upon us from society and the spiritual battle faced by all. But the letter shows that we can and should depend on God's help:

Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.' (1 Peter 4:11)

This Call, then, is for all Anglicans in every aspect of their lives to learn and learn again the way of Jesus Christ 'with the strength that God supplies', a strength given by the Holy Spirit, and to follow him in this.

2 Declaration

- 2.1 Jesus taught his disciples to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations". The size and extent of the Anglican Communion today shows that Anglicans around the world have been doing this throughout their history with enthusiasm and commitment.
- 2.2 Some have commented, however, that while Christian commitment 'is a mile wide it is only an inch deep.' For example, in many places Christian commitment has been seen as nominal. To address this a Season of Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making (Jesus shaped life) was launched at the Anglican Consultative Council in Lusaka in 2016:

In light of the Gospel and theological imperative to make disciples, [we] recognize the need for every province, diocese and parish in the Anglican Communion to adopt a clear focus on intentional discipleship and to produce resources to equip and enable the whole church to be effective in making new disciples of Jesus Christ. (ACC-16 Resolution 16.01)¹.

- 2.3 This was re-affirmed in 2019 at ACC-17 in Hong Kong. The Season will run until ACC-19 in 2026. Up to now well over 100 dioceses and many of the 42 provinces of the Anglican Communion have formally adopted Intentional Discipleship as a key priority and/or have hosted consultations and workshops on this subject. The use of small groups are central to it. The Anglican Communion has developed many resources to support the Season and Jesus shaped life (www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/intentional-discipleship.aspx).

- 2.4 Many other Churches around the world are also responding to the need to deepen discipleship. The Arusha Call to Discipleship of 2018, from the World Council of Churches, to which Anglicans contributed, expressed this powerfully when it declared that 'We are called by our baptism to transforming discipleship: a Christ-connected way of life in a world where many face despair, rejection, loneliness, and worthlessness.'ⁱⁱ Pope Francis has also called on all God's people to become missionary disciples and has placed this call at the heart of his ministry.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 2.5 As Anglicans have entered into our Season of Intentional Discipleship many have found that the Five Marks of Mission provide an inspiring and unifying set of signposts for learning and following the way of Christ. The Calls that follows therefore invite Anglicans to be formed by these so that we may live and share Jesus shaped life more and more.

3 Affirmation

We the bishops assembled at the Lambeth Conference, in this Season of Intentional Discipleship, commit ourselves to learn and learn again the loving, liberating and life-giving way of Jesus Christ in every aspect of our lives, through prayer, Word and sacrament, with the strength that God supplies, so that our following of him may be renewed by the Holy Spirit and that the people of our dioceses may be encouraged to do the same.

4 Specific Requests (The Calls)

- 4.1 We call on all Anglicans, in this Season of Intentional Discipleship, to learn and learn again the loving, liberating and life-giving way of Jesus Christ in every aspect of our lives, in everyday life, through prayer, Word and sacrament, and in small groups, with the strength that God supplies, so that our following of him may be renewed by the Holy Spirit and we make disciples of others. Life-long learning is needed for this, aware of our vocation. We especially call on Anglicans to be formed by the Five Marks of Mission, as an Anglican Communion Rule of Life, as habits to acquire through regular, thoughtful and contextually appropriate expression:
- Tell – to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God
 - Teach – to teach, baptise and nurture new believers
 - Tend – to respond to human need by loving service including through healing ministries
 - Transform – to work to transform unjust structures of society, challenging violence of every kind and pursuing peace and reconciliation
 - Treasure – to strive to safeguard the integrity of Creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth
- 4.2 We call on all leaders, lay and ordained, to enable our worship and liturgies intentionally to be a place where we are formed and transformed in our mind, body and spirit to live a Jesus shaped life, focused especially in the baptismal covenant of the Baptism service, in which the newly baptised are assured of the support of the congregation in their new life in Christ.
- 4.3 We call on dioceses to help parishes establish and extend small groups also for formation in discipleship and to offer and support other 'gates' into discipleship in everyday life, online and in-person, appropriate for their context, including in the workplace, schools and communities. Resources for the faith development of young children are also needed.
- 4.4 We call on all in our churches intentionally to sustain deep relationship with young people, in schools, congregations and communities, and to learn from those who are



senior in their discipleship, and from women, the marginalised and the poor, so that this learning and transformation can take place across whole church and for everyone to discover their gifts from Christ, using them fruitfully as they follow him.

- 4.5 We call on our seminaries, theological colleges and training programmes to consider giving discipleship and disciple-making a central place, reframing programmes of learning and teaching around them, so that all ministers, ordained and lay, may be equipped to enable those they serve to learn these things, not least through preaching;
- 4.6 We call on the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion to encourage and support progress in these areas with the help of the Commission on Evangelism and Discipleship, including through promoting the Season of Intentional Discipleship across the Communion, and to report back to the next ACC and next Lambeth Conference on the ways provinces are actively promoting intentional discipleship.

5 Implementation

In receiving and implementing this Call, provinces and dioceses will need to do more work on specifics, e.g. which kind of small group formation works best in their context? what are the possibilities for church planting? and what are the competencies that colleges, seminaries, and programmes need to instil in their graduates?

End Notes

- i. ACC-16 Resolution 16.01
- ii. R. Jukko and J. Keum, *Moving in the Spirit*, Geneva: WCC 2019
- iii. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2017