

Connecting people to change lives: A response to Albert Bogle

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In his seminar, Albert quotes from David Bosch's *Transforming Mission*: 'Mission is [...] seen as a movement from God to the world: the church is viewed as an instrument of that mission'. This quote serves as a convenient summary of the theme of Albert's paper – mission as movement from God to the world, and the church as instrument in that movement.

Albert explores the opportunities, challenges and dilemmas, that arise when the church is willing to be part of that movement. He sets out the types of question that then emerge: Can we be faithful to the gospel and work alongside partners who don't share our faith? Will secular money and values not simply dilute the gospel message? What is more important – living out the gospel or speaking out the gospel?

Albert's understanding of the church as involved in God's movement to the world means that his vision looks far beyond the local congregation. This vision is global, setting the church in a wider context than we are accustomed to, it is, at the same time, an enabling vision. The term here is *glocal*, that is, a vision wide enough to take in both local and global considerations. When we begin to see the relation of our own congregation and the local community in relation to the global, many possibilities emerge.

By way of illustration, Albert shows us the church acting as a community in partnership with institutions and agencies, governments and corporate organisations, to fulfil the mission of the church. He reminds us that the relationship of the church to the *world* is already present in the biblical examples of Daniel, Nehemiah and Joseph. In this relationship we need to have an open and generous spirit towards all in our surrounding communities, even if their beliefs and outlook are different from our own.

In principle, this means not just concentrating on Scotland, but learning to see things in global perspective by exploring practical links between Christian communities here and overseas. Albert goes on to encourage us to become *mission adventurers* recognising that the church's mission is to the world. Finally, he reminds us that Scotland was, historically, at the heart of the world mission of the church. The great mission conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 is clear evidence of this. The vision remains the same today: Can Scotland become a dynamo from which world mission can be activated and empowered?