

## **The *missio dei* embodied in local community ministry in Scotland**

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This paper examines the use of *missio Dei* in a local community context. It outlines a missiology of discerning that provides a way to interpret the birthing of the Blue Horizon Youth Charity in South Aberdeen, Scotland.

Our paper works with the assumption that the *missio Dei* is axiomatic for a missional ecclesiology. In John 5:29, the Son can only do what the Father does. In Luke 10:1-11, a naming of the Kingdom occurs after acts of healing, suggesting a contextual particularity. Hence listening and discernment in local contexts are essential to mission.

The *missio Dei* is theorised by applying three frames - neighbourhood listening, diagnosing local narratives and discerning God and the gospel - to a case study of the development of a local community ministry. Listening involves activating presence and seeking immersive relationships of curiosity and proximity. Diagnosing occurs through visual tools, utilising metaphors of icebergs and bridges. Diagnosing enables discerning, evident as documents describing the ethos, beliefs, values and practices of Blue Horizon are critically examined with hindsight. A continuity between listening, diagnosing and discerning is developed, suggesting that for community ministry today, doing what the Father does requires action-reflection on community ministry, pays attention to vulnerable voices in the community, works ecumenically and partners with non-church actors in ways that are inclusive while affirming gospel values.

This research provides tools and outlines practices for the local church, interpreted missiologically. Missiology is returned to the local church as the *missio Dei* is embodied in local community mission.

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