

Response by Bishop John Ellison.

Personal background

Ordained in England, curacy, then overseas for eleven years in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

This involved starting a new Anglican congregation and developing a course at an interdenominational level on the, "Gospel and Culture."

We, that is my wife Judie and our three children, were in Argentina during the Falklands war but returned to England soon afterwards.

Five years as Rector of a relatively large Evangelical Anglican congregation in Aldridge, West Midlands.

Diocesan bishop of Paraguay for nineteen years, with urban, rural and indigenous areas of ministry, and involvement in schools, a university faculty and indigenous ministries.

Now retired back to England some ten years, an hon. assistant bishop in Winchester, and involved in ministry both inside the structures of the C of E and outside with the Anglican Mission in England/Europe. (AMiE).

Personal observations arising from Steven's paper.

1. Properly contextualised, here in England, we must recover our confidence in the power of the Gospel. (Romans 1:16)

2. With humility, we must listen to the orthodox in the wider global/Anglican Communion and no longer see ourselves here in England as the centre.

Roland Allen came to believe that authentic apostolic ministry was seen in the work of, "wandering evangelists and prophets" and that, "The book of Acts is strictly a missionary book...the conclusion is irresistible that the Spirit given was...in fact a missionary Spirit." These were people who knew how to work both outside and when invited, inside the established order.

Working with presbyters and bishops from the wider Communion who are passionate evangelists and church-planters is uncomfortable and often untidy, but ultimately the way that the church grows, (and episcopal oversight gets credibility!)

3. We must make space for missionaries as bridge people.

For this insight I am indebted not only to the example of Roland Allen, but to Paul Hiebert, another great missionary and anthropologist, who taught for many years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

He wrote, "A growing number of missionaries are bridge-builders standing between different worlds, seeking to build bridges of understanding, mediating relationships, and negotiating partnerships in ministry."

He continues, "In the past missionaries went from the "Christian West" to the uttermost parts of the world. Today there are large churches and mission movements in many non-western countries, and the West is now also a mission-field."

With the thought in mind that the West, including this nation, is now also a mission-field, I concur with the observations of Archbishop Nicholas Okoh of Nigeria and former Archbishop of Kenya, Eliud Wabakala as they are quoted on page eighteen of Steven's presentation; "Our Communion has come of age, and it is now time that its leadership should be focused not on one person or one Church, however hallowed its history, but on the one historic faith we confess."

If we look only inwards to ourselves the future is bleak; if we look outward with a willingness to learn from the global church, there is hope for us.

John Ellison.