

# Discerning God in Mission

*A Journal of Missional Practice Resource*

Joseph Omoragbon and Fred Liggin are pastors who both understand their primary roles to be that of local missionaries and have a clear sense of God's call and engagement out ahead of them in their communities.

## Enter the Stories

In the interviews and conversations below, both Joseph and Fred reflect on their understanding of mission, what this looks like in their local practice and how all that they do is shaped out of discerning and responding to God's invitations.

1. **READ** Joseph Omoragbon's story: [An African Missionary on Tynside: An Interview with Pastor Joseph Omoragbon](#)
2. **WATCH** Fred Liggin's interview: [Following the Spirit, Finding Life, Sharing Bread](#) (10 min video)
3. **WATCH** [Two Pastors Talking: "So how do you hear God?"](#) (30 min video)
4. **REFLECT** Using the questions below, take some time to write down your reflections from these stories and conversations.

## *Questions for Reflection*

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1. Where was your attention and imagination drawn to in each of the stories and conversations above? Words, phrases, stories, exchanges?
2. Both Joseph and Fred share their understanding of mission. Imagine yourself joining the conversation. How would you share your own understanding of mission? What does this look like in your daily life and community?
3. Joseph and Fred share different experiences of discerning and hearing the call of God. Spend some time reflecting on an experience you have had as a local missionary when you sought direction from God.
  - A. What did discernment look like in this situation?
    1. Who was involved?
    2. What questions or conversations were a part of this?

3. What were the greatest challenges?
  4. What did hearing from God look like?
- B. What surprised you or was unexpected?
- C. How did you respond to God?

## Respond

We need to listen and talk together about how we're seeking and receiving direction from God as we participate in local mission. These conversations are opportunities to root ourselves in practices of responding to God in the communities where we live, rather than seeking God to bless our best strategies and programs. Discerning is difficult work and in some of our communities we have forgotten how to talk about or practice naming and responding to God at work around us.

This simple exercise is an opportunity to have a listening conversation with another person of faith about discerning and hearing the voice of God.

### *Invite someone to have a conversation*

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1. Choose someone in your community that you would not normally have this type of conversation with. Perhaps someone from another faith community or church? A member of your community you do not know well?
2. Let them know that you are doing a listening exercise and wonder if they would be willing to share more about their own experience of hearing the voice of God in their life and/or ministry.
3. Schedule the conversation.

### *Listening Conversation*

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1. Plan to just listen. You can take time after the conversation to write down your reflections.
2. Begin with lowering anxiety. Let your conversation partner know that you are interested in hearing their story and how God continues to guide, shape and lead them in their everyday life.
3. Questions you may want to use:
  - A. Could you share a story with me about an experience you had seeking direction from God?
    1. What did it look like for you to discern and hear from God?
    2. Who was involved with you?
    3. What questions and conversations were a part of this?

4. What were the greatest challenges?
5. What did hearing from God look like?
- B. What surprised you or was unexpected?
  1. How did you respond to God?
  2. Are there any other experiences of hearing God's voice that you would like to share?

### *Reflections*

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Take some time to write down some of your reflections from this conversation.

1. What surprised you?
2. Where was your curiosity piqued or your imagination engaged?
3. What kind of words or language was used to talk about the work of the Spirit in the discerning experience shared?
4. What was it like to talk about hearing God or discernment together?

## Share your experience

JMP creates tables for conversation and learning around how we are responding to God in mission in our particular contexts. This exercise is an opportunity for you and others in the JMP community to deepen our learning around what it looks like to talk about God at work among us in our everyday lives and why this matters in mission.

*What can we learn together about strengthening practices of discernment and responding to God's initiatives as local missionaries?*

Follow us on **Facebook** or **Twitter** and stay tuned for opportunities to engage this question together.