

The GlobalChurch Project

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Lisa Rodriguez Watson

Local Church Small Group Resource

This resource is designed to help your small group discussion. It's shaped to inspire you to consider new ways for understanding the mission of the church. Questions are organized in themes. Consider choosing the themes appropriate to your small group context. You don't need to cover all the questions. Allow for a time of response.

Small Group Preparation:

- Video: Lisa Rodriguez Watson, 25 minutes.
- Scripture: Luke 9:46-48, 22:14-27
- Participants are encouraged to bring their own journals or writing materials.

Themes explored in the video:

- **Migrating populations**
- **Immigrants as image-bearers.**
- **The church's response.**
- **God's hand in the movement of peoples.**

Beginning the conversation

Consider the questions suggested below to start the conversation for your small group. They'll consolidate the content of the video, after you've viewed it.

1. What were the major themes in Lisa Rodriguez Watson's responses?
2. Describe the phenomenon of migration. What are the influencing factors of migration and the movement of people globally?
3. Discuss the difficulties of the content. What was difficult to understand? Was there anything you would like to clarify with the group?
4. How does Lisa describe the role of the church in the context of migrating populations? What informs Lisa's view of scripture? What approaches does she take as she shapes her theology?

Going deeper

Explore the major themes raised in the video. Critically engage with Lisa's theology. Consider the questions that respond to the issues raised in your preliminary discussion.

1. **Migrating populations:** How does Lisa describe the global changes to migrating populations? What are the reasons for these changes and these movements?
2. **Migrating populations:** What are the major challenges facing migrants and migrating populations? Discuss the challenges posed for immigrant families and communities.
3. **Migrating populations:** What is the "biblical perspective" on migration/immigration, that Lisa refers to? How is migration a matter of Christian faith? Discuss the scriptural precedents Lisa mentions, and describe God's concern for the immigrant.
4. **Immigrants as image-bearers:** "All immigrants should see immigrants as bearing the image of Christ". How does Lisa describe the value of people in terms of how they bear the image of God? How does this encourage care and compassion for one another?
5. **Immigrants as image-bearers.** What are the implications of projecting the immigrant as "the other"? Discuss this statement: "It is a disservice not to treat all people as though they bear the image of God: it is pointing a watching world to a faith that is not scriptural or biblical." Why is Lisa so serious about this point?
6. **Immigrants as image-bearers:** How do the passages in Luke: 9:46-48, 22:14-27 characterize the attitudes of churches and the fear of the "other"?
7. **The church's response:** Discuss the principles of the practical response framework PLEASE: pray, listen, educate, advocate, serve, and evangelize. Evaluate the helpfulness of this framework. How does Lisa explain each of the principles?
 8. **Pray:** How does Lisa pray for migrants and migrating communities? What language and emphases does she use?
 9. **Listen:** How does Lisa stress the value of relationships of listening for migrants and migrant communities? Describe the "exchange of listening" and the importance of listening in the church's "welcome".
 10. **Educate:** How is the church responsible for educating people about migration? Discuss the two forms of education and how they differ in response: political and biblical.
 11. **Advocate:** What is the role of advocacy in migration? How does Lisa describe the church's role in advocacy?
 12. **Serve:** Discuss the examples Lisa used in "serving the immigrant". How does she explain the church's responsibility in being engaged in this serving?
 13. **Evangelize:** How is the church motivated to evangelize to migrating people and communities? What is the relationship between advocacy and evangelism? Discuss the challenges associated with evangelism to migrants and migrant communities?
14. **The church's response:** How are churches responding to the challenges faced by immigrants with unauthorized statuses? Describe these challenges and the ways that migration destabilizes persons and groups.
15. **The church's response:** Why is the political conversation just as important as a conversation that centers around the Scriptures on the topic of migration? What does Lisa envision for the church's education in migration?
16. **The church's response:** How does Lisa suggest that communities become better informed about the biblical and theological issues associated with the migration of populations?

17. **God's hand in the movement of peoples:** Lisa says: It is not just about the push and pull factors of migration. We should consider the hand of God in the movement of peoples. What does Lisa mean by this statement? Draw connections between the doctrine of the sovereignty of God and the movement of people through migration. How does Lisa describe God's work to be evidenced in migrating populations?

Informing theology

Ensure the discussion is specifically drawing on your local setting. Make sure the discussion is relevant to the lives of faith for your small group. Encourage relevant and thoughtful examples from each participant.

1. **Migrating populations:** How is migration a contextual issue for your small group and local church settings?
2. **Migrating populations:** Discuss and research the migrating populations in your region. What are the challenges facing these immigrants and immigrant communities? Have you previously considered this? How can your small groups begin or continue to engage with these individuals and communities?
3. **Immigrants as image-bearers:** What are the implications of this: "all people bear the image of God"? Discuss the cultural disparity of this statement. How does our suspicion of the neighbour affect our responses and our welcome to migrants and migrant communities? How does the competitiveness of Luke: 9:46-48, 22:14-27 resonate with our responses to the migrant?
4. **Immigrants as image-bearers:** How does recognising that all people bear the image of God encourage you in your scriptural witness of the love of God to all people? How does it change the way you regard migrants and migrant communities? How does it inspire you to respond to the migration-related issues in your small group contexts?
5. The **church's response:** How can you implement the principles of PLEASE? Is this model helpful for you in your small-group and local church settings? How do these principles encourage your witness?
 6. **Pray:** How can you and your small groups and communities pray for migrating populations and immigrant communities? What are the words in prayer that you will use?
 7. **Listen:** How can your listening encourage your learning from the "other"? How might listening overcome the terms of the "other"?
 8. **Educate:** How are your churches engaged in biblical and political education in migration?
 9. **Advocate:** How should the church advocate for migrants and migrating populations? What is the biblical precedent for advocacy and how should the church respond to migration in terms of advocacy? Share your experiences of advocating for migrants and migrant communities. How are you and your small group engaged?
 10. **Serve:** What does it mean to "serve the immigrant"? Discuss the ways in which your community serves migrant communities. How does Christ model this service and treatment and how does Luke 9:46-48 and 22:14-27 exemplify attitudes in service?
 11. **Evangelize:** How and why should the church evangelize to immigrants? What might it look like to "share the beauty of the cross and salvation to immigrant communities"? How would you appropriate the gospel message? How are your own life experiences resonant with the gospel and the experiences of the immigrant?
12. The **church's response:** How can the church change the status of immigrants through the cultivation of relationships? How can your small group and local churches actively "welcome"? How important is welcome?
13. The **church's response:** "The conversation in the church ought to revolve around the scripture." Lisa says that the starting point is not necessarily encouraging Christians to be more vocal in political conversations. What is the value of having these conversations centered on scripture? How can you encourage these conversations in your small group and local church contexts?

14. The **church's response**: How do the stories of the immigrants in scripture inspire you in your concern for this issue? How does scripture encourage you to be faithful to the call of God in the context of migration?
15. The **church's response**: What is the role of the church in the context of migration? How are your small groups responding to the needs of your community? What are ways your group can become more receptive to these needs?
16. **God's hand in the movement of peoples**: "When I look at the immigrant churches I am encouraged because they might be our future." How can majority culture churches be encouraged by the growth of immigrant churches? How does this challenge you?
17. **God's hand in the movement of peoples**: "Considering the hand of God in the movement of peoples helps us to be open to people who are coming into our countries to help and care for them." How does recognising God's hand in migration encourage your "welcome"? How do your small groups perceive God in the context of migration?
18. **Working theology**: How is the church's faith related to migration? How does scripture inform your understanding? How does Scripture compel you to respond?

Informing community

Facilitate the space for your group to respond to the discussion. You might consider this section as a personal time of written journal responses to the following questions.

1. What is God encouraging me, our small group and our community, to do?
2. In responses to the issues raised in the video, what are areas I want to ask for God's forgiveness in and to change my response towards? How do I have a more biblical and kingdom oriented response to this issue, and value that as much as the political?
3. How do I need God to minister to me and my community, for us to better engage with migrating populations?

Prayer

Spend time in prayer over what you've learnt.

Invite the ministry of the Holy Spirit to clarify, heal, and inspire change for your participants and communities.

References

Book: Daniel Carol, *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible* (Brazos Press, 2013)

Links

Website: www.theglobalchurchproject.com

Book: Graham Hill, *GlobalChurch: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches* (IVP Academic, 2015)