

The GlobalChurch Project

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Rosalee Velloso Ewell

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: Rosalee Velloso Ewell, 37 minutes.
- Scripture: John 1:1-18, Acts 10.
- Participants are encouraged to bring their own journals or writing materials.

Themes explored in the video:

- The theological concept of **dwelling**.
- **Serving** in **dwelling**.
- **Inter-religious dialogue**.
- **Lessons from the Latin American church**.

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 Rosalee's responses?
2. How does Rosalee describe "dwelling" as a way of being in the church of God? How does she understand the term "dwelling", biblically?
3. Discuss the difficulties of the content. What was difficult to understand? Was there anything you would like to clarify with the group?
4. Theological method: What influences Rosalee's theology? What approaches does she take as she shapes her faith and ministry? Describe her passions for teaching and theology.

Going deeper

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

1. The concept of **dwelling**: How does Rosalee's theology center on dwelling in neighbourhoods, communities and friendships?
2. The concept of **dwelling**: How does Rosalee describe "dwelling among the people of God"? How does she differentiate the term from "living and having residence somewhere" and "actually being apart of something, like a community and a place"?
3. The concept of **dwelling**: How is "dwelling" embodied in Christ's dwelling among us? How does gospel writer John explore this theme? How is "dwelling" expounded in John's prologue in John 1:1-18?
4. The concept of **dwelling**: Describe the biblical theme of "dwelling" through the Scriptures. What does Rosalee draw from?
5. The concept of **dwelling**: How is "dwelling" "being a part of a place, but also having that place, and those people, apart of us"?
6. The concept of **dwelling**: How does Rosalee talk about the Spirit of God with the same language of "dwelling" in Scripture?
7. The concept of **dwelling**: Describe the term "place-making". How can "place-making" often be used to accommodate the tastes and interests of particular groups, rather than serving communities?
8. **Serving in dwelling**: "Dwelling has to do with who is with us, who we are journeying with and who is on the road with us." Describe this aspect of dwelling, and how the people of God serve one another in "dwelling".
9. **Serving in dwelling**: What does it mean "to dwell" in transient and mobile societies? What examples does Rosalee use to illustrate this? How are her stories, "stories of service"?
10. **Serving in dwelling**: "Dwelling is not just about being located but about the enrichment of the place and the depth of relationships within them. This is a sign of hope - when people come together." Explain what Rosalee means by "signs of hope". How is "dwelling" a sign of hope and enrichment?
11. **Serving in dwelling**: How does Rosalee suggest that friendships transform societies? How does one see the richness and diversity of humanity in the process of getting to know people who have different faiths?
12. **Serving in dwelling**: How does the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10 illustrate transforming neighborliness. "In that encounter, you see exciting things and the Spirit working. That story is great because it is uncomfortable. They are both hesitant. But that transformation was a gift to the body of Christ."
13. **Serving in dwelling**: How does Rosalee view her urban neighbourhood residence ministry, and what does she recognize as its "signs of hope" in God's work?
14. **Inter-religious dialogue**: How is the concept of "dwelling" relevant to inter-religious conversation? How does Rosalee speak about her Muslim and Sikh neighbours? What is the value of sharing meals in the context of inter-religious community?
15. **Inter-religious dialogue**: How is God at work in the time it takes to build inter-religious relationships like that of Rosalee's in her community? How are misunderstandings, conflicts and tensions a result of "being in a rush, not taking time to get to know one another and considering one another's humanity"?
16. **Lessons from the Latin American church**: Describe the difficulties for the church in Latin America, according to Rosalee. What affected its numerical growth?
17. **Lessons from the Latin American church**: How does Rosalee's experiences in projects in the slums encourage her about the mission of Christ? How did Latin American conversations between communities address important and common issues and unite the project of the church?

18. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** Why does Rosalee suggest that the church has lost its prophetic voice, “wedding itself to spheres of political power in a negative sense, and basing itself on wealth and growth”? Explain this statement.
19. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** Describe the positive growth of the Latin American church. Where is the church “growing in number and in the depth of their Christian faith”? How does the Latin American church teach the western church, as described by Rosalee?
21. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** What indigenous forms of theology, such as liberationist theology, come out of Latin America which address modern issues? What strong movements of justice support the cause of the church?
22. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** How are Latin American churches threatened by the wealth of the state that is concentrated in the hands of a few? How is the Latin American church getting people to think about the social, political and economic implications for the gospel?
23. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** “This is an amazing concept and reality that we often forget. The same Spirit that was at work in Pentecost is at work today. you get that sense in many circles in Latin America. The power of God’s spirit in the church is a great gift.” Describe the role of the Spirit in Latin American theology. How should this inspire the western church?
23. **Theology:** In what ways does Rosalee encourage biblical engagement in social action? What does she describe as the ethical, social and moral responsibilities in discipleship?

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. The concept of **dwelling**: How does Rosalee’s theology encourage you to consider the creative possibilities of the concept of “dwelling”? In what ways does she influence your personal understanding of God and his purposes?
2. The concept of **dwelling**: How is “dwelling among the people of God” a mandate and a pleasure of the church? How can your small groups and church communities move beyond residency to the sense of being apart of the community of God? What are the possibilities of this in your own contexts?
3. The concept of **dwelling**: How does Christ’s dwelling in John 1:1-18 encourage your personal and communal relationship with God? How do you connect this to other Scriptures? What encourages you about the notion of God dwelling among you?
4. The concept of **dwelling**: How do you feel a sense of dwelling, being apart of something, and having it apart of you, in your small group and church ministry contexts? How can you facilitate this for others?
5. The concept of **dwelling**: How is the spirits ministry one of “dwelling”? How is this evident in God’s work in the church?
6. **Serving in dwelling**: “God creates new stories from new encounters between people and neighbours. Dwelling is also about a distinction between dwelling and living. It is moving from a sense of residence needing security, to the need for a neighbour. I want to recover that neighbour.” How do community, neighborly, relationships reflect the Kingdom of God? How is this an encouragement in urban ministry?
7. **Serving in dwelling**: “The themes of friendship and relationship building are foundational to Christian teaching and theology. It is hard to talk about making disciples without any sense of friendship or relationship.” How should theologies engage with persons in communities? How can you reflect this in your small group’s contexts?
8. **Serving in dwelling**: How do cities “tend toward isolation”, and how is this problematic? What are examples of communities overcoming this sense of isolation?
9. **Serving in dwelling**: How is “loving God and loving your neighbour” central to your ministry of dwelling?

10. **Serving in dwelling:** What are the “signs of hope” in the “creative and common spaces” of urban ministry? How might you draw on these in your own small group’s ministry contexts?
11. **Serving in dwelling:** How does serving in dwelling offer an opportunity to enrich communities?
12. **Serving in dwelling:** How have friendships been transformative in your life, your churches, your small groups, and ministry? How does Acts 10 encourage you in this?
13. **Serving in dwelling:** What aspect of “choice” does Rosalee struggle with and how does this affect her ministry? How might this affect your own urban ministry? “The fact that we had a choice to live here - it doesn't mean it is not a good thing to go there. We do have to keep in mind that there are so many people living in places that aren't ideal, and that they are there for the long haul because that is where they are from and they don't have options.”
14. **Inter-religious dialogue:** Where is God at work in the inter-religious relationships you are building in your small groups and local church contexts? How do you want to see these flourish?
15. **Inter-religious dialogue:** How can you give time to building inter-religious relationships in your small group and local church contexts? How does your understanding of other faiths encourage your faith and witness to Christ?
16. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** In what ways do the lessons of the Latin American church inspire your own faith, theology and ministry practice? How are your small group’s encouraged?
17. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** How can your small groups facilitate spaces for conversation about major issues that invests in the mission of the church?
18. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** Why does the church need to recover its prophetic voice and power in continuing the mission of God, inspired by the Latin American church?
19. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** In what ways does the strong emphasis on the work of the Spirit in the Latin American church inspire your small group and church contexts?
20. **Lessons from the Latin American church:** “Asking how can we serve is not something we have been good at in recent years. I hope for genuine humility for the church”. Describe Rosalee’s hope for humility for the Latin American church. How does this inspire your own small group’s ministries?

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 and correction in? What do I hope that God would change?
3. How do I need God to minister to me and my community dwell more intentionally, and serve others who dwell like us?
4. How do I ask that God would change our hearts to be more responsive to the teachings from the global church?

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.

Links

Website: www.theglobalchurchproject.com

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