

The GlobalChurch Project
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Amos Yong

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: Amos Yong, 33 minutes.
- Scripture: Matthew 3:11, Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:13–26
- Participants are encouraged to bring their own journals or writing materials.

Themes explored in the video:

- **Global Pentecostal missiology**
- **Pentecostalism and pluralism**
- **Pentecostalism and releasing all people to mission and ministry**
- **Bridging a theology of mission (missiology) and a theology of the Spirit (pneumatology)**
- **Christology and missiology**
- **Missiology as relational, shalomic and transformational**
- **Pentecostalism and Science**
- **Asian-American Christianity**
- **Migration and theology/practice**
- **Trinitarian theology and pneumatology**

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 Amos's responses?

2. How does Amos describe key features of Pentecostalism?
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: How is Amos's theology informed and shaped by his Asian-American context? What approaches does Amos take in understanding the Spirit in the context of his day-to-day experiences and teaching role?

Going deeper

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

1. **Global Pentecostal missiology:** What is missiology? And what are some of the key features of global Pentecostal missiology?
2. **Global Pentecostal missiology:** Is Pentecostal missiology pragmatic? How does this reflect the pragmatism (and practitioner-orientation) of Pentecostalism in general? How is pragmatism (and a focus on "practices" and "what works") expressed in Pentecostalism? What are the negative and positive expressions of such pragmatism?
3. **Global Pentecostal missiology:** How is the book of Acts at the center of Pentecostal spirituality? How does this shape the Pentecostal notion of being sent? How does it shape their passion for "going forth" in proclamation, deeds, and signs and wonders? How does it effect things like the notion of "crossing borders", "receiving power", "manifesting the Spirit", and being witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth?
4. **Pentecostalism and pluralism:** Most of us live in pluralistic cultures today, with many cultures, religions, worldviews, and ways of life living side by side. Pentecostals have thrived in such environments. How does reliance on the Spirit help us pursue discipleship, community and mission in pluralistic environments?
5. **Pentecostalism and pluralism:** How have Pentecostals made the most of the examples of mission in the books of Acts (e.g. embracing power encounters)? But, how have Pentecostals often ignored other features of missions in the book of Acts (e.g. by being too triumphalistic, or by being unwilling to see where God was already at work in cultures and practices before Christians arrived, or by demonizing peoples of other faiths)?
6. **Pentecostalism and pluralism:** How does the story of Paul on Mars Hill (and other stories from the book of Acts) help us interact with others across religious lines?
7. **Pentecostalism and releasing all people to mission and ministry:** Why do Pentecostals focus on releasing the whole body of Christ to mission and ministry? How does this benefit their growth, outreach, discipleship, and community life? What are the downsides to every-member ministry and witness? What are the promises and challenges to Spirit-empowered, every-member ministry and mission?
8. **Pentecostalism and releasing all people to mission and ministry:** Are Pentecostals always egalitarian? Or does a focus on leadership and "anointing" sometimes threaten this release of the whole body of Christ to ministry and witness?
9. **Bridging a theology of mission (missiology) and a theology of the Spirit (pneumatology):** How can the church begin to integrate missional and charismatic practices and theologies? How can the missional conversation be better informed by Pentecostal/charismatic movements, and vice versa?
10. **Bridging a theology of mission (missiology) and a theology of the Spirit (pneumatology):** What are ways that we can form both missional theologies of the Spirit ("missional pneumatologies") and Spirit-empowered missions ("pneumatological missions")?

11. **Christology and missiology:** “The Spirit that is received is the Spirit of Christ.” How is your focus on the Spirit “Christ-centered”? How is your focus on Christ “Spirit-filled”? How does the dual focus on Christ and the Spirit (and the work of the Father) shape, inform and empower Christian mission?
12. **Mission as relational, shalomic and transformational:** How does Amos Yong describe the way in which the Spirit leads us into mission that is:
- (A) Relational (relationship-centered)?
 - (B) Shalomic (righteous, peacemaking, and for the common good)?
 - (C) Transformational (transforming our lives, as we join with God in his mission to transform the world)?
13. **Pentecostalism and science:** According to Amos Yong, how do the following things shape the way Pentecostals relate to science?
- (1) Pragmatism.
 - (2) Missional zeal.
 - (3) Avoidance of theological and higher education, and self-reflective inquiry and practice.
 - (4) Concern about how theory undermines practice and mission.
14. **Pentecostalism and science:** Is this failure to engage with science a good thing or a negative thing? Are Pentecostals alone in this, or do other Christian movements express similar tendencies?
15. **Pentecostalism and science:** According to Amos Yong, why are Pentecostals reevaluating their relationship to science? How and why are Christians and the scientific community moving from a view that science and religion/spirituality are antithetical to each other, to a view that they can complement and enhance each other?
16. **Asian-American Christianity:** What cultural dynamics have prevented Asian-American Christians from fully exploring unique forms of Asian-American theology? What things are happening on the North American and global stage that will most likely increase the influence of Asian-American theology and Christianity over time? Will these shifts in North America also increase the influence of African-American, Latin American, Native American, and other theologies and groups?
17. **Asian-American Christianity:** What does it mean for particular groups to receive, adapt and develop mainstream (or dominant) theologies and ministry/missional practices? How can the establishment (which is still predominantly white, male, middle-class, and tertiary educated) be more attentive to (and learn from) Asian-American, Latin American, African-American, Native American, and other voices? What does it mean for this to be a truly global, multiethnic, multi-voiced, and multi-directional exchange?
18. **Asian-American Christianity:** According to Amos Yong, what are the distinctive ways in which particular groups engage with the Spirit (in theology and practice)? (E.g. Native Americans, Asian-Americans, Latin Americans, Caribbean, Afro-diaspora traditions, and other groups).
19. **Migration and theology/practice:** What does it mean to “re-appreciate the migratory character of Christian theology”? How do we do this?
20. **Migration and theology/practice:** How is the theme of migration expressed in Scripture? How has it shaped Christian history, theology and practices? What are ways in which the theme of migration forces us to recalibrate our systems of theology and our sense of identity? How does the theme of migration shape our practices of mission, discipleship, community, and theologizing?

21. **Migration and theology/practice:** What does it mean to say that a “theology that forms out of migration is a theology on the way from somewhere, to somewhere”? How is it a “theology in progress” or a “theology on a journey”?

22. **Trinitarian theology and pneumatology:** Amos Yong says that the “theology for the third millennium will include a more robust trinitarian theology, that can only be achieved by having a more robust pneumatology”? What does this mean? Why do we need a theology of the Trinity to understand faith and church and mission? Why is a theology of the Trinity inadequate without a robust theology of the Spirit?

Application

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. **Global Pentecostal missiology:** Discuss ways in which the themes and stories in the book of Acts can shape your mission. How do these themes and stories shape your sense being sent? How do they shape your passion for “going forth” in proclamation, deeds, and signs and wonders? How do they form your sense of “crossing borders”, “receiving power”, “manifesting the Spirit”, and being witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth?

2. **Pentecostalism and pluralism:** Consider ways that you can witness in a pluralistic context. Are you relying on the Spirit for this witness? How is the Spirit shaping your discipleship, community and mission in pluralistic environments?

3. **Pentecostalism and pluralism:** Are you finding ways to see where God is at work in cultures and people-groups before you arrived? How are you joining with God in his mission in those places? Have you demonized peoples of other faiths or traditions, or are you seeking to engage with them in the Spirit?

4. **Pentecostalism and pluralism:** How does the story of Paul on Mars Hill (and other stories from the book of Acts) help you engage and interact with others across religious lines?

5. **Pentecostalism and releasing all people to mission and ministry:** Is your church and ministry releasing the whole body of Christ to mission and ministry? How is your approach in this area benefiting or hindering your growth, outreach, discipleship, and community life? What will you do to further explore the promises, challenges and practices of Spirit-empowered, every-member ministry and mission?

6. **Bridging a theology of mission (missiology) and a theology of the Spirit (pneumatology):** With your leadership team (or in your small group), discuss how you can better integrate missional and charismatic practices and theologies? How can Pentecostal/charismatic movements better inform your mission? If you are part of a Pentecostal or charismatic church, how can you learn from missiology (and from missional conversations and theologies)?

7. **Bridging a theology of mission (missiology) and a theology of the Spirit (pneumatology):** Brainstorm ways that your church, leadership team, or small group can form missional understandings of the Spirit and his nature and work (“missional pneumatologies”). Also, brainstorm ways that you can cultivate Spirit-empowered missions (“pneumatological missions”).

8. **Christology and missiology:** “The Spirit that is received is the Spirit of Christ.” How is your focus on the Spirit “Christ-centered”? How is your focus on Christ “Spirit-filled”? How does the dual focus on Christ and the Spirit (and the work of the Father) shape, inform and empower your mission?

9. **Mission as relational, shalomic and transformational:** Look at what Amos Yong says about these three features of Spirit-centered mission. Interrogate your mission practices. Are they relational, shalomic and transformational? If not, what are you going to do to change this?

(A) Relational (relationship-centered)

(B) Shalomic (righteous, peacemaking, and for the common good)

(C) Transformational (transforming our lives, as we join with God in his mission to transform the world)

10. **Pentecostalism and science:** Discuss ways that you can bridge that gap between spirituality and science. Do you need to reevaluate your understanding of the way in which science and faith can complement and enhance each other?

11. **Asian-American Christianity:** Think about the cultural group you are a part of. How can you help your church receive, adapt and develop mainstream (or dominant) theologies and ministry/missional practices? How can your church or leadership team or small group be more attentive to (and learn from) Asian-American, Latin American, African-American, Native American, and other voices? How can you help your group engage in a truly global-local, multiethnic, multi-voiced, and multi-directional exchange?

12. **Migration and theology/practice:** Look at the cultures in your area. Is your church or ministry fully engaging these cultures? How can you better “appreciate the migratory character of Christian life, faith and theology”?

13. **Migration and theology/practice:** At some point your cultural group migrated to your area. Most of us are not indigenous to the place in which we live. How is the theme of migration recalibrating your systems of theology, your view of mission, and your sense of identity? How does the theme of migration shape your practices of mission, discipleship, community, and theologizing?

14. **Trinitarian theology and pneumatology:** Are your views of the church and mission undergirded by a robust theology of the Spirit? Are your practices soaked in the life of the Spirit? If not, how will you change these views and practices?

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 our class and me, to do?
2. In response to the issues raised in the video, what are areas I want to ask God for forgiveness in? How do I need to change? What does God want me to stand up for?
3. How do I need God to minister to me and my community, for us to better engage with the contextual issues of our community?
4. How can I gain a better understanding of the Spirit? How can I get better at walking in the power, presence and provision of the Spirit? What do we ask that God would do in our hearts?

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)