

The GlobalChurch Project

www.theglobalchurchproject.com



Tim Costello

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: Tim Costello, 9 minutes.
- Scripture: Isaiah 58 and Micah 6:8.
- Participants are encouraged to bring their own journals or writing materials.

Themes explored in the video:

- **Journey into Leadership of World Vision Australia**
- **Passion for Justice**
- **Challenges Facing the Church Today**
- **Integrating Justice and Proclamation**
- **The Mission of the Church**
- **Learning from Majority World (Third World) Cultures and Christians**
- **Shifts in Younger Generations**

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 Tim Costello's responses?
2. How does Tim Costello describe the importance of embracing a passion for justice?
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 Tim Costello's theology informed and shaped by his ministry with World Vision Australia? What approaches does he take in understanding God in the context of his day-to-day experiences and his service among the poorest people in world?

Going deeper

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

1. **Journey into Leadership of World Vision Australia:** What was Tim Costello's career path into leadership of World Vision Australia? What does this tell us about the way God works in our lives, shaping us for his call, service, and ministry, in the church and the world?
2. **Journey into Leadership of World Vision Australia:** "The Christian faith does make a difference." Why does Tim Costello enjoy leading World Vision Australia? How does this speak to you, as you consider God's call on your life and your church?
3. **Passion for Justice:** Why is Tim Costello passionate about God's justice?
4. **Passion for Justice:** Is justice possible in this world? How can people of faith express it?
5. **Challenges Facing the Church Today:** What does Tim Costello consider the greatest challenges facing the church today? Do you agree with him? Would you add other challenges and, if so, what would they be?
6. **Challenges Facing the Church Today:** How much do we know about Jesus, when he says, "Love your enemies"?
7. **Integrating Justice and Proclamation:** Why do Christians tend to separate justice from proclamation, deeds from words, compassionate care from verbal evangelism? How can these things be integrated in a way that reflects the whole gospel?
8. **Integrating Justice and Proclamation:** How does our translation of Scripture affect the way we understand faith and justice?
9. **Integrating Justice and Proclamation:** How can we move from a mere private faith toward an integrated private/public and personal/social faith?
10. **The Mission of the Church:** How does Tim Costello describe the mission of the church? Why does he consider "Jesus as Lord" to be a highly political statement? How does this affect our allegiance to the principalities, powers, politics, economics, cultural biases, and ways of the world?
11. **Learning from Majority World (Third World) Cultures and Christians:** Do you agree that we've lost real dependence on God in the West?
12. **Learning from Majority World (Third World) Cultures and Christians:** What did Tim Costello learn during the Asian tsunami of 2004? What was different about Asian questions after the tsunami (compared with Western questions)?
13. **Learning from Majority World (Third World) Cultures and Christians:** Why is faith, and live dependence of God, a powerful resource in poorer settings?

14. **Shifts in Younger Generations:** Do you agree that the Spirit is leading young Christians to “download the justice DNA”? Where do you see the Spirit doing this?

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. **Journey into Leadership of World Vision Australia:** How is God working in your life, shaping you for his call, service, and ministry, in the church and the world?
2. **Journey into Leadership of World Vision Australia:** “The Christian faith does make a difference.” Do you believe this? Does your church believe this? How is this conviction shaping your service and mission (both personally, and through a church community or some other form of ministry)?
3. **Passion for Justice:** Are you passionate about God’s justice? Where do you see justice being expressed and described in Scripture and through the church today?
4. **Passion for Justice:** Do you really believe that justice is possible in this world? How can people of faith express it?
5. **Challenges Facing the Church Today:** Do you “love your enemies”? How does love of enemies transform the service and witness of the church? How does it affect whom we serve with and where we serve?
6. **Integrating Justice and Proclamation:** Have you (or your church or ministry) separated justice from proclamation, deeds from words, compassionate care from verbal evangelism? How can you begin to integrate these things in a way that reflects the whole gospel?
7. **Integrating Justice and Proclamation:** What are concrete, particular, and local ways you (and your church) can move from a mere private faith toward an integrated private/public and personal/social faith?
8. **The Mission of the Church:** How would you describe the mission of the church? Are you living in such a way that the conviction that “Jesus is Lord” is expressed in a highly political way? How does this conviction affect your allegiance to the political parties and ideologies, economic systems, cultural biases, racial and gender prejudices, etc.?
9. **Learning from Majority World (Third World) Cultures and Christians:** Spend time in prayer, as you seek to cultivate real dependence on God. In the face of life’s difficulties and struggles, ask God to help you trust him, and depend on his power, provision, protection, and presence. Difficulties will still arise. You will still suffer. But you’ll know a new assurance, joy, trust, and dependence in the midst of such pain and loss.
10. **Shifts in Younger Generations:** Do you see the Spirit leading young Christians to “download the justice DNA”? Where do you see the Spirit doing this? How can you (and your church) encourage people to explore God’s passion for justice, and commit their lives to joining with Jesus in justice, mission, and peacemaking?

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 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 God's passion for justice? 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)