

The GlobalChurch Project  
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## Joshva Raja

### Group Discussion Guide

#### “Ivory Towers & Muddy Grounds: Theological Education Today”

This resource is designed to help your group discussion. It's shaped to inspire you to consider new ways for understanding faith, theology, mission, and church. You don't need to cover all the questions. Allow for a time of response.

#### Group Preparation:

- Video: Joshva Raja, 21 minutes
- Scripture: Ephesians 4
- Participants are encouraged to bring their own journals or writing materials.

#### Theme explored in the video:

Ivory Towers & Muddy Grounds: Theological Education Today

## 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 Joshva Raja's responses?
2. How does Joshva describe key themes in theological education and ministry training?
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 Joshva's theology informed and shaped by his practical ministry? What approaches does he take in understanding God in the context of his day-to-day experiences and discipling?

## Going deeper

Explore the major themes raised in the video. Critically engage with Joshva's theology. Aside from discussing the issues theologically, think and talk about how to apply the principles in your own setting/s.

1. What are some of the striking things Joshva notices about theological education today?
2. Think about the theological colleges you've been a part of. Are they only preparing people in "ivory towers" (academic institutions)? Or are they preparing people for and within "muddy grounds" (the cut-and-thrust of grassroots ministry, in concrete, messy, everyday situations)?
3. How can theological colleges get better at listening the church and society, as they shape their curriculum, training approaches, and location of training?
4. How do we rethink our approaches to theological education (and ministry training), so that they're able to take into account the demands of academic training, and also the demands and realities of life, ministry, church, and mission?
5. How do we help people who are training for ministry learn the skills of indigenizing or contextualizing theology? Are these skills important for ministry today?
6. What does "glocal" theology mean? How can people training for ministry become engaged with local and global theologies and voices?
7. How do we move from "deconstructing" theology and church and ministry practices, to positive "reconstructions"?
8. When we "appreciate" local, contextual voices, they move to the "center of theology." Do you agree? How do we get better at hearing and appreciating and valuing local, contextual, indigenous theological voices?
9. According to Joshva, God holds these things together: justice, healing, service, unity, love, truth, mercy, passion, community, mission, liberation, and more. How can the church do the same? How do we hold these things together in our theological education and ministry training?
10. What do you learn from Joshva's image and description of the Indian lotus?
11. Why do ministry trainees need to be both "rooted" and "related"? How does this help in their formation and transformation?

## 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 (and we) gain a better understanding of the issues in this video? 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](http://www.theglobalchurchproject.com)

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