

The GlobalChurch Project

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Fernando Segovia – Helping Christians from the Global South & Global North Enter Critical & Life-giving Conversations

College and University Class Resource

This resource is designed to help your classroom discussion. It has specific application questions appropriate to local church ministry contexts. Questions are ideal for paired discussions, group-forum style discussions, and personal reflective responses. Consider using a discussion method most suitable to your classroom setting. Select questions most appropriate to your group. Consider isolating particular themes.

Materials

1. Video: Fernando Segovia, 59 minutes.
2. Theme: Helping Christians from the Global South & Global North Enter Critical & Life-giving Conversations

Preliminary discussion

1. What were the major themes in Segovia's responses?
2. How does Segovia describe shifts in the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL)?
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 Segovia'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?

Explore and apply

Consider isolating a particular theme of interest for your classroom discussion. You might allocate topics for questions to particular groups or pairs. Or, raise particular questions in a forum style for group responses. Apply the answers to these questions in your own setting.

1. Fernando Segovia is the first Society of Biblical Literature president to come from the Global South. Appointing him was the first time that the Society had ventured outside the parameters of the Euro-American world of the North Atlantic. In that sense, his appointment was a marker of the tectonic demographic changes taking place throughout the world. Biblical studies have expanded into Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, etc.

What has this meant from his role with SBL? What has this shift meant for SBL itself—how it sees itself, what it does, why it operates in certain ways, and who gets involved?

2. In his Society of Biblical Literature presidential address in 2014, he addressed the vision and task of biblical criticism today. He says a series of key anniversaries of global conflicts occurred in 2014, which bring to bear particular historical, geopolitical, and spatial meanings for today. What anniversaries is he talking about, and what do they signify?
3. How do we respond well to these critical times, as Christian theological critics?
4. He talks about the many forms of criticism today. What is he talking about when he speak of biblical, historical, political, and other criticism?
5. What is the role and responsibility of the critic? How does the critic seek the hidden relationships within and between the world, the text, and the critic? How does the critic examine the relations between the critical analysis and theological visions, between aesthetics and ethics?
6. Presidential addresses in general, have gone in two directions: speaking either to the few or to the many. How do presidential addresses given in critical times of yesteryear—especially during the years of the Great War of 1914–18—indicate the function of biblical criticism in society and culture?
7. Why, in critical times, have presidents tended to keep the world of criticism and the world of politics separate from each other?
8. What spectrums of opinion exist regarding the pursuit of critical inquiry? And, how did former presidents choose rhetorical styles to suit certain discourse? Did this allow a different, more activist role?
9. How is the global state of affairs the context for critical inquiry today—and especially global economics? Why do we need to engage these things if we are going to form an engaged critical stance?
10. Recently, it has been observed that the movement of peoples from the Global South has led to a post-Global South phenomenon. We have moved beyond the North–South divide of yesteryear, as immigrants and minorities can now be found dispersed throughout the global cities of the geographical North as well. How does this affect the church, and its mission and theology?
11. What is a theoretical framework appropriate for engaging our times? And, how would this framework employ critical theories both from the Global North and from the Global South?
12. As we respond to the challenges of our times, how do we fuse the critical and the political, and the biblical and the worldly?
13. How are the premises of the Global South radically different from the Global North? How do they view the world as much broader, by far, than that of the West?
14. How do people in the Global South affirm that the diversity of the world is boundless?
15. How do we engage the angles of vision of the Global North—its hegemonic as well as critical discourses?
16. How can we eschew cognitive injustice and embrace diversity in understanding and transforming the world?
17. How do we engage the angles of vision of the Global South, its array of epistemologies and histories?
18. How do we imagine new projects of interpretation that embody such ideals, embracing the perspectives of both the Global South and the Global North and immigrant subaltern and other communities?

19. He says that Bible reading strategies informed by Racial-ethnic and postcolonial studies help us scrutinize the dynamics of power that affects biblical texts and our interpretation of them. How does he explain this idea?
20. In “Poetics of Minority Biblical Criticism”, he describes the distinctive features of existing minority scholarship. He also shows how they embody challenges to dominant scholarship and its undergirding assumptions. How does he unpack this for us? How does he outline the key features of postcolonial, minority biblical criticism?
21. What are the greatest challenges facing the Western (and global) church today?

Classroom ministry

Facilitate an opportunity for students to respond to the video in light of the classroom discussion. Consider inviting students to write their 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 biblical studies coming out of the Global South? What do we ask that God would do in our hearts?

Prayer

Spend time in prayer over what you've learnt. You may encourage your class to pray for one another. Or, in light of your discussion, you may choose to pray over your class.

Links

Website: www.theglobalchurchproject.com

Book: Graham Hill, *GlobalChurch: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches* (IVP Academic, 2016)