

The GlobalChurch Project

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Xiyi Yao – On the Growth, Struggles, & Future of the Chinese Church

Small Group Study Guide

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. You don't need to cover all the questions. Allow for a time of response.

Materials

1. Video: Xiyi Yao, 34 minutes.
2. Theme: On the Growth, Struggles, & Future of the Chinese Church.

Preliminary discussion

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 Yao's responses?
2. How does he describe some features of the Chinese church?
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 Yao'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?

Explore and apply

Explore the major themes raised in the video. Critically engage with Yao's theology. Consider the questions that respond to the issues raised in your preliminary discussion. Apply the answers to these questions in your own setting. 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. Xiyi (Kevin) Yao is associate professor of World Christianity and Asian Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. What does that role involve?
2. Yao served for 10 years in Hong Kong and mainland China, and taught at the Department of Theological Studies, China Graduate School of Theology, located in Hong Kong. What was he doing there?
3. We often hear about the extraordinary growth of the church in China. What are some of the things that God is doing in the church in China today?
4. How is the Chinese church seeking to consolidate its growth?
5. What can Western churches learn from the churches of China and East Asia?
6. What impact is economic wealth and urbanization having on the Chinese church today?
7. How are Chinese evangelicals shaping faith around Chinese culture?
8. What are the characteristics (strengths and drawbacks) of older and traditional Chinese evangelicalism?
9. How is the new generation of Chinese evangelicals changing?
10. Yao has done comparative studies of Christianities in China, Korea, and Japan. How does Christianity compare and differ in each of these Asian contexts?
11. The churches of South Korea and China have flourished, but struggled in Japan. How do we explain the difference there?
12. What does Christian pacifism look like in China today?
13. How does Christianity compare and relate to Confucianism?
14. What is most misunderstood about the Chinese church?
15. How can we become more informed about Chinese churches today, and partner with these churches?
16. What are one or two things that the Chinese church is saying to the global church today? What are they teaching us? What are they asking of us?
17. What does Yao say about the importance of the Chinese churches joining global theological and Christian conversations?

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 group 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 Christianity in China today? 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, 2016)