



Mitri Raheb – We Are Palestinian Christians

Discussion Guide

This resource is designed to help your small group or college class discussion. It's shaped to inspire you to consider new ways to understand the issues discussed in this video. You don't need to answer all the questions. Please allow time for discussion and response.

Materials

1. Person Interviewed: Mitri Raheb
2. Theme of Video: We are Palestinian Christians

Preliminary discussion

Consider the questions suggested below to start the conversation for your small group or college class. They'll consolidate the content of the video, after you've viewed it.

1. What were the major themes in this video?
2. How do those themes relate to your life and context?
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 the interviewee's theology and outlook informed and shaped by their practical ministry and context? What approaches do they take in understanding God in the context of their daily life and ministry?

Explore and apply

Explore the major themes raised in the video. Critically engage with the 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 or college class. Encourage relevant and thoughtful examples from each participant.

1. When many people think of Bethlehem they have a romantic or tourist view. When they think of Palestine or Palestinians they have an equally inaccurate view. How does Mitri describe contemporary Bethlehem and Palestine?
2. How does Mitri describe Palestinian Christianity? How does he describe its history, and current forms?
3. In "I am a Palestinian Christian," Mitri says that only a contextual Palestinian theology can provide an effective alternative to the escapism of religious fundamentalism and the failure of secular ideas "to create a just, equal, and peaceful society." What are the features of a contextual Palestinian theology?
4. What would be the fruit of a robust, contextual Palestinian theology today?
5. What is it like for Mitri (and other Palestinian Christians, and especially Palestinian Protestants) to be a minority? For example: (1) An Arab Palestinian when the land is controlled by Israelis, (2) A Christian when the majority of Palestinians are Muslims, (3) A Lutheran when the majority of Christians are Orthodox and Roman Catholic.
6. How has the minority status shaped their theological imagination and social ethic?
7. Mitri talks about a theology of the Cross. He says that fear, hopelessness, and frustration drive people to political options, grasping after power. "Religion, incorrectly understood, directs the human being "in need to the power of God in the world," whereas true faith directs one "to the helplessness and suffering of God; only the suffering God can help." Thus, a contextual theology can only be a theology of the cross." What does Mitri mean?
8. Why did Jesus die? And in what ways did his crucifixion offer redemption to the world?
9. Why do we need to embrace a historical-critical reading of the Bible? (A study of the Bible that requires attention both to the historical context of the word and to the application of that word to one's own situation in life).
10. In "Faith in the Face of Empire," Mitri says that the Palestinian context today serves as a hermeneutical key to understanding the original context and content of the Bible. How does the Palestinian context serve as a hermeneutical key, helping us see the Bible narrative and the mission of Jesus, afresh?
11. How have ecclesia amnesia, religious amnesia, and political amnesia shaped contemporary Palestinian memory and identity?
12. The numbers of Palestinian Christians are diminishing. Why is this the case? How has the West contributed to this problem? What can be done to reverse this trend?
13. What are the main claims of the 2009 Kairos Palestine document? See: <http://kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-us/kairos-palestine-document>
14. What do you think are that document's main contributions?
15. What does Mitri say about Palestinian suffering, and a biblical response in the face of occupation and imperialism.
16. What was the mission of Jesus? And how does the church local and global engage in that mission?
17. How are imagination and hope the wellspring of "creative resistance"?
18. In the final chapter of "I am a Palestinian Christian," Mitri shares his dream for the Holy Land. What is his dream?

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 the issues discussed 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

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