



David W. Congdon –

Rudolph Bultmann, Karl Barth, Theo Sundermeier, and the Future of Missional Theology

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: David W. Congdon
2. Theme of Video: Rudolph Bultmann, Karl Barth, Theo Sundermeier, and the Future of Missional Theology

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. In David Congdon's book "The Mission of Demythologizing", he examines Bultmann's dialectical theology. Who was Rudolf Bultmann? And what is dialectical theology?
2. Why does Congdon think a reinterpretation of Bultmann's thought is necessary, and especially as we form missional theologies?
3. Why is it important to deconstruct the slogans with which New Testament scholars have long caricatured Rudolf Bultmann's theology and hermeneutic?
4. Let's turn to the relationship between Barth and Bultmann. Who was Karl Barth?
5. How did Barth understand mission, and why was he so concerned with mission?
6. How did Barth pursue an understanding of God and God-talk that does not conflate the mission of the church with the diffusion of culture?
7. In what ways do Karl Barth and Rudolph Bultmann share theological processes and outlook? How is there continuity between them?
8. How is Bultmann a theologian of mission, and how is dialectical theology essentially a theology governed by a missionary logic?
9. Congdon says that "demythologizing is the extension of this logic into hermeneutics." Can you explain these terms, and what you mean in this sentence?
10. How and why did Bultmann invest himself in a missiological hermeneutic on behalf of dialectical theology?
11. Why is Bultmann's thought significant for the future of missional theology?
12. What bearing does it have on the future of missional hermeneutics?
13. Congdon has also written about Theo Sundermeier's "hermeneutic of difference." Please explain this phrase and who Sundermeier was.
14. How did Sundermeier contribute to a hermeneutical and intercultural turn within the field of missiology, as well as a missiological and practical turn within hermeneutics?
15. Why did he criticize the western hermeneutical tradition for being text-centric and egocentric?
16. How did he replace the standard hermeneutical models with one that is focused on the practical problem of understanding the stranger?
17. Please unpack the four-step process he provides for learning how to understand and coexist with another person.
18. What are the missiological implications of this process?
19. How does Congdon critique this process, and offer a distinctively emancipatory intercultural hermeneutic?
20. Why does Congdon engage in constructing your theology (and especially missional theology) in an interdisciplinary way?
21. Where does Congdon you think missional theology needs to go in the future?

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

Books:

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

Graham Hill, *Salt, Light, and a City (Second Edition): Ecclesiology for the Global Missional Community: Volume 1, Western Voices* (Cascade, 2017).