A WORLD OF GOOD
A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

Mike Ford

Season 2, Ep. 9: Vending Machine Ministry (2020)
www.chogglobal.org/S2E9 (59 min)

Key Takeaway

The church is not called to produce religious consumers but kingdom participants.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Mike Ford, Go and Be pastor at Cornwall Church in Bellingham, Washington, shares his passion for innovation in the church and challenges listeners to rethink traditional approaches to ministry, discipleship, and mission. Drawing from his background in engineering and his role overseeing local and global outreach, Mike explores how churches can move beyond maintaining familiar structures and instead become communities that equip people to engage in God's mission. Using the metaphor of vending machines versus food sources, he argues that churches must create environments that foster spiritual growth, participation, and kingdom impact rather than passive consumption.

Scripture passage: James 1:22-25

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 18:06-23:40.* Mike argues that the church should be one of the most innovative institutions in the world because it is called to join God in reaching people. Why do churches sometimes resist change?
2. How would you answer the question, “What is the church for?” How might that answer influence the way your church organizes its ministries and priorities?
3. *Listen: 28:48-35:50.* Using the metaphor of a vending machine, Mike warns that churches can unintentionally train people to consume religious experiences rather than actively live out their faith. What are the signs of a consumer mindset in church life? What does active participation in God’s mission look like?
4. What are the strengths and limitations of a “program-driven” approach to discipleship? How can churches balance offering helpful programs while still encouraging people to take personal responsibility for their spiritual growth?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Mike challenges the church to move beyond comfort and familiarity. In what area of your life has faith become passive or routine? What is one risk, step of obedience, or act of service God may be inviting you to take this month to move from consumption to participation?