A WORLD OF GOOD
A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

Discussion Guide

For small groups
www.chogglobal.org/aworldofgood

WELCOME

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

A World of Good is a podcast produced by Global Strategy, the international department of Church of God Ministries. We launched the podcast in 2020 to amplify the voices of the global church and create opportunities for us to learn from one another. Since then, we have released 150 episodes covering a wide range of topics, perspectives, and experiences. Along the way, we've featured episodes in Spanish, recorded conversations in front of live audiences, and listened to leaders from nearly 40 different countries.

Through it all, our purpose has remained the same: to help you hear the voices of the church around the world. These discussion guides are designed to extend those conversations, creating space for reflection, meaningful dialogue, and shared learning within your own community. We hope they encourage deeper listening, richer conversations, and a greater appreciation for what God is doing through the church.

FLOW

We encourage you to format your discussions in a way that fits your group. *Before the small group, send out a reminder to listen to the podcast—include the link.* Here are some elements you can incorporate into your time together.

- Open in prayer.
- Share the summary to set the context and read the scripture passage included in the discussion guide.
- When prompted to *listen*, play aloud the section of the podcast (timestamp given) prior to asking the question. Most sections are only a few minutes.
- Go through each question that would prompt discussion within your group.
- Share the key takeaway and reflection as a final thought.
- Pray for your community as you explore how the information in the podcast may shape how you or your community engage.
- Share the next podcast link so people can listen before your next gathering.

PODCAST OPTIONS

Some of the podcast discussions can be put together as a month-long series. Others are designed as stand-alone small group sessions. Links to each podcast can be found on the discussion pages provided.

Series

Global Partnerships
- Alan MacDonald
- Samir Salibi
- Joshua Weiger
- Projects: Live podcast

Local Engagement
- Matt Ingalls
- Beth Wolff
- Mike Ford
- Alecia Swoope

Global Experiences/Trips
- Chris Kaczmarek
- Kelley & Rhonda Philips
- Kathleen Otchy
- Esther Jadhav

Immigration
- Donnie Allen
- Zach Szmara
- Gena Thomas
- Mohammed

Stand-alone episodes

- The Bible and Justice (International Justice Mission)
- Wai Chan Lam, Church of God in Japan
- Norberto Kurrle, Church of God in Paraguay
- Esteban Zapata, Church of God in Honduras
- Emmanuel Masamba, Church of God in Malawi
- Bakyrmen Nonplugh, Church of God in India
- Lennox Boyce, Church of God in Barbados
- Joseph the Just (Christmas episode)

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Alan MacDonald

Season 3, Ep. 1: Global Partnerships (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S3E1 (60 min)

Key Takeaway

Effective mission work is not about what we accomplish during a short visit but about strengthening local leaders, responding to local vision, and faithfully walking alongside ministry partners over the long term.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Nate and Andrew interview Alan MacDonald about developing healthy and effective global ministry partnerships. Drawing on decades of experience in Mexico, the Philippines, China, and local church missions leadership, Alan reflects on what makes healthy global partnerships thrive. The conversation explores relationship-centered ministry, capacity building, the role of local churches in global mission, and how churches can build mutually beneficial partnerships that strengthen local ministry around the world.

Scripture passage: Philippians 2:1-5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 14:06-20:45.* Why should relationships come before resources? Why can financial support sometimes create challenges in ministry relationships? What benefits come from investing in trust and relationship first?
2. *Listen: 32:50-48:50.* Alan encourages churches to say "a big yes to a few things" rather than trying to support many ministries superficially. What are the advantages of going "long and deep" with a small number of ministry partners instead of spreading attention across many different projects?
3. What is the difference between helping people and empowering people? How can churches avoid unintentionally creating dependency?
4. What characteristics distinguish a healthy global ministry partnership from a transactional or one-sided relationship?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about a ministry, missionary, or organization your church currently supports. How well do you know their vision, challenges, and goals? What is one step you can take this month to move from simply supporting them financially to developing a deeper relationship that encourages and strengthens their work?

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Samir Salibi

Season 3, Ep. 2: Global Partnerships (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S3E2 (59 min)

Key Takeaway

Strong global partnerships thrive when churches move beyond financial support alone and commit to listening, learning, and serving together across cultures.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Samir Salibi shares the remarkable story of how the At Home project began among refugees in Paris. After years of searching for ways to help the church engage people outside its walls, Samir sensed God's leading to welcome refugees arriving in France. Through prayer, Scripture, relationship-building, and deep listening, At Home emerged as a multicultural missional community focused on serving refugees through friendship, practical support, discipleship, and shared life. The conversation challenges listeners to rethink the role of the church, moving beyond programs and events toward intentional relationships that embody the love of Christ.

Scripture passage: John 1:14

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 15:10-15:50.* Why is it important that churches care for both spiritual and physical needs? What happens when one is emphasized and the other neglected?
2. *Listen: 15:50-22:50.* Samir talks about the church making disciples, moving people from “a crowd to a community.” How is “making disciples” different from simply teaching biblical knowledge? Who has discipled you through relationship rather than instruction alone?
3. *Listen: 31:00-34:17.* What would it look like for your church to listen deeply to its surrounding community before deciding how to serve?
4. *Listen: 41:00-48:07.* How can churches support international ministry partners in ways that demonstrate mutual respect?
5. What practical steps can individuals or churches take to better understand the experiences of refugees and displaced people in their own communities?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Who are the people in your community that may be isolated, overlooked, or disconnected? What is one intentional step you could take this month to build a genuine relationship and create space for belonging, hospitality, and spiritual conversation?

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Joshua Weiger

Season 3, Ep. 3: Global Partnerships (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S3E3 (52 min)

Key Takeaway

Strong global partnerships are built through genuine relationships, mutual learning, and a commitment to serving alongside one another rather than independently of one another.

SUMMARY

In this episode of the Global Partnerships series, Andrew Gale, Nate Tatman, and Joshua Weiger reflect on lessons learned from previous conversations with Alan MacDonald and Samir Salibi. Drawing from their experiences as pastors, missionaries, and global ministry leaders, they explore what makes healthy global partnerships thrive. The discussion focuses on intentionality, discipleship, cultural understanding, local church identity, and the importance of building genuine relationships with ministry partners around the world. Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all strategy, the conversation encourages churches to understand who they are, why they engage in mission, and how partnerships can become a vital part of discipleship.

Scripture passage: 1 Cor 12:12-27

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 15:01-23:16.* How does your church's local ministry shape the way it should engage in global mission? What unique gifts or strengths has God given your congregation?
2. *Listen: 35:48 - 47:00.* How do power dynamics influence global partnerships, and what posture should churches adopt to build healthy relationships?
3. *Listen: 49:06 - 50:40.* Alan's quote is revisited: “Partnerships are risky, vague, and messy, but the prospect of making big kingdom impact is worth the investment.” Why do you think effective partnerships are often “messy,” and why is that messiness worth embracing for the sake of long-term kingdom impact?
4. What motivations can lead churches into unhealthy missions practices? How can we ensure our mission efforts are rooted in God's purposes rather than our own expectations?

REFLECTION QUESTION

If your church were to build one new global partnership this year, what values or practices would you want to be present from the very beginning to ensure a healthy relationship?

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Projects: Live podcast

Season 10, Ep. 11: Global Projects (2025)
www.chogglobal.org/S10E11 (50 min)

Key Takeaway

Global projects are most effective when they connect resources, relationships, and local leadership to advance God's work in sustainable and culturally appropriate ways around the world.

SUMMARY

Recorded at the Church of God Convention, this episode explores how Global Strategy partners with local churches around the world through community-based projects. Andrew Gale and Jenny Mihsill (regional coordinator, Africa) talk with Nate Tatman (regional coordinator, Europe & Middle East) and Abby Torgeson (regional coordinator, Latin America) about the philosophy behind projects, emphasizing empowerment, creativity, sustainability, and accountability. Through stories from Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Brazil, France, and a number of countries across Europe, listeners learn how local churches are developing innovative solutions to meet community needs.

Scripture passage: Ephesians 4:11-13

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 5:00-9:00.* Why is it important that ministry solutions come from local churches rather than being imposed from outside organizations?
2. The Yamoussoukro Events Place (YEP) project in Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates a creative approach to generating income that supports church ministries and community needs. What examples have you seen of churches using creativity to serve their communities?
3. Listen: *13:20-18:00.* Nate discussed the Three Worlds Leadership Network. What challenges do ministry leaders face when they feel isolated or unsupported? Why is community and mentorship important for long-term ministry health?
4. Listen: *33:45 - 37:20.* Abby shared about the church in Cuba. What can the global church learn from believers who faithfully serve in difficult circumstances?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about a need in your community that concerns you deeply. Instead of asking, “How can I solve this problem?”, ask, “Who is already doing good work in this area, and how can I come alongside and support them?” What is one step you could take this month to empower rather than simply assist?

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Chris Kaczmarek

Season 4, Ep. 3: Trip Logistics (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S4E3 (53 min)

Key Takeaway

Successful mission trips require more than good planning. They are most effective when logistics, relationships, and ministry purpose work together to serve others well.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Chris Kazmarek shares lessons learned from serving as a missionary in Uganda and now leading outreach and impact trips at County Line Church. The conversation explores why churches take mission trips, how to prepare participants well, the importance of long-term partnerships, and the need to move beyond mission tourism toward meaningful engagement. Chris highlights the value of cultural learning, relationship-building, and helping people experience God's work beyond their own context.

Scripture passage: Acts 10:1-48

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 10:15-10:56.* How have experiences outside your comfort zone helped you grow spiritually? Why do you think God uses unfamiliar situations to teach us?
2. *Listen: 25:39-29:59.* Why is cultural, spiritual, and practical preparation essential before serving in another community or country? What problems can occur when preparation is neglected?
3. *Listen: 31:45 -35:35.* What helps a short-term mission trip become a meaningful discipleship experience rather than just a travel experience?
4. *Listen: 45:00- 50:00.* Through stories about handing out cash and attempting to "help" in ways that weren't requested, the conversation highlights how good intentions can sometimes create unintended challenges. What are some ways good intentions can unintentionally create problems?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about a place, culture, or community that is unfamiliar to you. What assumptions do you currently hold about that group? What is one step you could take this month to learn directly from people in that community rather than relying on stereotypes or secondhand information?

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Kelley & Rhonda Philips

Season 4, Ep. 4: Receiving Teams (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S4E4 (44 min)

Key Takeaway

The most meaningful short-term mission trips are built on genuine partnership, mutual respect, and a commitment to serve local ministry rather than simply accomplish a task.

SUMMARY

In this episode, veteran missionaries Kelly and Rhonda Phillips share insights from nearly three decades of ministry in Russia, Hungary, and Germany. Drawing on years of hosting mission teams from the United States, they discuss what makes short-term trips effective, how teams can prepare well, and why cultural humility is essential for meaningful cross-cultural experiences. Through stories, practical wisdom, and lessons learned, they challenge listeners to approach mission trips as opportunities for learning, relationship-building, and mutual transformation rather than simply accomplishing tasks.

Scripture passage: James 1:19-27

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 5:48-7:50.* Think about a time when you had an "aha" moment that changed your understanding of God, people, or the world. What made that experience so impactful?
2. *Listen: 12:20-16:00.* Why is preparation an act of respect when entering another culture? What problems can arise when people arrive without learning about the community they are visiting?
3. *Listen: 23:20-27:05 and 36:05-37:35.* What habits, assumptions, or expectations from your own culture might create challenges when interacting with people from different backgrounds? How can greater cultural awareness strengthen ministry?
4. Why is it important to see ourselves as learners as well as servants? How does humility affect cross-cultural relationships? Why do personal relationships often change our views more effectively than information or arguments alone?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Before your next mission trip, cross-cultural experience, or interaction with someone from a different background, ask yourself: What assumptions am I bringing with me? What is one intentional step you can take this week to become a better listener and learner in your relationships?

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Kathleen Otchy

Season 4, Ep. 5: Ethical Storytelling (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S4E5 (35 min)

Key Takeaway

People are never props for a message. Effective Christian storytelling seeks to honor the dignity, humanity, and ongoing journey of the people involved.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Andrew Gale interviews Kathleen Otchy about the power and responsibility of storytelling in ministry. Drawing from her twenty years of pastoral care experience, Kathleen explores how stories help people connect, learn, and empathize while also highlighting the ethical challenges that arise when sharing personal experiences. The conversation focuses on consent, dignity, context, trauma, technology, and the importance of ensuring that stories humanize rather than exploit the people they represent.

Scripture passage: James 3:5-10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 5:02-6:56.* How has a story changed your perspective or motivated you to care about an issue, person, or community you had not previously understood?
2. *Listen: 7:06-8:55.* What makes storytelling ethical? Where do you think the line exists between telling an impactful story and exploiting the people involved in that story? What indicators help you recognize when that line has been crossed?
3. *Listen: 25:05-30:28.* What practical guidelines should churches, mission teams, or ministry leaders follow before sharing someone's image, testimony, or personal story? Why is ethical storytelling especially important in the context of missions and cross-cultural ministry?
4. How can mission trip participants share meaningful experiences without unintentionally reinforcing stereotypes or creating unhealthy narratives?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about a story, testimony, social media post, or ministry update you have recently shared or plan to share. If the people featured were sitting beside you, would they feel honored, accurately represented, and respected by the way you told it?

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Esther Jadhav

Season 4, Ep. 2: Cultural Intelligence (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S4E2 (51 min)

Key Takeaway

As followers of Jesus, we are called to engage people who may think, speak, worship, and experience life differently than we do. By growing in awareness, humility, and curiosity, we become better equipped to reflect God's love across cultural boundaries.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Andrew and Nate speak with Rev. Dr. Esther Jadhav about the importance of cultural intelligence (CQ) in missions, ministry, and everyday relationships. Drawing from her experiences growing up in Mumbai, India, serving in the United States, and researching cultural intelligence, Esther explains how believers can better navigate cultural differences with humility, curiosity, and grace. The conversation highlights practical ways to prepare for mission trips, engage cross-cultural relationships, and move beyond assumptions to build meaningful connections with people who are different from us.

Scripture passage: Acts 17:22-34; What can we learn from Paul's approach to engaging people whose worldview differed significantly from his own?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 3:08-7:23.* Nate shares about cultural interactions from his first year in Spain. Can you think of a time when you misunderstood someone's actions because you interpreted them through your own cultural lens?
2. *Listen: 16:30-19:35.* What is cultural intelligence, and why do you think Esther argues that it is essential for ministry?
3. *Listen: 40:45 - 46:55.* What attitudes or practices can help individuals prepare for short-term mission trips in ways that honor and respect the people they serve?
4. "CQ [cultural intelligence] should help us deliver the gospel, without changing the gospel, in such a way that brings life to people." Esther reflects on how cultural intelligence is a spiritual practice rooted in the belief that all people bear God's image. In what ways can cultural intelligence help us share the gospel more faithfully and compassionately?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about a person or group you regularly interact with but may not fully understand because of cultural, generational, ethnic, or social differences. What is one intentional step you can take this week to listen, learn, and better understand their perspective before making assumptions?

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Matt Ingalls

Season 10, Ep. 7: Local Meets Global (2025)
www.chogglobal.org/S10E7 (28 min)

Key Takeaway

Mission is not just about sending people elsewhere; it is also about allowing what we learn from others to reshape how we live and serve where we are.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Matt Ingalls shares the story of his journey through pastoral burnout, spiritual restoration, and renewed ministry vision. Through experiences with refugee ministry in Paris, France, and relationships with leaders like Samir Salibi, Matt discovered a different approach to ministry centered on listening to the Holy Spirit, learning to genuinely love neighbors, and responding to real community needs. The conversation explores how churches can move beyond programs and toward Spirit-led engagement that transforms both communities and those serving in them.

Scripture passage: Luke 10:25-37

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 1:27-6:12.* What can God teach us in seasons of burnout and disappointment? Have you experienced a season when disappointment or loss became an opportunity for spiritual growth?
2. *Listen: 15:35-18:55.* How does the Holy Spirit shape ministry priorities? How can churches better discern what God is calling them to do rather than simply returning to familiar patterns or programs?
3. *Listen: 19:08-23:00. W*hat is the difference between assuming what people need and taking time to listen to their true needs? How might that change ministry?
4. Matt describes how his experience in Paris challenged him to rethink ministry. What experiences have most shaped your own understanding of the church's mission?
5. How can partnerships with Christians in other cultural contexts help churches see blind spots in their own ministry practices?

REFLECTION QUESTION

If your church spent time learning from a ministry in another country, what assumptions, priorities, or practices might be challenged or changed?

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Beth Wolff

Season 1, Ep. 6: Beth Wolff (2020)
www.chogglobal.org/S1E6 (40 min)

Key Takeaway

Healthy churches are built on intentional relationships and everyday mission, enabling people to stay connected and engaged even during seasons of disruption.

SUMMARY

In this episode of *A World of Good*, Nate and Andrew interview Beth Wolff, pastor of Clarksburg Church in Clarksburg, Maryland. Beth shares how her church intentionally shifted its ministry paradigm in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on relationships, neighborhood engagement, and missional living. The conversation explores how these changes helped the church remain connected and spiritually engaged despite the isolation and disruption caused by the pandemic. Drawing on practical ministry experience, Beth offers insights into building resilient communities that can thrive even when traditional church gatherings are limited.

Scripture passage: Acts 2:42-46

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 5:30-10:00.* Beth describes a ministry paradigm that helped the church remain connected during COVID-19. What aspects of that approach seem most valuable to you, and why?
2. How did the pandemic reveal strengths or weaknesses in the way churches traditionally build community?
3. *Listen: 31:25-32:25.* What does it mean to live missionally in everyday life rather than relying primarily on church programs and events?
4. *Listen: 32:25-36:25*. Beth recommends practices that emphasize neighboring and relationship-building. How can Christians intentionally cultivate deeper relationships within their communities?
5. What lessons can churches apply from this conversation to prepare for future challenges or unexpected disruptions?

REFLECTION QUESTION

If your church could strengthen one aspect of relational ministry this year, what would it be? What practical steps could you take to make it happen?

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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?

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Alecia Swoope

Season 10, Ep. 4: Serving Your Community (2025)
www.chogglobal.org/S10E4 (31 min)

Key Takeaway

Effective support for people experiencing homelessness does not simply provide services but seeks to understand people, walk alongside them, and help create pathways toward healing, stability, and flourishing.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Andrew sits down with Alecia Swoope, chief operating officer at Church of God Ministries, to discuss her years of experience serving at Atlanta Mission, one of the oldest and largest Christ-centered homeless ministries in the United States. Alecia shares insights into the realities of homelessness, the importance of holistic care, and how churches can move beyond assumptions to build meaningful relationships with people experiencing housing insecurity. The conversation highlights the role of faith, dignity, community, and transformation in addressing homelessness and challenges listeners to see people rather than stereotypes.

Scripture passage: Matthew 25:31-46

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 7:03-8:09.* Alecia explains that Atlanta Mission's identity is rooted in Christian faith and that their work is motivated by a desire to reflect the love of Christ. How does faith shape the way we serve others? How does this connect to what Jesus says in Matthew 25?
2. *Listen: 13:28-16:20.* Why are relationships often just as important as material assistance? How can we serve people in ways that honor their dignity and worth?
3. *Listen: 19:43-23:10.* What assumptions do people often make about homelessness? How do the stories Alecia shared challenge or expand your perspective?
4. *Listen: 24:39-27:00. T*he conversation explores how healthy ministry goes beyond emergency relief to include life skills, education, relationships, spiritual growth, and long-term support. What does holistic transformation look like? How can churches become better community partners?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Alecia challenged listeners to move beyond assumptions and ask, “What do you actually need?” Think about an organization, ministry, or group of people in your community facing difficult circumstances. What is one step you can take this month to listen first, learn their real needs, and offer support in a meaningful way?

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Donnie Allen

Season 4, Ep. 6: Immigration, Honduras (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S4E6 (45 min)

Key Takeaway

Faithful ministry requires listening to people's stories, understanding their realities, and serving with compassion in the midst of social and cultural change.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Andrew Gale visits Pastor Donnie Allen in La Ceiba, Honduras, to discuss ministry, leadership development, community engagement, push/pull factors of immigration, and the church's role in transforming society. Donnie shares his journey from growing up on the island of Roatán to studying in Mexico and serving for more than 30 years in La Ceiba. The conversation explores cultural diversity, church planting, education, counseling, entrepreneurship, and the conviction that churches should become indispensable parts of their communities through service and influence. The conversation also explores the complex realities of immigration in Honduras and how migration affects families, communities, and local churches.

Scripture passage: Micah 6:8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 5:40-9:20.* How have experiences outside your home culture changed your perspective on faith, ministry, or relationships? How have these experiences shaped the way you interact with people from other cultures here in the United States?
2. *Listen: 13:15-15:52.* What challenges do churches face when balancing strategic planning with openness to the Spirit? How can communities discern God's direction?
3. *Listen: 24:32-28:29.* Why do you think changing a person's mindset is often more difficult than changing behavior? How can Christians help others experience true transformation?
4. *Listen: 30:04-36:59.* Donnie describes the realities of poverty, corruption, violence, lack of opportunity, and food insecurity in Honduras. He explains that migration is often not driven by preference but by a feeling that there are no other viable options. How can churches address some of the root causes that push people toward desperate decisions?
5. *Listen: 38:52-39:57.* How can Christians balance respect for laws with compassion for people facing desperate circumstances?

REFLECTION QUESTION

How can Christians balance respect for national laws with active compassion for people facing desperate circumstances? If every immigrant is a child of God, how should that truth reshape modern political debates and the church's posture towards immigration?

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Zach Szmara

Season 4, Ep. 8: Immigration and the Church (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S4E8 (55 min)

Key Takeaway

The church is uniquely positioned to welcome immigrants, build bridges across cultures, and reflect the inclusive love of Christ in diverse communities.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Zach Szmara shares his journey from aspiring missionary to pastor and founder of Immigrant Connection. After serving in Papua New Guinea and Mozambique, Zach and his wife returned to the United States during a difficult season of personal and family healing. Through relationships with immigrant families in Logansport, Indiana, Zach discovered that God had redirected his call from serving people overseas to serving immigrants living in his own community. The conversation explores hospitality, multicultural ministry, immigration, the church's responsibility toward newcomers, and the transformative power of relationships around the table.

Scripture passage: Leviticus 19:33-34

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 4:30-12:56.* Have you ever experienced God redirecting your plans or calling? How did you respond when God's path was different than you expected?
2. *Listen: 19:02-22:00.* Can you think of a time when someone's hospitality changed your life or perspective? How did Jesus use meals to connect with people? Why do meals and shared spaces often create opportunities for deeper relationships?
3. *Listen: 22:25-23:40.* What are the challenges and blessings of building a church that fully embraces different cultures, languages, and backgrounds?
4. *Listen: 30:50 - 34:05.* What does biblical hospitality require beyond simply living near people who are different from us? How does interacting with people from different cultures deepen our understanding of God's kingdom and the global church?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Zach's story was transformed by a simple invitation to a meal. Who in your community comes from a different culture, language, background, or life experience than your own? What is one intentional step you could take this month to extend hospitality and begin building a genuine relationship with them?

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Gena Thomas

Season 4, Ep. 7: Separated by the Border (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S4E7 (39 min)

Key Takeaway

People are not issues to be solved; they are image-bearers to be loved. Behind every policy discussion, legal debate, and social challenge are real people with names, families, fears, hopes, and inherent God-given worth.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Andrew and Nate interview author, speaker, and immigration advocate Gena Thomas about her book *Separated by the Border*. Gena shares the deeply personal story of becoming a foster parent to a five-year-old Honduran girl who was separated from her family due to the family separation policies at the U.S.-Mexico border. Through the experiences of a birth mother, a foster family, and a child caught between immigration systems, the conversation explores immigration, faith, family, justice, human dignity, and what it means to see and uphold the image of God in every person.

Scripture passage: Genesis 1:26-27

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 12:03-19:23.* In what ways can personal narratives humanize complex political issues that might otherwise feel distant or abstract?
2. *Listen: 13:16-15:23.* Have you ever encountered an experience that challenged assumptions you previously held? How did that experience impact your faith?
3. *Listen: 24:21-26:50.* How does viewing every person as an image-bearer of God affect how we speak about immigrants or people with whom we disagree?
4. *Listen: 26:50-28:26.* How does language shape the way we view people? What are some ways Christians can communicate with greater dignity and compassion?
5. *Listen: 30:45 - 35:05.* How should local engagement shape the way we think about global mission? For example, if we are passionate about orphan care globally, how should that influence the way we think about and engage in foster care and family support ministries in our own communities?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think of an issue that has become highly polarized or politicized in society. Are there people whose stories you have not taken the time to hear? What is one step you could take this month to listen to someone directly affected by that issue and better understand their experience before drawing conclusions?

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Mohammed & Family

Season 4, Ep. 9: Immigration Story (2021)
www.chogglobal.org/S4E9 (59 min)

Key Takeaway

God often works in unexpected ways to bring hope, healing, and faith to people even in the midst of displacement, uncertainty, and suffering.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Nate Tatman interviews Mohammed, Zahar, and their daughter Sarah about their remarkable journey as refugees from Iran to France. The family shares their experiences of living under political and social restrictions, the pressures they faced because of Mohammad's past record with authorities, and the difficult decision to leave behind their home, families, careers, and community in search of safety and freedom. Their story includes powerful accounts of spiritual transformation, dreams about Jesus, physical healing, and the support they received through the local church community. Through their testimony, listeners gain insight into the realities faced by refugees and the life-changing impact of faith and compassionate ministry.

Scripture passage: Hebrews 13:1-3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 7:19-13:35.* How do we sometimes take freedom for granted? What freedoms mentioned in the episode stood out to you? Why?
2. *Listen: 21:05-26:05.* What stood out to you most about the family's decision to leave Iran? What factors would make such a life-altering decision difficult for you?
3. How can seasons of hardship and uncertainty shape a person's faith? Looking back on your own life, have there been difficult seasons that ultimately strengthened your faith or changed your perspective?
4. *Listen: 27:45-29:55.* The family describes spiritual experiences that drew them toward Jesus. How do testimonies like theirs strengthen your own faith?
5. What is the difference between happiness based on circumstances and the peace that comes from trusting God?

REFLECTION QUESTION

When you think about God's work in the world, where have you seen hope emerge from difficult circumstances? How does this family's story encourage you to trust God's presence in challenging situations?

A WORLD OF GOOD

A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

International Justice Mission

Season 2, Ep. 7: Miguel Lau, IJM (2020)
www.chogglobal.org/S2E7 (59 min)

Key Takeaway

Biblical justice calls believers to move beyond awareness and actively participate in God's work of protecting the vulnerable and restoring dignity to those who suffer injustice.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Andrew talks with Miguel Lau, Senior Officer of Church Partnerships for International Justice Mission (IJM). Miguel discusses the relationship between justice, faith, and the work of the church and explains how IJM partners with local authorities and churches around the world to protect vulnerable people from violence, human trafficking, slavery, and abuse. The conversation explores biblical justice, the proper use of power, the role of public justice systems, and why Christians should view justice not as a political issue but as a central aspect of God's redemptive work in the world.

Scripture passage: Amos 5:21-24

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 25:10-29:31.* When you hear the word justice, what comes to mind? How does this conversation expand or challenge your understanding of justice from a biblical perspective?
2. *Listen: 29:34-39:05.* Miguel connects faith and justice throughout the episode. Why do you think some churches find it difficult to engage issues of justice?
3. Listen: *39:55-41:10.* How does viewing justice as part of God's restoration of the world change the way we think about Christian discipleship and mission?
4. *Listen: 41:10-46:55.* What are some examples where helping people in need is not enough unless the underlying causes of the problem are also addressed?
5. What responsibilities come with positions of influence, authority, or privilege? How can Christians use their power in ways that reflect God's character? What unique contributions can the church make in addressing injustice?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Where do you see people in your community who may be vulnerable, overlooked, or lacking protection? What is one specific action you can take this month to advocate for, support, or stand alongside someone experiencing injustice or hardship?

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A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

Wai Chan Lam

Season 2, Ep. 5: Pastor in Japan (2020)
www.chogglobal.org/S2E5 (76 min)

Key Takeaway

God often uses ordinary people and ordinary moments to accomplish extraordinary things.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Pastor Wai Chan Lam shares his remarkable journey from growing up in a traditional Chinese Buddhist family in Singapore to serving as a Church of God pastor in Japan. Raised in a home where religion was primarily transactional and centered around rituals, offerings, and seeking favor from various gods, Wai Chan's life changed when a Christian tutor introduced him to Jesus at the age of eight. Despite strong family opposition to Christianity and having little access to a church community, the seed of faith continued to grow. His story is a powerful testimony of God's pursuit, grace, and faithfulness across cultural, religious, and geographic boundaries.

Scripture passage: John 1:35-42

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 17:20 - 20:40.* How do family traditions, culture, and childhood experiences influence the way people understand God? What beliefs about God have you had to rethink during your spiritual journey?
2. *Listen: 23:35-26:02.* Who has been influential in your faith journey? What qualities did they demonstrate that helped you grow spiritually?
3. *Listen: 48:05-53:35.* Wai Chan reflects on reading the Bible first in Chinese and then later in English, and how each language opened different insights. How might your understanding of faith change if you intentionally learned from Christians whose cultural backgrounds differ from your own?
4. Have you ever had a seemingly ordinary conversation that made a significant impact on your life? Why do you think God often works through simple interactions and relationships?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about someone who has significantly influenced your faith journey. Have you ever thanked them for their impact? This week, consider reaching out to encourage that person. Also ask yourself: Who might God be calling you to encourage, mentor, or invest in spiritually?

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A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

Norberto Kurrle

Season 8, Ep. 7: Church of God, Paraguay (2025)
www.chogglobal.org/S8E7 (47 min)

Key Takeaway

The Church of God in Paraguay demonstrates that ministry thrives when leadership is shared, believers are empowered to serve, and churches intentionally invest in the spiritual and practical needs of their communities.

SUMMARY

Recorded while traveling across Paraguay, Andrew Gale talks with missionary and ministry leader Norberto Kurrle about life, culture, and ministry in Paraguay. Norberto shares his unique multicultural upbringing across Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Germany, and the United States, and explains how those experiences shaped his calling. The conversation explores Paraguay's diverse cultural identity, the growth of the Church of God, the challenges and opportunities of bivocational ministry, and innovative models of church planting and community outreach that are transforming communities throughout the country.

Scripture passage: Matthew 28:19-20

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 0:03-6:23.* How does culture shape our identity? What aspects of your culture, upbringing, or family background have influenced your faith journey?
2. *Listen: 6:23-17:30.* What unique opportunities and challenges arise when serving in a multicultural environment? How have you seen culture affect relationships within the church or community?
3. Listen: *30:00 - 36:07.* How can ministries adapt as the needs of a community change? How can churches discern when it is time to change or evolve a ministry rather than continue doing things the way they've always been done?
4. Norberto discusses Monica, the school director who lives in Itapaso and has become deeply embedded in the lives of the families she serves. What are the strengths of living among and doing life with the people you are serving rather than simply providing services?
5. How can churches become more effective at listening to and learning from believers in other countries and cultures?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Norberto described a church where everyone has a role to play. What gift, ability, or ministry opportunity has God given you that could be used to strengthen your church or community? What is one step you can take this month to become more actively engaged in serving others?

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A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

Esteban Zapata

Season 11, Ep. 4: Church of God, Honduras (2025)
www.chogglobal.org/S11E4 (22 min)

Key Takeaway

Healthy churches equip people to serve both God and their communities rather than passive consumers.

SUMMARY

Recorded in Cuba during a pastors' gathering, Andrew Gale talks with Pastor Esteban Zapata about his faith journey, the Church of God in Honduras, and the exciting future of ministry there. Esteban shares how God transformed his life as a teenager, describes the growth of the Church of God across Honduras, and highlights the denomination's investment in entrepreneurship, church planting, and leadership development. He also discusses challenges such as immigration and leadership loss while emphasizing the hope found through empowering believers to serve their communities and expand God's kingdom.

Scripture passage: 2 Thessalonians 3:13

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 2:15-4:46. H*ow does God meet people during difficult seasons? How have difficult experiences or disappointments opened doors for God to work in your life?
2. *Listen: 7:04-8:16.* Esteban discusses dreams for sending bi-vocational pastors into new communities. How might the model of sending entrepreneurs to plant churches change the way churches interact with the communities where they are planted? What gifts or skills do believers possess that could be used to serve others beyond the walls of the church?
3. *Listen: 9:00-10:10.* If a first-time visitor walked into your church, what would you hope they experience? What makes a church feel like a spiritual family?
4. *Listen: 12:40-16:10.* How can business, work, and entrepreneurship become tools for Christian ministry and community transformation?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Esteban shared a vision of raising up believers who can both support themselves and serve God's kingdom. What gifts, skills, professional experiences, or resources has God given you? How might you use one of those gifts this month to bless others and advance God's mission in your community?

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A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

Bakyrmen Nongpluh

Season 7, Ep. 4: History of the Church in India (2023)
www.chogglobal.org/S7E4 (30 min)

Key Takeaway

The growth of the global church is often sustained by local leaders who faithfully carry the gospel forward within their own cultures and communities.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Andrew Gale speaks with Rev. Bakyrmen Nongpluh about his journey from growing up in Meghalaya, India, to serving as a pastor, missions leader, educator, and principal of Nichols-Roy Bible College. The conversation explores the history of the Church of God in India, the remarkable growth of the church in Meghalaya, the importance of leadership development, and the ongoing need for faithful Christian witness and peacemaking in a rapidly changing world.

Scripture passage: 2 Timothy 2:2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 3:08-6:15.* How have experiences outside your comfort zone shaped your faith, leadership, or understanding of God's work in the world?
2. *Listen: 15:10-21:40.* What stands out to you about the way the Church of God spread in India? How does this story challenge assumptions about missions and church growth?
3. Listen: *22:11-24:30.* How does indigenous leadership contribute to the health, growth, and sustainability of Christian movements around the world?
4. Who are the faithful leaders, past or present, whose influence has shaped your faith community? What lessons from their example are worth preserving for future generations?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Who is someone God may be calling you to encourage, mentor, or invest in spiritually? What specific step can you take this month to help develop a future leader, disciple, or ministry servant?

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A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

Emmanuel Masamba

Season 6, Ep. 5: Church of God, Malawi (2022)
www.chogglobal.org/S6E5 (35 min)

Key Takeaway

The church demonstrates the love of Christ most powerfully when it serves communities with both compassionate action and faithful witness during times of need.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Andrew Gale speaks with Rev. Emmanuel Masamba about the Church of God in Malawi, its growth and ministries, and the devastating impact of Cyclones Ana and Gombe in 2022. Emmanuel shares how churches responded to widespread flooding, displacement, and loss while continuing to serve vulnerable communities. Despite significant challenges, the conversation highlights the resilience of Malawian believers, the importance of compassionate ministry, and the hope God continues to bring through the church.

Scripture passage: 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 3:58-8:55.* What stood out to you about the Church of God in Malawi? How does learning about believers in other parts of the world tied to the history of a place strengthen your understanding of the global church?
2. *Listen: 19:35-24:20.* When disaster strikes, what role should the church play in providing both immediate relief and long-term hope?
3. Listen: *28:35-31:40.* How can faith communities help one another recognize signs of hope?
4. Why is it important for churches to address both physical and spiritual needs when serving their communities?
5. How can times of disaster create opportunities for the church to demonstrate God's love in practical ways?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about a challenge or crisis your community has faced. How did local churches respond? What opportunities might exist for even deeper engagement and service in the future?

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A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

Lennox Boyce

Season 11, Ep. 5: Church of God, Barbados (2025)
www.chogglobal.org/S11E5 (18 min)

Key Takeaway

Faithful church leadership involves serving both local communities and the broader global church while responding with hope and resilience to the challenges people face.

SUMMARY

In this episode, Andrew interviews Rev. Lennox Boyce, pastor and national leader for the Church of God in Barbados. He shares the story of the church's beginnings in Barbados, discusses current challenges facing congregations, including leadership development and engaging younger generations, and highlights how local churches are meeting practical needs through compassionate outreach. The conversation offers a hopeful look at faithful ministry in a changing world.

Scripture passage: Matthew 9:35-38

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 2:20-7:15.* Lennox describes Barbados, its history, culture, and the beginnings of the Church of God on the island. How does the unique culture and history of a community influence the way churches engage? Why is it important for churches to remember and celebrate their history?
2. *Listen: 7:42-9:31.* Lennox discusses the aging pastoral workforce, churches without pastors, and the need for new leaders to answer God's call. What can churches do to identify, mentor, and encourage future ministry leaders?
3. What are some barriers that prevent younger generations from engaging with the church? How can churches communicate the gospel in ways that are meaningful and authentic to them?
4. *Listen: 12:25-13:50.* Why is it important for churches to combine sharing the gospel with meeting practical needs? How have you seen acts of compassion open doors for ministry?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about your church or ministry. Where is there a need for leadership development, mentoring, or succession planning? What is one intentional step you could take this month to encourage, support, or invest in a future leader?

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A GLOBAL STRATEGY PODCAST

Joseph the Just

Season 6, Ep. 11: Joseph the Just (2022)
www.chogglobal.org/S6E11 (19 min)

Key Takeaway

Biblical justice is not merely about enforcing rules but about demonstrating righteousness, mercy, and faithfulness in relationship with others.

SUMMARY

In this season finale episode, Andrew and Nate reflect on Advent, Christmas traditions, and a profound insight from Kenneth Bailey's book *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*. Focusing on Matthew 1:18-19, they explore why Joseph is described as a "just" man when his actions seem to depart from the strict legal expectations of his day. The conversation challenges listeners to reconsider biblical justice, not primarily as punishment or legal correctness, but as compassion, mercy, humility, and right relationship with others.

Scripture passage: Matthew 1:18-25

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Listen: 8:45-11:30.* When you hear the word justice, what comes to mind? How does Joseph's response to Mary's situation challenge or expand your understanding of justice?
2. *Listen: 11:35-13:31.* Can you think of a time when showing mercy required greater strength or wisdom than simply enforcing rules? What did you learn from that experience?
3. *Listen: 16:01-17:30.* Why do you think Jesus connected spiritual transformation with practical compassion? How can churches better hold these together?
4. In what ways did Jesus embody a different kind of justice than what the world often expects? How does that shape the church's mission today?

REFLECTION QUESTION

Consider a relationship, disagreement, or difficult situation in your life. What would it look like to respond with Joseph's kind of justice, one that is rooted in compassion and humility rather than simply asserting your rights or proving you are right? What specific action could you take this week to practice that kind of justice?