

YCIP Workshop

SUMMARY

This session will encourage the group to move beyond the ideological commentating that Christians often restrict themselves to. The session will seek to provide a practical basis from which we can engage in politics locally. In particular, we will focus on harnessing our political power for good.

Introduction



Introduce the workshop

Welcome

This workshop is designed to help YCIP groups start to think about politics in their locality. It seeks to get away from the discussion of politics from the sidelines and into action.

Start with a few rounds of questions. Give the participants a chance to reflect on their answers properly. Proper reflection and sharing is central to healthy discussion throughout the session.

Rounds

What are your current political activities?

What does political power mean to you?

When has politics seemed off-putting to you and why?

What injustice in your community makes you angry?

Give plenty of time before beginning for people to reflect on their answer. Give people time to share individually without being interrupted. This is a time of sharing rather than discussion.

Once you have all answered write the injustices you have mentioned down on a poster paper in bubbles with plenty of space around them. We will return to these later in the session.

Scripture Reading



Read Luke 5: 17-26 Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

Passage

17 One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. **18** Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. **19** When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. **20** When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." **21** The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" **22** Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? **23** Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?' **24** But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." **25** Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. **26** Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

Application

How did Christ deal with the problem that was presented to him? There was a man who was paralyzed in front of him which was an obvious problem. However, Jesus also perceived that there was a deeper issue at play which was the sin in the man's life. While they are connected in the story, they need to be dealt with differently.

Think about the injustices you mentioned above. Can you think about what are the obvious problems that need a specific response and those issues that are not obvious, which are connected but have a much deeper root?

Video- Jesus and Politics (2:35 Minutes)



Play the Christians in Politics video “Jesus and Politics”.

Discussion

What is Jesus' posture to politics?

How does seeing politics as a part of God's kingdom shift the way we think about it?

How does Jesus respond to political problems?

Is political engagement restricted to political parties?

Application

When we look at the life of Christ, he encounters people with problems that have both visible and invisible needs. While connected, the needs require different responses. Christ would always seek to address the visible and immediate needs while also looking to address the more systemic and invisible problems in peoples' lives.

How can you break the big problems on your poster into addressable issues that are visible or invisible? Write down the issues you come up with around the problems. The issues will probably be a mixture of visible and invisible problems that may need an immediate or long term solution.

Exercise - What is Politics?



Get another poster paper out for this exercise.

Institutional Power

What sustains democracy and positive politics is not just turning up for elections and voting, but democracy thrives or decays in the years in between elections. What provides a strong democracy is the people engaging with it proactively as individuals and as institutions, within political parties and from the outside.

For this exercise, write down all the local institutions and bodies that come to mind when you think of politics. Then draw links between them all and write down what connects them. Be creative, you will be surprised at how seemingly disconnected institutions are connected through relationships as well as common political interests that can be harnessed for good.

Application

Turn back to your own problems that have been broken down into issues. Who are the institutions connected, responsible or concerned about the injustice? Write them down around the issues and how they are connected.

Think about how those with similar concerns about an injustice can come together to deal with those issues systemically by engaging government or those responsible for dealing with the injustice. Think about the relationships between institutions and what relationships need to be made. Positive local political change comes from a place of deep rootedness in a community. It cannot be conjured up artificially.

Video and Conclusions



Play the Christians in Politics video “Show Up 2.0” (1:38 minutes).

Conclusions

Throughout the session you have identified what the 'Jericho Roads' are in your context. You have broken the problems into issues, and you have identified the different institutions and actors that are connected to those issues. Many of you will have been involved with charities and being the Good Samaritan, but which issues need a solution that involves making the Jericho Road safe? What are the practical things that you can do this week to begin that journey of truly transformative politics and not simply commentating from the side? Below are some examples:

- Contact your local MP/councillor about the issue asking what is being done or offering to help
- Ask the institutions you are a part of (start with your church) what issues in the community are they concerned about and what political solutions are being sought
- Join your local political party (remember joining a party is not agreeing with everything about it, rather it is getting a space at the table to decide what they believe).

Whatever action you decide on, do it. We need more Christians in these spaces acting for Christ and creating a just political climate.

Prayer



Finish your time with prayer. Pray over these issues. Pray for government, both locally and nationally. Pray for local institutions that you are a part of; that they will people politically active and be a part of transforming communities.