



**DYNAMIC GOSPEL
NEW EUROPE**

CONVERSATION
AND GATHERING

Summer 2021 Conversation

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Welcome

The summer gives us a chance to slow down a little and there will be just one Lausanne Europe Conversation for the months of July and August. We anticipate that Impact Groups will just meet once over those two months and when you do it will probably depend on which country you are in.

Given the season, we also wanted the Conversation to be a little lighter and to be more reflective. One of the multiplex topics at the November gathering will be The Christian and Art so we thought this was a good moment to introduce that theme into the Conversation.

There is an invitation to reflect on a painting alongside the scripture passage to which it refers by Charles Kelly and Nathalie Meeks. We will also watch and listen to a new hymn that has been produced in association with the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity.

This month we will reflect on an interview with one of today's great Christian apologists, Oxford mathematician Prof. John Lennox, but we will also read two articles by Dave Benson and Lars Dahle, which challenge all of us to see ourselves, and our churches, as essential in the apologetic task. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email us at conversation@lausanneeurope.org

And if you are just starting your Impact Group, or are confused about what they are about, then check out the introduction pages to the [Conversation](#) and [Impact Groups](#) to find out more.

Instructions

1. Introductions

Give time for everyone to greet each other and share something of how their summer is going. Pray that God would restore us over this holiday season and would speak to us through scripture, art, and song.

2. Lectio Divina – Visio Divina

Some of you may be familiar with the spiritual discipline of Lectio Divina, an Early Church practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer. Charles Kelly and Nathalie Meeks have complemented this with Visio Divina, a reflection on a piece of art, specifically Rembrandt's *Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee*.

The Lectio Divina and Visio Divina exercises are meant to be done individually. Nevertheless, we thought it would be really good for Impact Groups to share those insights together. So make sure you take time to do the exercise BEFORE the group so you have something to contribute.

1. Did God draw your attention to something that you hadn't seen before as a result of the Lectio Divina?
2. Similarly, did the Visio Divina exercise open your eyes to something new?
3. Share in the group which character in the boat you most identified with and why.
4. Did you find it challenging to use a piece of art in this way? If so, why? If not, why do you think others might do so?
5. Take a moment to pray for each other in the storms we may be facing.

3. We Seek Your Kingdom

Noel Robinson, Andy Flannagan, and Graham Hunter have taken a traditional hymn tune and written new lyrics that inspire us to see our daily tasks through God's eyes – and

live out the prayer 'your kingdom come' in every part of life.

Music has a way of moving us and stirring us to action. This hymn has been written to encourage the church into action. After listening to the hymn, we would like you to reflect on the following three questions and come to the Impact Group ready to share your thoughts.

1. At a personal level, where are you praying for God's kingdom to come in your daily life? Where do you want to see God breakthrough and reign?
2. What can you do to empower the people in your church or network to be agents for God's kingdom to transform, revive, and heal their workplaces, families, and communities?
3. Jesus preached a gospel of the kingdom that had a special focus on the least and the last: Where in your surroundings, or more broadly in Europe, do you see a particular need for the Kingdom to come and bring transformative change? How can we as a church send people into these areas?

4. Were there any other phrases in the hymn that really struck you? Share that with your group.

4. Prayer

Always make sure that you leave enough time to pray together every time you meet. Here are the prayer points for this month's Conversation:

1. Pray that God would use this holiday season to restore us. Continue to pray for the many who, either because of Covid-19 or other illnesses, are being treated in hospitals across Europe and the world, and for grieving families.
2. The heavens declare the glory of God and his law refreshes the soul (Psalm 19). Pray that God would speak to us this summer, through what we see in his creation and through his Word. "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." (Psalm 19:14)
3. Pray that we might seek God's kingdom in every sphere of our lives, both personally, in our church, in our neighbourhood, and to the ends of the earth. End

your Impact Group praying the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.

5. Make Your Contribution to the Conversation

We really want to hear back from your Impact Group after each session. Please find a few minutes to summarise what you hear from God, the highlights of the discussion, and any questions that were raised, in the comments box immediately below.

[GO TO THE CONVERSATION](#)

Lectio Divina – Visio Divina

By Charles David Kelly & Natalie Meeks

[Go to the article online](#)

CHRIST IN THE STORM ON THE SEA OF GALILEE **Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn**

This spiritual exercise connects the verbal with the visual. Beginning with Origen in the third century, Lectio Divina is an Early Church practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word. Traditionally, Lectio Divina has four separate steps: read (reading the text four times), meditate, pray, and contemplate.

Visio Divina is a form of looking in which we prayerfully invite God to speak to our hearts as we look at an image or a painting. As you gaze, you will be offered some questions for silent reflection, some of which may speak to you, while others you may choose to ignore. At the end of

the Visio Divina, you will be invited to share a word or phrase to express your experience of the image.

Let's start. Take a moment to pause, sit still, and relax. How might God want to speak to you through this passage and painting?

LECTIO DIVINA

Don't read too fast! Meditate on the passage.

Mark 4:35-41 (ESV)

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."

And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.

And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!"

And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"

And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Pray to quieten yourself and ask for God's illumination.

1. *Lectio* (read) – Read the text for the first time. Gently listen; don't force it. To what is God drawing your attention?
2. *Meditatio* (reflect) – Read the text for a second time: This is not a study. Pay attention to what God pointed out and reflect further. Does a word or phrase come to mind?
3. *Oratio* (respond) – Read the text for a third time. Respond with short thoughts you want to capture. Write down your thoughts in a journal or notebook.

4. *Contemplatio* (rest) – Read the text for a fourth time. This is not prayer or meditation but rather a chance to sit quietly and let God work.

VISIO DIVINA

'Don't Look too fast! Gaze upon the image.



Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, "Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee", 1633, oil on canvas, 160 cm × 128 cm (62.99 in × 50.39 in). This painting is still missing after the 1990 robbery from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, MA, USA.

ABOUT THE PAINTER

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669) was a Dutch draughtsman, painter, and printmaker. An innovative and prolific master in three media, he is generally considered one of the greatest visual artists in the history of art and the most important in Dutch art history.

QUESTIONS

1. Look at the image in an intentional way. Don't over analyze. Simply allow your vision to rest with the image. What parts of the image visually jump out at you?
2. What thoughts or emotions are emerging from the image? Write down single words or short phrases which reflect your response, not whole explanations. There is no insignificant discovery.

3. Slowly, count the characters. Why did the artist paint this number of people?
4. What are the characters doing?
5. Who do you see that you wouldn't expect to see? Who is in the cabin?
6. Which character in the boat do you most identify with?
As you continue in an attitude of prayer, what is the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart? What emotions, desires and longings are evoked?
7. What is your response to what the Holy Spirit has been revealing? Is there something you would like to share with others?
8. Take the time to respond to God in gratitude, supplication, wonder, lament, confession, and praise. What do you need to remember?
9. Bring your prayer to a close by resting in God's grace and love.

We Seek Your Kingdom

By Noel Robinson, Andy Flannagan, Graham Hunter, and the LICC

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Lyrics

We seek your kingdom throughout every sphere
We long for heaven's demonstration here
Jesus your light shine bright for all to see
Transform, revive, and heal society

Before all things, in him were all things made
Inspiring culture, media, and trade
May all our work serve your economy
Transform, revive, and heal society

Peace, truth, and justice reigning everywhere
With us be present in our public square
Fill all who lead with your integrity
Transform, revive, and heal society

Forgive us Lord, when we have not engaged
Failing to scribe your heart on history's page
Make us again what we were made to be
Transform, revive, and heal society

Faithful to govern ever may we be
Selfless in service, loving constantly
In everything may your authority
Transform, revive, and heal society