

Fair Trade | Jason Eyre: Pt 2

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

church, community, mission, Mormon, Christ, hope, ministry, leadership, Pride, experience

SPEAKERS

Jason Eyre, Robin Linkhart, Blake Smith

Blake Smith 00:27

Hello Project Zion Podcast listeners. This is Blake Smith, Project Manager for Project Zion Podcast. In today's episode, you'll hear part two of the interview between apostle Robin Linkhart and Jason Eyre. We hope you enjoy.

Robin Linkhart 00:41

Hello and welcome to Fair Trade a Project Zion Podcast series where courageous people share the candid stories of their faith journey, and what brought them to Community of Christ. I'm your host, Robin Linkhart. I'm here today with Jason Eyre, who shared his faith transition story with us on episode 164 in February 2019. Welcome, Jason, it's so good to have you with us today on Project Zion Podcast.

Jason Eyre 01:12

Thank you, Robin, it's great to be back on the podcast again.

Robin Linkhart 01:16

So as we said, you have been a very active member even before you joined the church, and you continued to support congregational life both at the house church in Provo after you moved up, and then in Salt Lake City, even when you still had your membership in the Provo house church, she would come up to Salt Lake periodically. And I think when you were attending house church, you were helping out with leadership and planning there with Carla. And then, you eventually transferred your membership up to Salt Lake and one thing led to another and you're on the pastorate. So tell us all about that because you were doing all kinds of things.

Jason Eyre 02:00

Well, so I think one of the best ways to ... I don't see myself as a church nerd, but one of the things I found coming to Community of Christ, and I mentioned earlier in this conversation that there were some things that I had left at the LDS church that I really appreciated. And a lot of it had to do with the topics on Sunday and those types of things. I really felt a home again, and really felt like I loved the church, and the house church in Provo used to be held every other week. And so I would try to at least go to Salt Lake on the weeks when I wasn't in, wasn't then, when I wasn't doing house church in Provo. I definitely played a leadership role in house church in Provo, as far as Carla was fairly new to the LDS culture. And so I had a lot of chances to "Mormon splain" some things might be the way to say it. We had some really awkward experiences where we had a subgroup of the Mormon church to Snufferites

that were trying to infiltrate. Now I learned later, it wasn't just Provo is happening in Salt Lake, Boise, and all over, but I called out to Carla and said of one of the meetings, something's not right here. And we've got to watch for these things. So, I had a strange way of being kind of an ambassador, if you will, and helping clarify that. In house church in Provo, I definitely had a chance to visit with people, especially who are coming for the first time, in dire faith crisis circumstances. And where I had had an acute faith crisis could sit down and kind of show them the things that connected for me. Like I remember Tony and, or not Tony, but Charmaine was visiting one week, and someone came in who had just, they had just left the LDS church and came to us almost in haste. And there were some very specific things happening that were just, you can tell that this person was very much suffering. And, as I explained, I talked about some of the things on the Latter-day Seekers website, how we don't have to proselyte to active Mormons, how I felt like I could come here and not disavow my family. Like the November policy, it required kids to disavow their parents, that I could still have my baptism, that when my father baptized me when I was eight years old, that today is still my baptism. And then I was able to just be confirmed. Little things like that as I can sit down and explain just in pure love and emotion, I guess is the way to say it, really was powerful for me and made house church a wonderful thing. The pandemic is probably what led me mortis. Salt Lake from Provo. I did do the lessons and I was the online church expert throughout the pandemic for both congregations. With house church, we had people from all over the country at times, coming in and having some very interesting discussions. There was a point in my spiritual life where I needed to go back in-person. And we, we got things straight out where Salt Lake could go back in-person. And that's when I moved my membership to Salt Lake because house church decided that they weren't quite ready to go back in-person and spiritually, I'm trying to kind of keep the ministry alive and being the back of the house person, if you will, but that had taken a lot from me and I needed spiritually to be back in-person. So that's when I decided to transition to Salt Lake, and started serving there with Carla on the pastoral leadership team. For me, it was kind of neat because I was able to take and embrace some of the little things. I actually played a role in us starting to serve coffee at Salt Lake. And we have coffee pots and we fresh grind the beans, we're really trying to take our hospitality up a notch, and make people feel welcome. We have hot chocolate right there for everybody. We're, we had a lesson on kind of reclaiming the word of wisdom on using tea and brewing herbal teas where Joanna brought and taught us amazing things and has changed my life on a daily basis. But now in Salt Lake, we are trying to take and do some amazing things with that. But, that's what transitioned me from house church up to Salt Lake was, they wanted to stay online and I was more than happy with them staying online. I just kind of left and let them do their own thing there. But but for my spiritual well-being I needed to kind of step back. I mean, I had been doing online ministry with you since what 2016-2017? [Robin: 2017 Yeah] It's all a blur. It's been so long on some of those and, and the skills from doing Forward with Community, which was one of those early leadership roles like where Brittany, you, and I and Nancy started that together. Where that, you know, I was able to take those skills and quickly bring Salt Lake into the online world when we needed to. And to be quite honest, we still do an online zoom service at Salt Lake every Sunday. It's been fun the last few months to take some of my skills. We've cleaned up the audio, you joined us the week we got the new camera, I finally learned how to make it automated, automatically move around, which was good. But I am trying to keep the little things if you will. Some of the microphone upgrades and things we've done are actually going to be able to we're gonna be able to take them up to reunion with this this year. Okay. And then we'll have our kid's camp at the church this year for the first time. So kind of like Night at the Museum, it's gonna be "night at the scary old 60-year-old church building.

Robin Linkhart 07:30

Well, speaking of online, your ordination happened online. Well was hybrid, right? Because you were at ... tell us about that.

Jason Eyre 07:48

The time that online ministries (sacraments) came out. I swear they came out like two weeks after I was ordained. And I don't have any issue with that. I was working in Carla's backyard. We, because it was the height of the pandemic, we were trying to figure out exactly how to do this and what to do. And, we sought special guidance. And where Carla and Kuzma, both were able to ordain me. We weren't causing cross-contamination or those kinds of things. We lived in the same community. They live just in Eagle Mountain over the couple miles down the road. So I actually yeah, we zoomed and we live zoomed it. So people all over, many of the people, from the Blairs to Penny, to Carla, to Brittany, to Robin, everybody was able to come and join us Karin online, which was amazing. And yeah, I sat in the backyard. They walked out, they ordained me and walked back in. And we had as little contact as possible, but we still did it kind of the old-fashioned way, if you will. We did record it, which was really neat. And I can go back and watch it any time. And Joelle would have been with us at that time as well. So anyway, that was, I was ordained a couple of weeks later. It came out that you could do online ordinations, and that would have been a lot easier, because Carla had to do a lot of work to get the approvals and make sure everything was in line with the church standards at the time. And I'm grateful for the work she did for that and grateful that I could get ordained and I've tried to take that and do my best with it and run with it and continue to use it serve others.

Robin Linkhart 08:10

Well, it was just an incredible blessing, and the Spirit was so full and powerful. It still makes tears come to my eyes. It was just that gentleness of how Community of Christ, officiates sacraments and our interconnected community, the blessings of community that just run so strong. It was so beautiful, so beautiful. So, talking about how...

Jason Eyre 10:29

I don't think I've ever had a chance to talk to you about that, Robin. Yeah, probably the first time I've really talked about it. I will throw Carla under the bus. She did give me a hug afterwards. And it was probably one of the best hugs I've ever had, and that I needed because we had just been apart, everyone had for so long. I'm so glad we're back together today and that the pandemic ended.

Robin Linkhart 10:52

Yes, yes, yes. So tell us about how you came to be on the pastorate and all about the work you and your team are doing. I mean, you have this amazing pastoral team.

Jason Eyre 11:03

No, I really do. And so, I did join the pastoral leadership team with Carla, Leslie... Tyler wasn't necessarily on it, because he was pastoring house church, but he helped us out quite a bit and would meet with us. Monica would have been there, and then Laura. And so it's been really, it was neat,

because the first year I got to experience with Carla, and kind of see the World Church perspective side of that. And then Brittany took over the next year. And so that was Brittany, Michelle, Oh, man, I can't remember...

Robin Linkhart 11:39

Alex, Alex was on.

Jason Eyre 11:40

Yes, Alex was

Robin Linkhart 11:41

And Laura.

Jason Eyre 11:42

And Laura. And then this year, it's Joanna. But the amazing thing about serving on the pastor leadership team. And then maybe this is where I have a unique experience as well, Carla, because I was a clerk, and I'm the main clerk and a Mormon Bishopric. And so, in Nashville, I did do Bishopric meetings, and welfare, and I wrote all the checks for the church and those types of things. Kind of a financial officer type job, yes. A very different way of operating and experience, but comparing and contrasting that, I love how the diversity makes the experience such a different experience. Definitely, it's been amazing to serve with Brittany and Laura, and just different personalities, different skill sets. The, it was a little bit scary for us, because we had for so many years had such amazing help and support from World Church. And Carla got called to the Presiding Bishopric. And how could she ever say no to that, for Salt Lake and, and I'm so glad she's serving us back there in that difficult position as well through these difficult times. But it, you know, we kind of found ourselves out here taking care of things by ourself. And the probably some of the neatest, neater things that have happened. Of course, I mentioned a little bit earlier, a relationship with Ogden helped us engage, and we've been able to ... we've done funerals at Ogden's church for people when that's where they've wanted to be. We've had some pretty tough funerals, because we've served in the leadership team with one of our members losing their husband in a very tragic way. A couple of them actually, but definitely being on a pastor leadership team. You're, you're in the middle of it, you're in the thick of ministry. And there's everything from the challenges of making sure the service is there each week, making sure that things are happening. I probably have my routine where I'm the tech guy, I make coffee in the morning, and I try to sneak and bring doughnuts every couple of weeks if I can, if I have time or those kinds of things. I do try to do the little things if you will, because it's the thoughtful things that make church such a neat experience. We thought we found ourselves overwhelmed at times. We are a congregation where on any given week, we will probably have one or two new people just randomly show up at Sunday school. And then a couple of different people show up for worship, and sometimes they stay in sometimes they don't. And so we always have to be ready to answer the tough questions. Just the one thing of being a house church, I was able to understand and have great conversations with people in the thick of acute faith transitions and we see that in Salt Lake just as much as we did a house church in Provo. Sometimes though, we have a whole congregation around us and we have to kind of break off and have those conversations, if you will. And, and so there's definitely this helping people go through a tough thing, being a group that we're all of us, we're former LDS at this point. We definitely bring a

strong empathy to that. And so each of us have had our own journey into Community of Christ. It's very, it's been very powerful, though, for us to be able to have kind of a full understanding, if you will. I'm not Mormon splaining. Like I, like I mentioned, I was at house church. But at the same time, that just helps us be more direct with our ministry. And it's, it's done, we have seen so many amazing things happen this year, we've seen a lot of people join our congregation, we are a growing and thriving congregation, we're trying to, I think one of the biggest challenges we face right now, and that we are trying to get better at is our youth ministry that we one week might have 12 kids, and one week might have two. And then one week might have even more. And so, we've we're trying to make sure that that we provide the ministry beyond Kid's Camp. To that on a weekly basis, we are trying to make sure that we provide the ministry our online community needs. It's been surprising to me that there were people that were exploring the church in 2018, and 2019, who suddenly have shown up on zoom the last few weeks again, and are reconnecting with us and then coming. So there's just it, there is just a, I guess, the pastor leadership ministry, you have to be ready for everything. And it's definitely been an amazing experience and continues to be. And I'm really excited to see where we continue to go as we serve together.

Robin Linkhart 17:10

Well, we're excited to have you on that team. Jason, it's been wonderful to watch you all. You attended World Conference last year in 2020. I think that was your first World Conference, right? Yeah. Yeah. 25. So Wow.

Jason Eyre 17:24

So one of the challenges I have is I was pretty new at my job when the last full conference happened. And I only got like a week of vacation. And I needed that for reunion. Like I use all my vacation for church, which is... This year, I finally just left and went to Hawaii, but that's another story. But last week, I did and I drove, I drove to church. I've driven through having driven from Nashville, Utah, several times I know the road through Kansas, I know when to take the 80 and when to take the 70 and all that kind of stuff. And I deliberately drove. I wanted to cross the plains, so to speak, one of my own pioneer experience. And really, that was the first time that I had seen the Temple in Independence. I had never been in the auditorium. I had been to Independence, the LDS visitor center across the street several times. In fact, we usually stopped let our kids play on the covered wagon in the basement while we sat in an air conditioned building and rested for a minute on the long trip. But I've never been to any of the Community of Christ sites or things in Independence. And so that was really neat to go. What really surprised me more than anything is that, and I go to conferences with work and things like that all the time. But the sense of community there, you know, everyone who had played a role in my faith journey from you to Karin to Carla, to Brittany to Josh, to John Vanderwalker, my mission center president to John Hamer to Leandro and the people that do Beyond the Walls. Everybody was there. And the people that I had listened to on Project Zion and like the, the people from Europe, Rand and gosh, I can't think of all the names right now. But, and then Michelle was there from the pastor leadership team. And so it was just really interesting to see everything come together. Now. I am kind of a business meeting geek, and just sat there with absolute fascination, watching the legislative process, thinking that there could even be a legislative process. It was a very, very empowering experience for me. It was like I got to be there with, well the people from Auckland were there. Blair was there. Everybody was there, and we got to sit together in our mission center. And it was really, I would just call

it Zion. Then we went and did, we had breakouts, we had dinner together, I went and snuck out for lunch with friends took someone to the ER who got overwhelmed with some of the emotion that was happening inside the, the room so to speak. I definitely had an amazing experience there. But, you know, the other crazy thing for me and this is, again, I had never really dealt with General Authorities in the LDS church. I had when I was a missionary, I was in the office, so I did see the 70s and other leaders come through. But we were walking from the Temple, I was with Elray, we were walking from the temple over to the auditorium one evening between sessions and all of a sudden Stassi and Scott from the First Presidency are right there, that Stassi stops us to talk to Elray about his resolution. I joked with Scott about he got the easy resolution. And then we went and sat down, and we couldn't figure out, I kept trying to get some stuff out of my bag, which was bad, because when I looked over President Veazey, was sitting seven seats that way, and Stassi was sitting seven seats that way, and Scott was sitting over here, and they all have their security detail, and here I am trying to pick this little bag of peanuts out of the bag, I'm like, I probably triggered all their security people. Just kind of a funny experience. But it was neat that they were in the audience with us exploring the worship service, and just how small a community it is, and how close knit a community it is. And what a great fan. And so I just I absolutely love the world church experience. I got to learn a lot from kind of the back of the house as I visited with Karin and others about the communion experience and trying to make it safe. And people wanted orange Fanta or didn't want orange Fanta and some of those kinds of things. That that are those details in in being in leadership that, kind of show what a big deal it is to put that on. And I think for me, the other kind of interesting part was, I drove home in one day, all the way from Independence to my house. I have a I have a hybrid car that gets 560 miles on a tank of gas. And I filled up at the turnpike that QT (QuickTrip) ahead to see QT one last time in Denver. And then when I got the Green River, I was gonna stay and I'm like, it's 630. I can be home by nine. And I just did it. Now I didn't have any kids with me. Right? I mean, I'm so used to making that trip from Nashville. That took two days, because we had to stop use the restroom, we have to stop and do all this. Well, it was just me. And you know, but for me, it was kind of neat, because I got to do it without losing all my vacation at work. And I got to have a great experience with it. And so I am looking forward to the next one, which I think is next year. Yeah, I am excited to do it again. But it's also been interesting, Robin, we get a lot of questions about World Conference. And honestly, it was helpful for me to share and help other people prepare to go to World Conference next year. Yeah, so it's definitely just as much a leadership experience as it was being there and being served.

Robin Linkhart 23:33

Well, it was really exciting to see you there and to be with people like you. So Jason, as you walk with church members and friends and new seekers, what do you see people looking for in their church or faith experience? I mean, what connects for them in meaningful ways as they choose to journey with us or just spend time with Community of Christ? I mean, in a sense, what are their big five questions that you're hearing?

Jason Eyre 24:01

Well, I it's been very interesting. One week, we had eight ladies who obviously knew each other coming and asking us about women's ordination and, and asking, so, there's definitely a lot of questions that we get about the difference between the two churches. There's a lot of surprise when they realize that we have the Book of Mormon. There's been some interesting Book of Mormon revelations lately. We

had a person who grew up in East Germany get baptized into our congregation. And he mentioned that the German translation of the Book of Mormon in Community of Christ is actually better than the LDS German translation for him. And he's been able to reconnect with the Book of Mormon in his native language. And so the book of Mormon's been interesting because I can tell you when I left the LDS church, I left that with it, but I've reconnected with it in many ways and have been able to I think I had mentioned on the earlier podcasts, the Trinitarian side. Those are those are definitely things that come up, having a woman pastor comes up a lot, and having mostly women serving in our congregation comes up. But there's also we are trying to, we're working with Harmony, and going through their program for becoming welcoming and affirming. We are dealing with a lot of people in the LGBT community that are in very different places. And they've brought tools to us, like their one-on-one interviews, which was, we all freaked out and said, This is home teaching. And then when we actually went through the experience, which we did in Sunday school, so it wasn't at home, to bring that Mormon trauma back into our lives, so to speak. When we actually had our one-on-one conversations, for example, at, during Sunday School at church, we learned a lot about each other, we experienced a lot of story time with each other. And those types of things, the tools that we're getting through harmony, the deeper understanding and experiencing, we're having with the LGBT community is really, really important. Because that's something that's very much needed in our area, and there are a lot of people that come to us that are hurting with the faith transition. But a lot of times the intersectionality, of LGBTQ type issues and other things are very much front and center in their lives. And, not only are we kind of helping them unravel some things or deconstruct some things, we're actually helping them construct a loving, understanding faith community. I think probably one of my more interesting experiences was a few weeks back, we went to Davis County Pride, which I didn't know Davis County was a safe place to do any of that. And Michelle helped us because she's from up in that part north of Salt Lake. And we had a lot of people come by our table. And one of the realizations I had was, and I just said this directly. I said, Look, we're not here to bring church to Pride. Because you're not here for church either. But we are here to celebrate with you. And we are here to experience love and joy in community. And we realized we went to Winco, and they had all this weird candy that people liked, like the Sunkiss, candies and things. But I do keep coming back to hospitality out of everything I've seen and learned in Community of Christ. I don't, it's not necessarily an enduring principle. I mean, there's blessings of community, and there's all these things. But the lessons I've learned about hospitality have been, and the hospitality I received when I was transitioning from living in Panguitch up to here, people open their homes to me, people took good, huge good care of me, all those just the lived experiences, "by their fruits, you shall know them" type stuff. That really is what we're taking now into Pride. That's what we're trying to use to build a better safe space. You know, we, it's interesting, a couple of weeks ago, we had someone who's transitioning and, their gender. And as part of that transition, needed to get some statements and realize the church was where they had started to transition earlier than they had in their general life. And that they went and got Brittany and others to sign written statements for them to help the judge understand that they had been expressing as this particular new gender. And it was neat to see that church was a place that could happen. And there's definitely a lot of the LGBT community is confusing. And there's definitely a lot of different challenges and different things there. As we meet people with different orientations, but we have as a conversation, as a congregation, we've had some of the firsthand experts for lack of a way to say it, come in and help explain some of the different expressions and some of the different things for us, so that we can be there and we can understand. And sometimes it might be who to have them talk to as well for more empathy on a

particular thing or those kinds of things. But we do, we are striving to be opening and welcoming to everybody. We are striving to live our enduring principles. And we hope not just as a faith community, but leadership and the community as a whole, that we're doing a lot of things. One other interesting realization we came to in Salt Lake. And you'll appreciate this having been pastor there before. But we've also tried to reconnect and actually connect more and support more of the preschool that uses our building. It was a strange recollection when the Mormon prophet's grandkids went to our preschool in our building, that was a shocker. And what we realized was that the ministry that the preschool in our building offers is a ministry to our neighborhood. And you know, we may not be in a neighborhood where a homeless ministry makes sense. But that preschool ministry is huge. And during the pandemic, we had people support the preschool through their tough times financially in other ways. And these were people that had gone to preschool there and came back. And we've had people visit our congregation and say, Well, I feel right at home in this building. Because between ages two and five, this is where I came weekdays. And so we're finding ministry taking new and unexpected things. We're exploring the mission prayer. And I did, actually there is a Project Zion episode that Brittany and I did, where I talked about some of my leadership at work, and how the mission prayer has taken me into new and unexpected places, and it continues. I am doing some very crazy interesting things at work. Almost every crazy thing that I've done has started to come to fruition. And there'll be some fun stories to tell there too, with, I'm trying to help the marginalized and the need, and use my secular role, if you will, to help live out mission at work.

Robin Linkhart 31:43

Yes, vocation as mission is a very powerful way to live out mission.

Jason Eyre 31:49

It helps you enjoy your job, too.

Robin Linkhart 31:52

So Jason, when you think about the worldwide Community of Christ, from the little to the big and interconnected across the globe, what are your hopes for Community of Christ?

Jason Eyre 32:07

You know, I think that our scriptures, our Enduring Principles, our Mission Initiatives, and our church leaders, have given us a lot of challenges. And they've called us to that challenge. And it's my hope that we can fulfill that in the way that they envision. And it's my hope that we can even bring new and keen understanding, and an enhanced ministry and other things to even surpass what they've dreamed of. As I read through, we joke with people who come into Community of Christ for the first time, or we give them a copy of the Doctrine and Covenants. To be honest, I usually give them a hymn book, I still think that some of our needs ministry, but the Doctrine and Covenants, we tell them to start at the back and read it back to front. And the words that are embodied there in scripture that we often use as our sending forth messages and things like that. It's my hope that everyone can feel the spiritual growth that's intended there, that everyone can feel the love that's intended there. And that everyone can experience God in Christ, and everything through that. I, today has been a very strange day with two major lawsuits, one in Idaho, and, of course, the stuff in New York with the former president and those types of things. And one of my kids looked at me, and says, "The world is such a crappy place." And to

be quite honest, there's a lot of contention in the world right now. There's a lot of insecurity. There's a lot of frustration. And there's just, even this past school year, I have seen increasing our homeless kids increasing our kids that are struggling with language. They're coming from other countries, a lot of refugees. I have just seen people with intersexual, or multiple challenges in their lives being challenged in ways I've never dreamed about. Just the increasing costs of food, how expensive it is even to go get fast food or eat out in America right now. There's just so many things that are, that it feels like are working against us. And, and it's my hope that we can get through these tough times, kind of like we did through the pandemic, that we can use, not just the technical resources, but also the community resources, the loving resources that we can continue to find new expressions and find new ways to serve and be new things. And we're definitely going to see that in Salt Lake. We're exploring for the first time, probably more of a prison ministry type approach. and I have worked in prisons in Nashville, I actually have some knowledge there. We're looking at, of course, always trying to do more for homeless and other communities there in refugee communities and things like that. But we're also starting to look at sobriety, and have had recent people join us who are going through AA and other support groups. And we're exploring what hosting a neighborhood support group might look like, as well. And so there's, there's a call. And, you know, sometimes we all take on a little bit too much, or say yes too many times. But yet, if we can continue to bring hope and light to others, I truly believe that the little things we do, the hospitality, the details, it's all going to bring spiritual growth for us, it's going to bring fulfillment for us. And it's going to bring love into our lives, and then new people and new community and amazing things, and hopefully help someone who's going through a lot of bad stuff, find some good, and start to grow that good in their life.

Robin Linkhart 36:07

I love it. I love it. Jason, what do you need Community of Christ to hear you say?

Jason Eyre 36:15

Oh, wow. So I find myself in Community of Christ in an interesting place. And, this is just religion in general as well, when I went to World Conference, one of the questions they surveyed was the age of everybody there. And I was middle age, I'm in my 50s. But it was so amazing to me, about as far as church engagement goes, how many people there were in their 80s, who I wish could be with us forever, but won't be. There weren't a lot of kids there. I saw the kids programs, and there were handfuls of kids. And we've struggled. When we've had a mission center conference, my daughter was the only kid registered. And so we, I took my wife and had her do stuff in the community with her. And so I do think it's my hope that the church can become relevant in younger people's lives. I do hope that the teachings that we're going through with harmony, I do hope that the whole church can understand how important it is to truly understand the LGBTQ community, and the intersection of challenges that they face, in an effort that we can be fully affirming for them, in whatever expression of that is in their lives, and emerging expressions and things like that. I, I hope that the church can be that. That place for joy, hope and peace, and can I hope we can reach people. I hope we can be relevant in a time when churches are becoming less relevant. And, I hope that the bold steps that we've taken will continue to take bold steps, but I think that there's so much we can step our world into with the foundation of our Enduring Principles, and our Mission Initiatives. And, and our amazing other things like the six the multiple lenses, to solving a problem, for example. Faithful disagreement, because when it is faithful, and it leads to God, that disagreement, actually, over time, helps us get through some of

the crazy contentious things or the justice, strangeness or whatever might be happening, the bad politics of our time, whatever it could be. I truly hope that our church can continue to have the strength and the will to keep doing the good it's doing and I hope that there's more people my age, and more people my kids age, to help make sure it doesn't just age out.

Robin Linkhart 39:05

Yeah, I'm with you on there. And we are seeing bright sparklers emerging, sometimes in the most unexpected places. But there's something afoot, the Spirit is moving to be sure. So yeah, as we wind down on this interview time, Jason, is there anything I haven't asked you about today that you would like to share with our listeners?

Jason Eyre 39:31

Well, I think Robin, an interesting story that happened in my life lately might explain how much has really changed in my life. I recently applied for a higher position or a neighboring school district. And what I didn't realize was that this organization runs very different than the one I'm in. It's very patriarchal. It's still very traditional and some of its values and things like that, although it's much larger. And I realized when I didn't get that position that I interviewed a couple times for, that it was probably a blessing for me, as I reflected back, because you always reflect back when something like that doesn't work out. And then like, what did I say? What did I do? And I realized that I talked about values like authenticity, about meeting people where they are, I talked about helping empower people. And, so many things that I probably would have never connected with prior to my joining Community of Christ. So, the strong hospitality that I've talked about several times as a theme throughout this podcast, the creativity, the so many different things, that wasn't really they were looking for. And so I presented myself at the interview as someone who was just completely counter to what was their wants and needs at the time. And instead of feeling disappointment and regret, I actually realized that it was kind of a blessing. Because I didn't walk away from something that's working very well for me into something that my make my flame go out, that might burn me out, that might make me not feel mission driven. I may not be able to accomplish the mission of helping homeless students, or helping people who are struggling with language and some of those types of things that I'm actually experiencing with AI and technology and other things at my job right now. And so I'm really grateful for the whole new view on life that I've been able to receive as I've come into Community of Christ. I think that I got the better end of the fair trade, if you will. But I know Fair Trade is a play on coffee, and I love coffee. It's a huge part of my life, too. But at the same time, I do feel like my impact on the world, the good that I'm doing, the being ready to respond. So many different aspects of my life have just changed so much, because Community of Christ has built a new foundation, and a new way for me to help the world. And I hope to be able to take that and maybe take it up a notch. You know, I may not be here some days to bring church into your life, I might just be here to celebrate it with you. But I expect to do a lot of celebrating this June in Pride Month and other things. If I may share one other thing, Robin, I cannot say enough how grateful I had been for Project Zion Podcast, and the work that you and Blake and Karin and Brittany and so many people have done on it. And Josh, back in the early days, at least, and the folks from Iowa and others, so many people there. I love this ministry. We use it a lot in helping people reconnect with things or understand things. And my daughter joked yesterday that she saw that one of her friends had the shirt that says, "My history is church history." Well, I think that Project Zion is a big

part of this church and its history. And I'm pleased to be able to come share and contribute a little bit more as well.

Robin Linkhart 43:20

Well, and on behalf of Community of Christ js and we celebrate you and blessing that you are to this whole community. And it's just such a joy to travel the way together side by side into this future that really is full of so much possibility. And thank you for being with us today, Jason. It's been my joy. And, it's an honor to spend time with you and to hear all about chapter two, in Community of Christ. And I learned more about you. I've known you for several years, but I still learned more. And that's always a blessing for me. And... [Jason: thank you, Robin.] Yeah. And always a very special thanks to all of our listeners. If you would like to hear more from courageous people willing to share the candid stories of their faith journey and what brought them to Community of Christ, check out our Fair Trade series on projectzionpodcast.org. You can find that on the series drop down menu on the top bar of our website or you can click on the link listed in today's show notes which will take you directly to all of our Fair Trade episodes. If you would like to hear more from Jason his whole story is episode 164. And he also has episode 26, when he stopped into common grounds with Karin Peter. He made reference to the episode he did with Brittany about mission in his workplace episode 371 and episode 500 celebrating those is the 500th episode podcast. And Jason was at the very beginning of Project Zion was helping editing for many years and he has a special spot there so don't miss an opportunity to hear more from him. This is your host, Robin Linkhart, and you are listening to Project Zion Podcast. Go out and make the world a better place. Take good care. Bye bye!