

Nice to Matcha | New Leader | Adam Wade

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Adam Wade, Community of Christ, Council of 12 Apostles, Pacific Asia field, calling, ordination, discipleship, continuing revelation.

SPEAKERS

Adam Wade, Robin Linkhart

Robin Linkhart 00:30

Welcome to Nice to Matcha, a Project Zion Podcast series where we meet new people, leaders, movers and shakers. I'm your host, Robin Linkhart, and today I'm here with Adam Wade who has been called to serve in Community of Christ Council of Twelve Apostles. If that call is sustained in legislative session at the 2025 World Conference, Adam will be ordained during a worship service at that same conference. Adam, it's so great to have you with us today.

Adam Wade 01:05

G'day. Yeah, it's good to be here. Thanks, Robin.

Robin Linkhart 01:08

Now, I know that you've been a guest on Project Zion before, but today we're going to get to know you much better. So, let's just start with the basics. Take a couple minutes to just introduce yourself to our listeners.

Adam Wade 01:23

So, actually, at the moment I'm sitting here on the edge of Port Phillip Bay. I thought it would be a nice spot to do the podcast. So, that's uh, the bay where I live in Melbourne, Australia. Um, it's not a surf beach. I do love to surf, but it's, uh, just not too far from my house. So, uh, yeah, that's where I'm currently residing. And my current role in the church, uh, is a President of Seventy, which is sometimes difficult to explain, but, um, part of my role is helping with the Pacific Asia Field and supporting the apostle for that field, which is the head administrator for that, uh, area of the world where we have churches, and, so, um, my assistance with her, as well as, um, supporting the ministry of seventy, and that's where we're looking at, uh, reaching outside the doors of the congregation building and seeing how we can help support the community, uh, projects that we might be engaged in and sharing, uh, the message of the Community of Christ with the wider community. I've worked for the church now for over 20 years, which is fairly scary to think about. I started working for the church fairly young. I worked as a youth minister for approximately nine years. Uh, started in Sydney, Australia, and, yeah, worked there. And after that, I was then invited to go and be pastor of the Seoul Congregation in South Korea. And so me and my family moved there in 2009 and we served there for four years and part of my responsibility was also the head administrator for the East Asia Region, uh, so, Mission Center president is what we call it in Community of Christ. And I was responsible for the church in Seoul, but then also the two

congregations we have in Japan, a congregation in Taiwan, and we also have some members in China that, uh, spent time in other places and then traveled back, uh, to their home country of China, and we still have contact with some of those people there.

Robin Linkhart 03:34

Alrighty. Wow. That's a lot. So, we're going to wind the clock back lots of years and invite you to tell us your growing up story about where you grew up, what life was like for you and your family and your community, some of your interests and hobbies. We've already heard you say something about surfing. And, then, as you talk about that, where was God and faith in the mix of all of it.

Adam Wade 04:04

Yeah, so, I grew up in Community of Christ. My, uh, father was a member and my mother was not, and when they were married, she joined the church, not because they got married, but because she wanted to be a part of the community. My, um, dad's mother was a member of the church and married my grandfather who was the same, was not a member of the church, but also felt that he wanted to join and be a part of the community. And even the further generation back, uh, they were one of the first generations to join the church, uh, in Australia. And, so, um, I have a long heritage in the church, but I also have a heritage of, um, I guess, sharing the message with people outside of the faith community and bringing them in and helping them experience what that faith community is all about. So, part of my journey, um, in the church, um, was in and around the Hughesdale Congregation. So, I, uh, I went to one of the campgrounds we had a couple of hours, uh, north of Melbourne, um, called Mountain Hut. And I remember, as a child going up there with mom and dad, um, as part of our experience. I do remember, uh, one night where we rocked up to camp quite late in the evening. Uh, it was dark and I remember being in the car and Dad hopping out of the car and going to inspect our cabin. But I use the word cabin very loosely because we used to have what was termed a shent and it was halfway between a shed and a tent. So, it was a concrete slab floor with three tin walls and a tin roof and just a sheet of canvas across the front. And I remember dad going into the shent, but then telling us to remain in the car because we were lucky enough to have a massive spiders nest in our shent. And in Australia, we have these spiders that are not very dangerous. They're a little bit like a tarantula. They're very big, but they're not dangerous, called a huntsman. But this huntsman was wide enough that it was hiding behind a fence post that is about probably two or three inches wide and its legs were more than double the width either side of this post sticking out the side and it had just had babies, so, there was about 200 tiny huntsmans crawling around our shent. Now, most people would think at that point you'd either turn around and go back home or you'd try and find alternative, uh, accommodation. But no, dad decided to use some, uh, pesticide and managed to, I think, fumigate our room over the course of about an hour. And I don't think I got a lot of sleep that night in the shent, uh, thinking about the spiders crawling around the place. But as part of my journey, it was about 11 or 12 years old where, uh, the, the national parks in Victoria wanted to take that land back and, so, we actually needed to go and find a new campground. And, so, part of my experience growing up was going with dad on weekends to try and find a new place for our community to have retreats. And, so, I remember in the car on weekends going and looking at various different properties until we finally settled on a place, um, called Kallara. But I remember, I think a big part of my church experience growing up was traveling up to Kallara with dad as they've set out a vision for what that place needed to look like. And, so, it was going up there for working bees and I remember members of the community giving their time and their expertise to be

able to travel up to that place and dedicate, um, their giftedness to be out and building a place where people could go and experience God's Spirit. Um, it was an old farmland and I remember many a time clambering up through the bush and making forts with my friends while dad and his mates, um, worked on constructing first the conference center and then accommodation and slowly adding to that place over the years. And, so, I think that was really formative for me to see what it meant to be a part of the community and what it meant to serve. Um, it's interesting, but recently, in the last year, in my current, uh, role in supporting the Australian Mission Center, we've actually needed to sell that campground, um, which was quite, I would say it was an emotional time for me, but, again, um, in talking with people like my dad and, and dad's friends, there's a recognition that it was fit for a purpose and for a time, but now that mission needs to be transformed into, um, another shape, another way of doing things. And, so, um, it was recognizing the significance of that place in people's lives, but also recognizing, um, to continue to be good stewards, and continue to look at the mission going forward, that was the decision that needed to be made. And, so, I think that's a big part of, of who I am, is, um, are we effectively living Christ's mission and are we being good stewards? And I think if we can answer both of those questions effectively, it goes a long way to living out the mission of Christ. Um, I was baptized at 12 and I had quite a strong spiritual experience around my baptism, um, which, at the time, as a 12- year-old, I didn't fully understand, but, um, I remember coming up out of the, the water and then going off to the side of the chapel, um, where we used to get changed after being baptized. And then they had a side entrance that you could come and go out of. And I walked out of that side entrance and I saw mom and I started to cry, which, if people knew me as a kid, that was not uncommon. I would get quite emotional very easily in my childhood over really silly things like spilling my drink on the table at dinner, or the fact that I'd got eight beans and my brother and sister only got five beans, or that it, it was not uncommon for me to, to get teary. Um, and at this point in my life, my parents were starting to say, I was 12 years old, You need to stop crying, like, you can't just keep crying. And they would say the phrase, at the drop of a hat. You can't keep drying, crying at the drop of a hat. So, part of me was trying to, to control my emotion and to know when it was appropriate to, to be those things. And, so, I walked out and saw mom and started crying. And I remember saying to mom as she came up to me, she's like, Mom, I'm sorry. I don't know why I'm crying. I, I just don't understand why I'm crying in this moment. And I remember mom looking at me and saying, It's okay to be crying in this moment. And it wasn't until I reflected back on that experience, probably a decade later, that I could recognize that that was the Spirit touching my life and that was the sense that I had in that particular moment. So, I think that was quite formational for me. The other key part of my journey would probably have to be, um, an experience I had, um, on a retreat, um, with a church couple that visited Australia. And, um, the lady, uh, they were from the States, and the lady had spent time with our congregation about a month before, and then we're on this retreat with a bunch of youth from all over the Pacific. And I remember she had me for a class one day and after the class, I was walking back with her and she turned to me and said, Adam, have you ever thought about working for the church because I think that you would be really good at it? And in that moment, I was 18 years old, I had enrolled in university to be a chemical engineer and my wife was cruising along, but as she shared those words, the only way I can describe it, it was like I had all of these thoughts and ideas floating in the outside of my brain suddenly come into a sharpened, pinpoint focus of confirmation of that's what I needed to do with my life. And, so, that was another pinnacle part of my calling and for all of my roles in the church, I've always needed a specific calling to that role. That's not for everyone. And how I interpret my calling is different for each individual, but for me, it's

really critical that that element of calling is a key part of any, um, new responsibility that I take on the church.

Robin Linkhart 13:07

Can you tell us a little bit about, um, your school experience and early grades (. . .), I'm not sure what you call it in, in, uh, Australia, up through what we would say high school and some of your interests and, and hobbies?

Adam Wade 13:27

Um, yeah, so I live straight into the church side of things, which obviously takes up a fair amount of my, uh, thinking space at times. But yeah, as a, a kid, I, um, went to the school up the road. I literally had a block to go to school, but, uh, for whatever reason, my mom, uh, used to like to drive us to school, so I used to get driven a block, uh, to go to school, much to the horror of my friends and family at the time and even now. But, um, I've sort of dabbled in a lot of things over the years. I played tennis as a kid. I also played Australian rules football. But in my high school years, I played a lot of, what we call in Australia, netball, which is, um, its own sport. Um, it's sort of a slight variation on basketball that's played in the Commonwealth nations. Um, I used to play mixed netball with my, um, friends from, from high school, and, and did that quite a lot. I also played, um, basketball on my dad's basketball team with a bunch of his friends, both from church, outside of church, and over the years, eventually, it, uh, it ended up turning into a bunch of me and my friends and dad playing on the team, uh, which was quite unique. I went to a pretty rough school. I went to a school that was, um, known as a, a tech school, or, um, a, a, a school where there was a lot of subjects around trades and, so, I really value that experience now looking back because I did things like marine studies and woodworking and metalwork, but also subjects like aviation and electronics and those types of things where I got a basic skill or understanding of those things that I've then used as part of hobbies that I've picked up on or to do things around the house and things like that. So, that's been, um, really valuable as part of my education and, and growth and now feel like those are things that I like to do, um, is to create things or to fix things as a role. Um, I, being a part of that school, though, I was quite academic and was probably in the top tier of the students in terms of maths, physics and, and chemistry, and, so, because of that, and because I liked being a good student, I was actually, though, isolating at times, because that was not seen as, um, the majority. And often times those kids can get picked on and, and teased, and that was definitely part of, of my experience. But I think, um, when I was 14, 15, around that year eight, year nine is what we call it in Australia, um there was a time there where a bunch of who I thought were my friends, um, turned around one day and, and told me that they didn't want to be friends with me anymore at high school. And, so, it meant that, um, I then had to go and, and find other friends and, so, I ended up with kind of the misfits of the school there for a little while. Um, but it was around the same time that I went on the very first trip to the U.S. to attend the church youth forum called the International Youth Forum over in Independence and that experience, I think, aligned with what had happened at school. Uh, there was a moment where I walked out onto the world plaza at that event over in the States, which is at the, the Temple complex, and I was by myself, and I remember walking around looking at all of the faces in the crowd, looking for people that I knew, and it suddenly dawned on me that actually I could go and talk to any one of these people here and they would welcome me with open arms and start to talk to me. And that's exactly what I did. And I think that shifted something, because when I came back from that experience, I recognized that I was okay being who I was. And, so, it's

funny, but over the next couple of years, I ended up becoming good friends with that same group of people that told me they didn't want to be friends anymore. And, in fact, I'm still friends with a number of them today and I'd call them, uh, my best mates. So, so that was also part of shaping who I was and, and being okay with who I was, even in the midst of an environment where there was probably a lot of people that thought I was a little bit odd or strange. Um, so, sports been a big part of my life. I like playing sport. I like watching sport. I wouldn't say I'm brilliant at anything, but I like, uh, participating and, and having a go. Just after school is probably when I picked up surfing and, um, developed my deep appreciation for the ocean and love being in the ocean, and, so, that's been a big part of who I am. Whenever I get the chance, I like to go out and just be in the ocean. Um, I find it relaxing, um, calming. It reconnects me, it grounds me and it's significant and important.

Robin Linkhart 18:56

That's awesome. I, I really connect to that. I've, I've never been a surfer to speak of, but we spent two and a half years of my life in the Caribbean, um, in Dominican Republic, and I've always loved water. But during that time, we had access to the ocean all year round and it just became a, a source of, I don't even know, have the words to describe the sense, but just this ethereal connection and, um, filling in a missing piece of some type when I'm in and by the ocean. Now, I live in the middle of the States, so, and have for a long time, so, there's not much of the ocean in my life. Alrighty, so, you're finishing high school. What do you call high school in, uh, Melbourne?

Adam Wade 19:47

High school, although it's a little bit different. In high school, we go from year seven to year 12. (Okay.) We don't have middle school.

Robin Linkhart 19:53

Uh huh. So, you're graduating from high school, ready to go off to college and begin your life as an adult, uh, with everything that comes after that. So, tell us that story.

Adam Wade 20:09

Yeah, so, I think, um, it was right before I went to, to uni that, um, I had the experience I shared, um, with the lady that told me about working for the church. And it was interesting at that point, like I said, I've been enrolled in chemical engineering, and after I had that, she said it, it would be good and to go and talk to the the apostle, just go and have a conversation with him. And, so, um, (. . .) he was the kind of guy that everyone liked to talk to. So, I was really nervous about finding an opportunity in private where I could have the conversation. And there was one night where we were sitting down on the floor, uh, for a worship service, and he was sitting about two or three people away, and I remember thinking the whole time in the service, I wasn't paying that much attention, but I was thinking, Right. If this could be the moment, this is the moment where I need to go and be brave and go and talk to him. And, so, at the end of the service, it was interesting, as the service finished, everyone stood up except him. He stayed seated on the ground. And, so, I stayed seated as well. So, I shuffled over to him and told him my experience, uh, with the lady and said, You know, this has really resonated with me. I think I, um, can foresee a, a full time future for me in the church. And his response was, Adam, if there was anyone in this room who I thought would come and say that to me, it would be you. And, so, that confirmation was really significant. He then said that he was changing roles and that we were going to get a new

apostle coming in. And, so, it would be good to go and talk to, uh, that new apostle. And, so, the next day, I had to put on my brave pants again and go and find the new apostle, who happened to be Ken McLaughlin, and he was sitting at the table with someone at lunch. And, so, I grabbed my lunch and I sat down opposite and I shared the story with him, the experience I had with the lady, then talking with the apostle, who was Everett Graffeo at the time, and he said, I think that is wonderful and I'm glad you've told me. He said, though, and this was really a significant moment for me, he said, Lots of people start working for the church thinking it's going to be amazing, and it's not what they are expecting. You need a degree to work for the church. So, what I would suggest to you is go and get your degree, get yourself settled, get a house, get a wife, get a life, is literally the words that came out of his mouth. And I'll admit at the time, it definitely hit me pretty hard, but I've always appreciated that advice and I think it was really sound counsel for him to be able to say that. And, so, what I did was I did go and finish my engineering degree and I worked for two years as an experimental scientist. That was my official title, which is fun to say. I was an experimental scientist and I worked for a government organization. And although it sounds fancy, my job was to look at new wastewater treatment. So, it was very smelly and was very dirty. But after doing that and getting myself set up, I was actually approached by the Mission Center president at the time for a youth minister role in Sydney. And at that time in my life, um, what was, um, being asked of me and the timing and everything that was going on, it just didn't fit right. It didn't feel right. I would say now that I did, I didn't have that sense of call at that particular time. And, so, even though this was what I wanted to do, this is where I felt, um, my life was going to head, I actually said no, um, to applying for that youth minister job initially. Another nine months went past and then the Mission Center president had changed and he came and he actually approached me again and said, Adam, we haven't filled this position. I'd really like it if you would reconsider and take on this role of youth minister. And at that point, things had changed and a number of my things, a number of things in my life were now aligned and there was that sense of call that, Yes, this is what I'm meant to do. And, so, um, after six months of mentoring under Craig Martins, who was the youth minister at the time, um, I then moved up to Sydney to start my role as youth minister in the church.

Robin Linkhart 25:11

Wow. So, uh, I haven't asked you this yet. As, as you, uh, finished up high school and went off to college, tell us about your pathway with ordained ministry and how that evolved in the offices that you served in along the way.

Adam Wade 25:31

Yeah, so I think as a young person, UM, there was a time when I'd started uni and, UM, usually when people are at uni here, they also pick up a part time job. So, my part time job was fantastic. I loved my part time job. When I was at uni, I used to run kids parties at an indoor sports center. So, the indoor sports center had three sand volleyball courts side by side, so, when kids turned up, it was like a giant sand pit. And I would spend the first hour and I would just run Kids Camp games. So, we would do a treasure hunt, we'd do running races, we'd do relays, and I would just try and exhaust these kids and they'd come off sweaty, but with huge grins on their face. We then go into the party room and we'd feed them all kinds of snacks. We'd have the birthday cake and sing Happy Birthday. Inevitably, the parents would typically offer me a piece of cake and I'd politely decline the first time, but when they offer again, it was wonderful to be able to have birthday cake as your lunch. And then we'd present the birthday kid

with a trophy that said, Happy Birthday. And, inevitably, there was always two or three kids to be, like, You get a trophy? I want to have my birthday here. And then we'd go out into the indoor nets and we'd play cricket or soccer or basketball or, um, Australian rules football. And, so, um, it was fantastic. I used to love it. The parents would always be ecstatic because they got to take home exhausted kids that they knew were going to sleep that night. And it was just a really fun job. So, typically, what I would do is I would tell my boss that I was not available to work before one o'clock on Sunday because I needed to go to church. And, so, that's how I would work. I'd work four parties, two hours long each. So, I'd work four parties on a Saturday and then typically three parties on the Sunday. That was my, my job. Over the course of a few months, uh, we started getting quite popular and some of the parents actually started requesting that I would do their son's party because that's who their son knew from being in, um, one of their friend's parties. And a couple of times they fell in that Sunday morning slot. Now, because I've been asked, personally, I felt, Well, look, if they've asked me, I'm happy to do that one Sunday. And, so, that one Sunday a month turned into a couple of Sundays a month turned into probably three Sundays a month and it was probably a period of about six months where I didn't go to church on a Sunday. And it wasn't because I didn't like it anymore. It wasn't for any particular reason other than just I'd, I'd sort of fallen into this pattern of working on a Sunday morning. And, so, one Sunday, for whatever reason, there just wasn't any, uh, parties booked that morning. And I was like, Oh, I don't have to work. So, hey, I might go along to church with mom and dad. And I remember standing in what we call the narthex, which is kind of this in between space between the chapel and the hall where we used to have morning tea. And it hit me in that moment and I remember the thought that came to mind was, This is what has been missing from your life. And it really struck me, and I think from that point, I then made an intentional decision to include that experience as part of my ongoing faith and discipleship. So, um, not long after that is when I got called to the office of priest and the pastor actually approached me on the Sunday before, and I was a counselor to him, so, it was not uncommon for us to have conversations. But this particular day, he came up to me and he said, Oh, Adam, I'm just wondering if I can come around to your house, um, this week. Um, I've just got some things I'd like to talk to you about. And in that moment, the thought that came that I would say was not my own thought, was, He's going to call you to priest. Now, my instant reaction, and this is true for me, for all of my calls, is that my actual brain kicks in and goes, Don't be ridiculous. He just wants to come around and talk to you about the congregation. He wants to talk to you about helping with this program or helping you, help him with planning a worship service. A couple of days later, sure enough, as I sat on the couch in mom and dad's lounge room, he presented me with a call to priest. And, so, I think that was instrumental to me, um, particularly as I had a number of women who were really key mentors and taught me certain particulars about the role that have stayed with me for a long time. Um, one of which was that I'll always remember was about when communion is served where possible, and I know communion is served in various different ways in different settings around the world, but where possible, to serve it in such a way that once the person has been served, you don't then move back in front of them, so that after they've taken communion, it gives them the chance to pause and reflect and connect with the spirit in that moment, without being distracted by how you're moving in that space. And, so, that was one of the particulars that I've always tried to uphold, um, even now as I serve communion. So, that was, uh, my call to priest. I was then, uh, called to elder and served as an elder for a time, and then I was called to the office of seventy, uh, probably two years after being called to elder, and I served in the office of seventy. I'm still a seventy, um, even though now I've been set apart as a President of Seventy.

Robin Linkhart 31:54

So, um, where were you in your full time ministry with the church when you were called to elder or had you started full time ministry already when you were called to elder?

Adam Wade 32:08

There's an excellent question, Robin. I believe, so, I don't actually remember the timeline. I'm not particularly good at remembering historical dates. That's not my forte. My son is exceptional and can remember dates of various historical facts, but that is not my forte. And, so, I, I'm reasonably confident that, yes, I was serving, um, in my role as youth minister at the time, um, but I can't quite remember.

Robin Linkhart 32:44

So, I met you the first time, um, at the Community of Christ seminary in Independence back when we would go for three weeks of intensive studies and take two classes at one time. And you remember those days, right? And, uh,

Adam Wade 33:01

Unfortunately, I do actually remember that fact, yes.

Robin Linkhart 33:05

and I, it was sometime during that time that you told me you had just been called to, to seventy. Uh, what role were you serving in when you were called to the office of seventy? Do you remember?

Adam Wade 33:20

Yeah, so I was serving as a youth minister at the time when I got called to seventy as well. Um, I do remember that because I was ordained in Australia, um, and I remember the night of my ordination. Uh, typically, I will choose to fast before, um, I'm going to engage in a significant time of ministry. So, usually before I speak or I'm at an ordination, I like to fast in the lead up to that. And, so, it's always a little bit awkward, though, because in the Community of Christ, everyone loves you to eat with them and will constantly invite you to come and eat with them if you're standing there looking like, um, you haven't eaten. So, this particular night, we were at a conference, and we're at, uh, retreat grounds in Sydney, and, so, instead of standing around awkwardly, I decided I'd go for a walk. And I walked down the hill to a pond and I was just reflecting on my call and, um, that experience that night. And, um, I, I then thought back to the experience that I had where I did feel called. It was a night also at another retreat. Uh, we typically have our reunion, so we have a big church gathering from the Christmas to the New Year period because it's summer over here during that time. It's a time when lots of people have leave, uh, from their jobs. So, we would typically have an event during that time. Um, we had a youth service that night, so, I was responsible for speaking at that, um, youth service. And I remember I'd just spoken and was standing off to the side as then, um, the final activity we were doing before the close of the worship was occurring. And we had a big cross that was hanging at the front of the room, a big wooden cross, and the person up the front said, What we're going to do now is we're going to hand out these little squares of paper. And what I'd like you to do is on that square of paper, I'd like you to write down what you feel called to in this moment. What is God calling you to in this moment? And the number seven and the number zero came to mind. And I went, No way. I am not a seventy. Seventies

are crazy. Seventies need to be going out and doing all these things. And I am not a seventy. At that moment, one of the youth who I was baptizing in a few days time came up to me and said, Oh, Adam, you do not have a piece of paper and a pen. Here, take this piece of paper and pen. And she walked away. From the doors behind me, in came the three youth that were helping their mom, who was the cook that we employed for the camp, that I'd invited along to the evening youth activities that we would have at the end of every day. And they asked me, What's going on here? What are you guys doing? So, I gave them a brief explanation and said, You guys are welcome to hang out until youth activity start. And they said, Yeah, sure. We'll, we'll go and hang out at the back of the room. And as they walked away, a man came up to me who I'd been visiting with and sharing with through netball, that had chosen to bring his family along to camp. And he was a huge guy. He was called Stretch, um, because he was almost seven foot tall. And he jabbed me in the ribs and said, Hey, did you see where I put mine? And it was right at the very top of the cross. He's, like, I bet you can't get yours that high. And, so, after those three experiences, I looked at the piece of paper in front of me and realized that I needed to put the number seven and the number zero on that piece of paper. And, so, I wrote that, I folded a bit of paper and I stuck it to the cross. (That's awesome.) And, so, as I was reflecting on that experience, um, that night before my ordination, I remember as I was walking by the edge of the lake, it was starting to get really dark and all of a sudden, this bird started just calling out from across the pond. And it was probably every three or four seconds, it was calling out. And then all of a sudden, from the other side of the pond, I heard the reply come. And, so, they would alternate quacking from either side of the pond until eventually they were able to find one another in the dark. And, so, I think that experience for me, um, just highlighted the fact that that's what I was called to do as a seventy is to be able to be a person whose voice calls out, um, to guide people, to provide them, um, with a direction, um, to be able to share with them so that they can find their way in the dark.

Robin Linkhart 38:45

I love that image. And I believe you were serving in Seoul when you received the call to serve in the Council of Presidents of Seventy. Is that correct?

Adam Wade 38:57

Yes, I was.

Robin Linkhart 38:58

Yeah. All right, so that brings you up to where you are currently in your full time ministry. And we're going to take a, a little side road here and talk about something else before we get into your experience receiving your call to the office of apostle. It may seem odd for some people, but often as full time ministers, we can become so consumed by the, the doing of ministry and the activities of church life that we find ourselves neglecting the being and the continuing need of our own souls. Adam, how do you nurture your relationship with God.

Adam Wade 39:42

Yeah, for me, I, as I mentioned before, the ocean is really important. And I think there's an element where I recognize the, the parallels between the ocean and God's Spirit in terms of the vastness, the depth, um, the way it shapes and moves. There's a lot of, um, elements that I really connect with, um, in terms of the ocean and God's Spirit, and I find that it's actually something I need in my life, uh, to

help me be grounded. It's a place where I do connect with God is just being in the ocean and in the water with my feet in the sand and the water surrounding me. So, whether it is on my surfboard or recently, in the last decade, I've started to do a lot more scuba diving in some of the places. There's just an element of being in that environment that helps me connect to the spirit and helps open up a conversation with God. I, I think it's been really important for me, uh, in the last, uh, probably, at least the last decade, but probably more. Um, I had a class on prayer where they talked about how to pray, but a critical part in that class was making sure that there's time for God to respond. So, to not just be talking the entire time, but to actually leave space like a conversation for God to respond and, and how that is for, for different people, will look, sound, feel different. Um, but to approach prayer more like a conversation than just, uh, an email or a request that goes one way. And, so, I think that's been an important part of my ongoing discipleship, is to open myself up to those nudgings or those thoughts, but to actually create the space for those to occur because I think we can get so consumed with the thinking and the doing that we don't actually then allow the space for God to respond.

Robin Linkhart 42:06

Thank you. Now it's time for us to hear as much as you want to share about the experience of receiving your call to the office of apostle.

Adam Wade 42:21

It's terrifying. If I'm honest, I've said that to a number of people now, um, so, like I said the, the call to any role in my life, um, I've usually had a very specific experience around that and my call to apostle, um, was no different. I, um, was called into, uh, the president's office and, um, for a meeting and, again, similar to my call to priest, I had had that thought of she's going to call you to apostle. Of course, I denied it and was terrified at the thought and pushed it to the back of my mind until I sat there and she presented the call. As I left the Temple that night, I noticed that the sky was lit up as the sun was setting. It was this bright orange sky. And being from some, as someone close to the ocean, the saying that goes in my head, at least, is, Ah, red sky at night, sailors' delight. And I remember half chuckling to myself as if, Huh. Yeah, delight, sure. I'm actually terrified. And, so, that night, I went to my host home and had a fairly early night because when I'm staying and traveling, um, at their place, I, I do like to get up and go to the gym in the early morning. And, so, the next morning, I woke up at 5 a.m., went to the class, and I was actually driving home from the gym that morning that I was driving back along the road and saw the sun rise. And it's not something that I think I've ever seen before, but the sky again, was a bright pink, orange, red color, which the saying also goes red sky in the morning, sailors take warning. And again, I remember thinking to myself, Well, that's much more like it. I think a warning is in order. And the phrase that came back to me is the phrase that we find in scripture, um, that Jesus says to Peter on the boat, Why are you so afraid? And it kind of hit me in the moment to reaffirm that call and although I'd still say I am afraid because I think there is a lot of responsibility and, and where we need to be moving as an organization into the, the future is going to be new and different and probably difficult, but I think there was that reassurance of why would I be afraid when God is there with me, guiding me through. So, that, I think, was a reaffirming of my call to serve, um, as an apostle. Um, there is elements where I'm still terrified, like, when I sit in a room and recognize the leaders in that room are responsible for leading the church, and not that, I think that they're not capable, but it's, it's more a recognition that I'm now an important part of that. Um, but I think there's an element where it gives me a

sense of responsibility and seriousness. So, the role, um, that I want to make sure that I honor and carry forward is part of the call.

Robin Linkhart 46:03

So, I know we're still early in this new chapter as it unfolds, but as you live into this, in your ongoing adventure with God, how have things changed for you?

Adam Wade 46:20

I think it's, it's been interesting to reflect recently on what I've seen develop over the church in the years and I spoke about, you know, dad and his friends that helped build the conference center and that played basketball. I, I recognize that it's still just been part of my church life where we've gone from this space of everything used to occur at church. So, my grandmother was part of the church tennis team and my dad, most of his friends now are all associated with the church. And, so, the church was the place where you would do your study, where you could volunteer, where you could play sport, where you could worship, that everything was revolving around that space. And it was interesting, it kind of hit me when I lived in South Korea. I noticed that South Koreans have done this really interesting thing because they live in such small apartments because property is so expensive over there, a lot of them have what I would call outsourced their living room. So, in places like Australia or where I've been in the U.S., typically people would have, you know, their own television, their entertainment system, if they've got kids, they've probably got some sort of, um, console where they can play games, and, and a lot of the things are built up in their lounge room. But in Seoul, it's quite the opposite. Because they've got such small rooms, you go out to a DVD room if you want to go and watch a movie. You go out to a singing room where you go and do karaoke with your friends. You go to a PC room where they have lots of computers, they're all networked together, that have the latest technology where you can play games with your friends. And, so, they've kind of outsourced parts of their living room and they'll go and they'll experience that and then they'll go back home. And, so, I think, for me, in some ways, the church is sort of headed in a, a similar direction. For a lot of the things that the Church used to be for people, there's now those options for people out in society, um, that if you want to go and be educated on a particular topic, you won't necessarily research it yourself and develop a class and invite people to join the class in your congregation. You'll probably go and join with like-minded individuals. If there's a particular charity you're passionate about, you probably go and, and partner with that charitable organization and live out your discipleship and your calling in that organization. And that's not to say that there aren't some things where people in congregations still rally around and create their own outreach program at all, but it does seem like there is a lot more options in our society for people to tap into and live out their discipleship. And, so, what that means is, then, for me, it makes me reflect on what is the role of the church community, um, in whatever form it takes in the 21st century. And I think, for me, it needs to be a place where people can come and explore and develop their faith in a safe space. So, to be able to create an environment, a community that is safe for them to be able to share their thoughts and their feelings and their experiences, what they've been reading or what they've been seeing online, to be able to explore that with other disciples, to be on that journey together, and to do it in a way where their worth is upheld, where they're open to where the Spirit is leading them as well, but, um, to be in that shared safe space, I think, is really important, and that for the focus to be for the church in terms of how we would interpret the scripture, how we would understand God's call and God's Spirit moving in the world, um, how we would understand the stewardship over the planet's resources,

our own resources, and how we use our time. All of those things I think, that, that are unique to our community and create that space for disciples to explore. And I, I wonder if that's the direction where we're needing to head, um, as we explore who we are going to be into the future.

Robin Linkhart 50:55

That is definitely an ongoing adventure with God, for sure. This next question connects a, a little bit to what you've already shared. What are your hopes for Community of Christ into the future? Um, you, you've given us a, a lens through which to see how you're seeing God moving in the world today. How does that connect with our movement, a peace movement, and the heart of God's vision for all creation, for you?

Adam Wade 51:27

The best way to probably answer that was, um, I was visiting a, a family that were exploring beginning a small group, um, up in Canada and we were sharing with them at a coffee shop and I was sitting across the table from the father and, it's interesting, but as I was sitting there, we're having a discussion, and he turned to me and he said, Do you know what distinguishes us from every other Christian-based organization in the world? And I was smart enough to keep my mouth shut and not respond, but wait, and he came back with continuing revelation. That really stuck with me. And I think, for me, what I would say is an important part of our faith is being open and listening to where God is calling us into the future. It can be difficult at times and I know that we've had many occasions where we've wrestled with where we think God is taking us and to be able to do that in sacred community where everyone's worth is upheld and we continue to support the blessings of community. But I think that, for me, is the most significant thing as we move into the future, is making sure we are open to where God is calling us no matter how challenging that might be. And, so, that is really a, a key part of my philosophy and my understanding of when I say the mission of God because that means that it's not stagnant, that it's not unchanging. And I need to be open and flexible to those places where we need to go.

Robin Linkhart 53:13

That's exciting and terrifying at the same time. I love it. Adam, is there anything that you would like to share today that I haven't already asked you about?

Adam Wade 53:24

I don't think so. I think I've just shared six or seven sermons that, um, others have probably heard over the journey. But I, it's always good, I think, for me to reflect on where I've come from and those experiences that have shaped who I am today.

Robin Linkhart 53:47

Yes, indeed. It's been a joy to share this time with you and to hear more of your story. Thank you so much for making the time, Adam, to be with us today.

Adam Wade 53:59

No worries. I might go for a quick stroll in the water.

Robin Linkhart 54:04

If you would like to hear more from Adam, check out Extra Shot 126, Hospitality with Young People and Episode 329 in our What's Brewing series about mission in which Adam reflects on pandemic changes and lessons in the life of the Church. As always, a very special thanks to all of you, our listeners, for spending a portion of your day with us. 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.