

Intro Music:	00:15	[inaudible]
Katie Langston:	00:17	You're listening to an extra shot episode on the Project Zion podcast, a shorter episode that lets you get your Project Zion fix in between our full length episodes. It might be shorter timewise, but hopefully not in content. So regardless of the temperature at which you prefer your caffeine, sit back and enjoy this extra shot.
Intro Music:	00:59	[inaudible] [inaudible]
Linda Booth:	01:00	Welcome my friend to Coffee Connect. My name is Linda Booth and I'm a long time minister in Community of Christ having served on the Council of 12 Apostles for 21 years and six years as their President. So grab a cup of your favorite brew and sit close because I have a story to tell you about connections, about how God uses ordinary people to transform the world, one person at a time. You see, God didn't send Jesus into the world to maintain the status quo. God sent Jesus to turn the culture and religious norms upside down and Jesus reached out and brought into the fold, the outcasts, the sinners, the unclean, the marginalized, and the rejected. Jesus invited the lion to see the lamb as its neighbor and friend and Jesus challenged the choose to care for Samaritans their natural enemies. Jesus welcomed the despise chief tax collector and the prostitute to dine with him even though he was highly criticized by his disciples and others and Jesus showed us how to witness through simple everyday actions of compassion.
Linda Booth:	02:25	And as a result lives transformed and the world changed one person at a time and we're called to witness like Jesus, one person at a time. In a past life, I served as the director of community relations in the Olathe public schools in Kansas and part of my role was to serve on boards of directors such as United Way and help nonprofits with public relations. One such was TLC which stood for Temporary Lodging for Children. They provided short-term home and emotional and physical support to children and youth whose lives were in turmoil. To support a fundraising campaign, leaders asked me to help with a video that would share their story. I had the opportunity to sit with several children and teenagers, hear their stories and interview them off camera. One olive skin girl with flowing jet black hair rarely looked up as I talked with her before, the video camera taping. This 13 year old had a tablet in front of her on a white piece of paper.
Linda Booth:	03:45	She was creating with a black ballpoint pen what look like an intricate chain to get to her to get comfortable. Before the

interview I asked her about her creation. She pointed to one line in a corner of the page and she said, look here, this is one person I look more closely and indeed there was a small stick figure line for the body circle for the head four lines extending to represent arms and legs and she said to me, see how this person is connected to the next one and the next one and the next one? As I gazed at what I thought was a chain, I saw maybe a hundred stick people join together hand to hand winding around and filling the paper. I was amazed that this series of stick people form such an intricate design. I was even more amazed when the teenager explained the significance of these connected figures.

Linda Booth: [04:50](#)

She said, "You see, it starts with one person reaching out to help another person. Then that person holds out a hand to the next and it goes on and on until the world is a safe place for everyone." And what she said is true, isn't it? You and I are part of an ancient relay of witnesses who followed Jesus Christ and live their witness and powerful story of Jesus', his life, his ministry, and through the power of story, generations of people were invited to follow Jesus because one person shared the story of Jesus, one person at a time. Over the years I've been to the Portland congregation in Oregon three times. The first was to speak at a Peace Colloquy which engaged members of its community. The congregation was small but enthusiastic about justice and peacemaking. The second visit was to speak at a homecoming celebration.

Linda Booth: [06:03](#)

The congregation invited past pastors, church members from other congregations and neighbors. I had several responsibilities that weekend. The first was to welcome participants at the end of a talent show. Like most talent shows, lots of children played the piano, blew on a flute, sang, dance, shared campfire skits and did magic tricks. And during the show, I must admit, I rehearsed in my mind an appropriate welcome for the people gathered in the gymnasium. When it was my turn, I began to speak my prepared welcome. But I instead found myself telling this true story of Gianna, a woman I had met who had made her living as a prostitute in Kansas City, Missouri. A short man named Cliff had shared his witness of God's love for her as they leaned against the tailgate of his truck. Gianna went home with new hope for her life. And in the brief version of this story, I told of her transformation and baptism.

Linda Booth: [07:12](#)

And as I told that story, I had an out of body experience and I argued with myself and I said to myself, this is not an appropriate story for this audience. Stop! Go back to the original welcome. But I was in the middle of the story and it was

too late. I couldn't go back. I finished with a welcome to the assembled audience and I was a little embarrassed. As I stepped off the stage. Waiting there for me was a tall Ebony skinned woman who grabbed me in a tight hug. My head was caught between her neck and shoulder and she was crying and she kept repeating. That's my story. You told my story when she left, I found pastor Murray and I ask him about the woman. Her name was Charlotte. She lived a rough life and was out on a pass for good behavior from a drug rehabilitation center.

Linda Booth: [08:13](#)

He said that I'd seen two of her children in the talent show. One had played the piano, the other, the clarinet members of the congregation had been taking care of Charlotte's children and were paying for their music lessons, etc. Naturally, I wanted to hear why Charlotte and her children were at the talent show and how their lives became linked to the Portland congregation and here's what I learned. A teacher in the congregation got concerned when one of Charlotte's daughters was absent from school for several days. She inquired in the school office and she learned that Charlotte had been evicted from her apartment and she and her kids were living in a park. The teachers began to pray for her student and the more she prayed, the more she knew she needed to do something. So on a Saturday morning, she went looking in Portland parks for Charlotte and her children.

Linda Booth: [09:13](#)

And when she found Charlotte's sitting on a blanket on the grass with her two daughters and a son, she sat with them. She listened to Charlotte's story. Charlotte's life was a mess. She had no place to go and no family to help her and her children. The young teacher told Charlotte she had been praying for her and her family. She boldly offered to care for Charlotte's children. If Charlotte went into drug rehab, Charlotte agreed, and for several months the caring teacher and congregation had been loving and nurturing Charlotte's children. I was impressed by the compassion of the teacher and this congregation and I asked pastor Murray to keep me posted on what happened to Charlotte and her children. When I got home, I started getting voice messages from pastor Murray on my office phone in the Temple in independence, Missouri. The first one shared that Charlotte was out again on a pass, had been invited to church and someone had given her Bible and prayed with her.

Linda Booth: [10:19](#)

The second one was that Charlotte was out again on a pass again was invited to church and had asked for our envelope so she could give something back to the congregation that had given so much to her and her children. Several more messages to update me on Charlotte and her children. Charlotte

successfully completed the drug rehab program. Another, members of the congregation helped her find an apartment and a job. Another, this excited message from pastor Mary quote yesterday was Pentecost Sunday and Charlotte and two of her children were baptized and confirmed. Two years later, I was invited back to the Portland congregation to ordain pastor Murray and evangelist. The congregation was packed. I knew Murray's family and I recognize that most of the people packed into the pews or not his relatives. When I leaned over to the presider to ask who all those people were, he said that Charlotte had gone out and witnessed to the people and drug rehab and on the streets. She told them about a community that loved unconditionally and she invited them into the community. And there they were. An assortment of people whose lives also were being transformed through the gospel of Jesus Christ and the loving fellowship of ordinary disciples who just love them on conditionally. So there you go. Stories about how you and I can transform the world. It just takes loving one person at a time.

Music: [12:19](#) [inaudible]

Josh Mangelson: [12:21](#) Thanks for listening to Project Zion podcast. Subscribe to our podcast on Apple podcast, Stitcher, or whatever podcast streaming service you use. And while you are there, give us a five star rating. Project Zion podcast is sponsored by Latter-day Seeker Ministries of Community of Christ. The views and opinions expressed in this episode are of those speaking and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Latter-day Seeker Ministries or Community of Christ. The music has been graciously provided by Dave Heinze.

Music: [13:18](#) [inaudible].