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Project Zion Podcast

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Welcome to the Project Zion podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

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Hello and welcome to Project Zion. Today is the first podcast in a new international series grounds for peace under the auspices of [peaceprojects.edu](http://peaceprojects.edu). In this series we are asking what are the grounds the foundations for a new peace for humanity. I'm your host Andrew Bolton joining you from Leicester, England. The member of the Community of Christ, European peace and justice team, according to Steve Veazey, president of Community of Christ, no matter where we start from as individuals are calling our purpose as a human species is to be a peaceful humanity. The phrase peaceful humanity is another way of saying Zion, or God's peaceful reign on earth, where everything is right. Today, our guest is Richard Wrangham, a British academic currently working at Harvard University of Massachusetts, is a professor of biological anthropology there. He's a scientist who studies primates that apes, chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and humans, is past president of the International primatological society, and a fellow of both the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the British Academy. His book, *The Goodness Paradox: How Evolution Made Us Both More and Less Violent*, has just come out this year. Jane Goodall first went to Africa to begin her studies of chimpanzees 60 years ago today and Richard was a student in Tanzania. Jane Goodall calls Richards book, a brilliant analysis of the role of aggression in our evolutionary history. So Richard, a very warm welcome to you. Thank you for joining us. I find stories of human evolution fascinating. And according to a DNA test, I had at least 2% Neanderthal. There's history in our DNA.

Richard Wrangham 2:50

But certainly it's so nice for you to have me today because I think that as we think about these big problems of society, it's so helpful to understand something about what kind of species we are, where we come from. And the story about human emotional tendencies related to aggression is a story that's changing very fast, and it's really developing. So it's an exciting time understanding who we are and where we come from.

Andrew Bolton 3:26

So given our human evolutionary history, the big question before us in this podcast is this, is it actually possible for us humans to be a peaceful humanity, our genes stacked against us. So let's begin looking at this question by first of all asking you to describe what you call the Goodness Paradox. What's the paradox, Richard?

Richard Wrangham 3:52

The paradox about humans is in relationship to aggression because we show such extreme On the one hand, when you compare us for other species of animals, including our closest

relatives, were incredibly kind and tolerant and cooperative and what we would call good. And on the other hand, compared to our close relatives, were also the most wicked and violent and cruel and rapacious of creatures, as well. So the paradox is, how can we be both of these things, because often we tend to think that there is a single scale of aggression. And an individual or population or species is at one end or the other, they're either Oh, very aggressive or not aggressive at all. And we have both of these tendencies. So it's paradoxical that we can have both on a single scale.

Andrew Bolton 4:52

So we're both incredibly generous and calculating the violence and both true a true of the Humans species. So if we were to put this together in another way, using the voices of two European philosophers, Englishman Thomas Hobbes argued that humans are nasty and violent and need a strong government to reduce their violence and make society possible. And then Rousseau, French speaking from Geneva, Switzerland said, humans are basically good is civilization, people's environment that corrupts them. So are you saying that both Hobbes and Rousseau are right? Humans are both nasty and nice?

Richard Wrangham 5:39

Yes, the thing about Hobbes and Rousseau is that they're both right and they're both wrong. You know, there is Rousseau saying, or reputed to be saying that we are born good and it is only society that corrupts us. Well, you know, he's right that we're born good, but he's not right and say that only Society corrupts us because I think it's very clear that within everybody, there is the potential for, in some ways, what we would call evil, but certainly the potential for violence. So, you know, for years for two or 300 years people have been fighting about was Rousseau right? Or was Hobbes right? And we shouldn't be fighting about that. We should be lifting the the good parts from either of them the correct parts, neither of them and say, well, both are right, but both are wrong, too.

Andrew Bolton 6:35

I find it fascinating that a natural scientist settles a philosophical argument has been raging for two or 300 years. So I think that's wonderful. So what is the evolutionary story? What happened to make us, as humans both gentle and calculating the violin?

Richard Wrangham 6:57

I think the line that we come from is very clearly a line that vo thousands of generations has been hunters. So, you know, the story of human evolution is that a species that looks so like us that they could walk into a clothing store on main streets in any town, and they could buy clothes to fit them, you know, something that a species that looks like contemporary humanity, in that sense, emerged around 2 million years ago, and was called Homoerectus. And the species that we belong to that is different from those earlier species of humans is called Homosapiens. And Homosapiens emerged. Some people say 200,000, some people say 300,000 years ago, depending on how you define the beginnings. Well, I want to distinguish between those, those earlier humans, starting 2 million years ago, and the later ones that we belong to now homosapien starting, I think of it as 300,000 years ago. The earlier ones, including

Homoerectus, were certainly hunters. And hunters are good at hunting prey animals, the antelope that they need to eat. And that makes them good at hunting in general, and they can hunt and kill each other. And there are lots of other animals that do that. chimpanzees and wolves, hyenas, lions, they're good at hunting prey, they're good at hunting each other and they kill each other. So then, we got that angle of aggressiveness. But then something else happened. And starting with our ancestors around 300,000 years ago, we see the first evidence for a species that has got a mark kind of gentleness as well, the story here takes us into domesticated animals. So domesticated animals are always compared to the wild ancestors, relatively unaggressive they are gentle and relatively tolerant. We walk among them without risking getting bitten. And domesticated animals doesn't matter who they are related to. They have characteristic features and there anatomy. I mean, one of the features that is very obvious is white patches on their foreheads and, and white toes, they very often have a white hands of the tail. There are all sorts of features like that and floppy ears that we recognize very easily. But if we were to look inside their bodies, we would also see a series of anatomical changes. And these are important because there are anatomical changes that occur in domesticated animals that we also see starting to happen with homosapiens, around 300,000 years ago. And these are a reduction in the total body size, a reduction in the degree of differences between males and females with males becoming more like females.

There changes in the face, the short face shorter and narrower, the teeth becomes smaller, and ultimately the brain becomes smaller as well. And all of these things happened starting around 300,000 years ago. And what that suggests if we were any other species, and I think it is actually true, is we will come in domesticated. So on a species that has an ancient history of being a killer, there became this new kind of trend of a domestication event that made us into something like a domesticated animal and the story here involves two markedly different kinds of aggression. The hunting and killing kind of aggression is called proactive. It's premeditated planned aggression. You stalk your prey, you stalk your enemy, sneak up on them, and kill them and run away. The other kind of aggression is emotional, unplanned, reactive aggression. And this reactive aggression is the type that is so muted, so relatively unimportant in domesticated animals, and is sort of muted in ourselves. So there's evidence of the way the anatomy has changed in the last 300,000 years to make us this new species on Earth homosapiens. The evidence is that because of our anatomical changes, that signals the fact that we became relatively unaggressive From the point of view, of reactive aggression, and just to tie this together with Hobbes and Rousseau, you can say that Hobbes was talking about our proactive aggression, the type that's been with us for 2 million years. And Rousseau was talking about our suppressed reactive aggression, which has been increasingly downregulated for the last 300,000 years. So we emerge as a species with a high tendency for one kind, proactive, planned, premeditated cruelties. And on the other hand, a low tendency to just lose our tempers and blow up in the face of, of a threat. We are very much calmer than our ancestors would have been.

Andrew Bolton 12:51

So we can fly across the Atlantic both ways, numerous times. 400 people on the plane and there's no incident.

Richard Wrangham 13:03

Yes, but nowadays you have to be checked for, you know, several times before you get on the plane because you might have a premeditated type of aggression. But but we weren't losers lose our tempers or nearly unless of course, you have too much alcohol.

Andrew Bolton 13:23

Yeah, very interesting. Yes. Yes. Very interesting. So what's the mechanism? How did we become both?

Richard Wrangham 13:32

Well, that's a fascinating question, of course as to what is it that intruded around 300,000 years ago to start us on this astonishing journey towards becoming one of the most gentle animals on earth. And I think that the evidence is overwhelming, that the really important feature was that language became so sophisticated, that individuals within these small social groups Our ancestors belong to, were able to whisper together and talk when there was a social problem. And the reason we can say that language seems so important is that we can turn to small scale societies of hunters and gatherers or people living in very simple farming communities where they're isolated from any kind of government or, or intrusion of the modern state. And we can ask, how do they deal with the problem of somebody who is like our earlier ancestors who, who was not domesticated, who was too willing to lose his temper who was willing to, to use his physical strength to bully others and, and take someone's wife from another man or to seize the food for himself or just generally try and dominate others in the kind of way that actually an alpha male chimpanzee or an alpha male but Baboom, tries to dominate that groups. Well the answer when you get some kind of intransigent Lee dictatorial individual is that the rest of the society comes together, they whisper to each other at times when he can't hear what they're saying, and they make a plan. And the plan is, let's get this guy alone at the appropriate point, and we will kill him. Now, many lesser mechanisms come into play before they get to that stage, you know, they'll laugh in his face and try and persuade him one way or another to behave better. But if he doesn't, if he continues to be a really serious aggressor, then what happens is that some individual with the authority of the rest of the community will kill him, put an arrow in his back on drop a huge rock on his head in the middle of the night or whatever it is. So now you've got a mechanism that is unique among animals, because no other animals can develop the kind of confidence in each other's willingness to help each other, that they can arrange for this equivalence of capital punishment. Languages, what enabled people to do that, once they do it, once they have the language, then they are able to use the combined power to dominate someone, however aggressive they are. So that's it. I think what happened in 300,000 years ago, language became so sophisticated, that as it were, the beta males were able to control the alpha males. And then the result of that over time, is that there is a, an evolutionary process of natural selection or call it social selection if you like, against the tendency to be hyper aggressive, because those men start losing out, they they die too young. And if they maybe do have some children already, then what can happen in terms of what we see in small scale societies is that even their children might be killed, because people really don't like being dominated. So you've got a very strange evolutionary mechanism, which uses proactive

aggression. And as a consequence, tends to lead to selection against the propensity for reactive aggression. It's Hobbes producing Rousseau.

Andrew Bolton 17:44

So, so this is really quite a dark story, isn't it? So execution murder, when the beta males gang up and kill the alpha males creates both our gentleness homes are capacity to plot to calculate, to work together in a conspiracy at low risk to themselves to murder. So were you about the death penalty?

Richard Wrangham 18:14

Well, I'm glad you asked that. Because, you know, I want to make absolutely clear that this is an evolutionary analysis of where we come from, and it is absolutely not a recommendation for how we should behave. And my own feelings about the death penalty are clear. I think it is an outmoded system that we should abandon completely. the death penalty was something that was developed in the context of these small independent or knocking societies. Very different from it's used by the state because in the small scale societies were for 10s of thousands of yours, it would have mattered enormously. These penalties were being carried out by people who knew each other. It might be a son against a father, it might be cousins, it might be whoever it is, is done in sorrow under difficult circumstances. But nowadays, with the state executions, there are all sorts of reasons for saying that they are not something that we should continue with. I mean, among other things, it doesn't reduce crime, the statistics do not give any indication that execution tends to reduce crime in the future. And at the time, it's a very expensive system. It's actually more expensive than keeping people in jail. But even more importantly, it's thoroughly unjust executions tend to be carried out much more on the poor and disadvantaged, then on the wealthier, and nowadays, of course, there's a racist component to that. And then perhaps even more, more importantly, anything, it makes mistakes. And we know know that quite often executions in the past have killed innocent people. And then of course, everyone regrets it. So I want to make absolutely clear that just the fact that in the past, our species has routinely used capital punishment is absolutely no reason to think that it's a good idea.

Andrew Bolton 20:38

So you're saying, I think that our violent human past does not have to determine our future and to use a religious language. We're not predestined to be forever violent. So humans have choice. There's the possibility of peaceful religions and ideologies that give us new possibilities.

Richard Wrangham 21:00

Yes, I mean, when people talk about having choice, your choice is very difficult because it's got to be a choice not just among individuals within a society, so the whole society perhaps is able to, to come to a choice at the ballot box for a peaceful leader, whatever. But it's going to go to their choice between conflicting entities between conflicting nations. So and then the word choice is harder to use, because there's something about the fact that if one society chooses to be peaceful, they have to rely on negotiation with the other society to make that effective. So it's not easy. But the big point here is that, you know, we know perfectly well, that there has

been a tremendous decrease in the amount of violence that we've seen in the world on a percentage basis as to say that the proportion of people who die from violence, for instance, has gone down over time. And that alone says that there's no reason why that shouldn't happen in the future. And the difficulty is that we come from a line in which we do have motivations that easily induce a willingness to think that we are morally right about a question and the other side is wrong. And therefore we should be violent. We should be. We should kill people on the other side, because it's morally right to do so. And that problem will always be there. The short story here is that we have biological tendencies that mean that violence is never very far away. And therefore, that we will always need to be really, really careful about designing our institutions and our treaties and our international relationships in ways that minimize the chances of violence.

Andrew Bolton 23:18

So for us to be a peaceful humanity, it's very important for us to have some self awareness our evolutionary past, and that were on a short fuse, as it were.

Unknown Speaker 23:31

I really think so. I mean, you know, if you just take sort of one hideous example, you know, you think about the French Revolution, and to the extent that that was motivated by the thought that Rousseau was right and that we're all very peaceful. If only we can get the chance to get rid of the previous bad people who were imposing some kind of violence on us, then everything will be wonderful. And of course, it never is, in all the revolutions lead to more violence in the future, and then they you develop new social arrangements for suppressing the violence, it will always take work, they will always take fresh ideas our society takes fresh forms to be able to control of violence. And I think the the helpful thing to think about here is that the kind of aggression that is so important in leading to war and genocide and all the really unpleasant things, is is productive violence. And the point about proactive violence, whether you are a chimpanzee or a wolf or a human is that you do not undertake it if you feel that there is a risk that you personally are going to get hurt. Now in humans, that little formula is less optimistic than it might be Other species, because people can be sent into battle through hierarchies that exist within the army and the state and so on by people who personally are holding back and not going to get hurt. But nevertheless, the general principle is that if the expected costs of a behavior are higher than the expected benefits, or if the risks of getting hurt are high, then the behavior is not undertaken. In other words, we do not have some kind of lust for violence, we don't have some kind of mad urge to attack regardless of circumstances. We're very sensitive to context. And if we can design the kind of society that acknowledges that there is always an underlying threat, but at the same time, recognizes that provided we have a social arrangement in which people who are criminal in the intense under violence will be held responsible, then there is real hope for a peaceful future.

Andrew Bolton 26:15

So I find it really interesting to connect with Lester in the Battle of Bosworth and Richard the third 1485 losing a war with the future Henry the seventh. This was a battle between two alpha males, there was a civil war. Then along comes Henry the Eighth, the son of Henry the seventh.

Apparently he had 70,000 executions, perhaps in his reign, including St. Thomas law, to his wives. And then in the 20th century, we have mass murderers, Adolf Hitler, Stalin. And on the other hand, you have also strong leaders Winston Churchill on this side of the Atlantic, Abraham Lincoln and the United States. Both of them believed in democracy, most of the time, they were constrained by democracy constrained by institutions of law and courts elections, Parliament, Congress. And so, this to contrast two sets of alpha males, one not constrained so much and another constrained, doing much better, I think. So, what about today? We have strong men leaders like Putin of Russia do tatty of the Philippines, Xi Jinping of China, Bolsonaro, Brazil, and Mr. Trump of the United States. And you mentioned the actions famous axiom. And another conversation, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Do you have any comments on the importance of democratic institutions in holding political leaders accountable?

Richard Wrangham 28:00

Yes, I mean, of course, these are wonderful questions because they're so important. And, you know, I don't want to portray myself as a political scientist, but but I will say that in the end, the, the coalitional control that is exerted by democratic institutions or other kinds of institutions that somehow represent the will of a larger group of people, is just absolutely fundamental. I should make a distinction, by the way between the alpha males in a chimpanzee community say, and the alpha males in human society have the type that you've been talking about the churches and the riches of thirds and the proteins, because we call them alpha males in contemporary society, but they're not the Same as alpha males in animal societies. And the reason is that humans are so coalitional you know, the only way that President Trump can become president of the United States is by organizing Coalition's it is not exerting his own physical strength. Whereas in animals they do use simply that physical strength and it's just an amazing thing. The way that an alpha male chimpanzee becomes an alpha male is by personally defeating in physical fights every other male in the group. And I think that's the way we should think about our past until we got the kinds of Coalition's that led to us becoming domesticated 300,000 years ago. So now we've got a new kind of alpha. Now we've got an alpha who is the head of a coalition, rather than somebody who does their own personal fighting and clearly, the only way To control the new kind of alpha is by having rival Coalition's that are able somehow to suppress the autocratic tendencies of these, these new alphas. And those are forces where institutions become a vital and terrifyingly vulnerable in some ways, of course, because, you know, we all know of historical and even present day cases where individuals manipulate their own coalition strength to the point where they can be put into positions of unrivaled power. And you brought up Andrew, you know, I think that one of the features that we do inherit from our deep past is this tendency, particularly in males, maybe to some extent in females power to corrupt and absolute power to corrupt? Absolutely. It's when you get unfettered power, that you have the ordinary constraints on proactive aggression being disappearing. And when they disappear, then all of a sudden, our willingness to commit violence in order to eliminate even quite trivial threats to ourselves, becomes all too tempting. And so you can have, you know, ferocious leaders like Stalin, authorizing the killing of millions. That's the danger of course, and it's why it's so desperately important to keep an eye on the institutional structures that do keep society from having a state monopolize public to its own extreme advantage.

Andrew Bolton 32:05

So that's why a human rights, national and National Court enforcing international law are so important for peace and justice and an important way of curbing proactive violence. So given law and courts, there is hope for peaceful humanity. Law and courts with teeth with power.

Richard Wrangham 32:33

Yes, I mean, you know, there's tremendous open, and I think we'd always come back to the fact that we have had very peaceful societies in the past, you know, you can have countries which for several hundred years, can have extraordinarily low rates of violence. So, Iceland is a classic example. But then I said Also, you can go back before the last few hundred years, so the time of sagas 1000 1100 ad that sort of thing and and see terrible accounts of violence. So these things change, but the overall trend is certainly in the right direction. It's just that we still have to be very careful because the trend may be in the right direction. But there are still great dangers. One of the intriguing facts is that the longer that societies go without war than the worse the war is, when this eventually happens is that's a problem that we should be aware of.

Unknown Speaker 33:42

Yeah, I agree. I agree. Can I ask a question about matriarchy? In the webinar you said there were no matriarchal human societies that you knew of. Although bonobos cousins of chimps are matriarchal. So is male rule inevitable in government, corporations, churches and religions? Or is something more equal possible not matriarchy or patriarchy, but joint rule. And I should declare that in Community of Christ, we have women, at every level of the church and involved in every key decision off of our passes in the UK, for instance, are elected every year, and they're women. So, can you have joint rule?

Richard Wrangham 34:30

Well, this seems to me to be a fascinating question, because it's one in which the trend that we see is at a much earlier stage than the trend for reduced violence. That is to say, we still have very few examples of societies in which women are equally powerful as men at the top. I don't know about the Community of Christ, but quite often what you find is that in businesses say, you might have quite a lot of women in the executive branches, but the further you go towards the top, then the more the bias is towards the men. But there seems no reason why this would have to happen. It depends on people being specially determined. And it's, you know, incredibly exciting, that since 2003, we now have for the first time, a country in which the, the parliament or the you know, the top institution in the country, who institution is numerically dominated by women. So that is Rwanda. When 46 out of 80 seats were occupied by women. But it's amazing that is the first time in the history of the world that we know that we've got the the rules body as it were numerically dominated by women. There have been some cases now in Scandinavia, where you have more women than men in Parliament. So, in principle, it seems perfectly reasonable this should continue. There will just be pushback, and males seem particularly good at forming Coalition's with each other. So it may be challenging, but I didn't see why shouldn't happen.



Andrew Bolton 36:31

So there's a bit of hope. So I want to ask,

Richard Wrangham 36:36

You asked about matriarchy in the broader context you brought in bonobos, which are they the sister species to chimpanzees, and have this extraordinary set of contrast with chimpanzees much less violent and much more tolerant and much more females much more involved in the hierarchy. But most people I think would say that it's pretty equal between males and females. Most males can get beaten up by most females. And most females can get beaten up by quite a few males. The important thing in bonobos is that when these interactions happen, the females are much better than the males that come into each other's help. So if a male and a female get into a conflict, and they squeak and ask for help, then the female definitely will get support from local females and the male will not get support from local males. So thanks to Coalition's. I have all sorts of friends who are who are trying to think very seriously about how to re sculpt some of the political systems and the legal systems in the United States and elsewhere. Following the noble principle you should do to try and get women to support each other better. In terms of all the kinds of conflicts where women have tended to suffer in the past.

Andrew Bolton 38:06

Alright, interesting. I want to explore another question that is to do with nonconformity. And so nonconformist alpha males were murdered in the past. But what about courageous nonconformity? Are people like Quaker George Fox, conscientious objectors in wartime? Rosa Parks who refusing to give up a seat in Montgomery, Alabama started the civil rights movement, or aganda. None of these people were bullies. They were non violent, gentle people, but they refused courageously to be a beacon to unjust laws, or unjust norms. And these kinds of people have been quite important, particularly the 20th century for making human cultures better. Do you have any comments about the role of non violent ethical Non conformance?

Richard Wrangham 39:04

I think I have to take off my evolutionary biology hat here because I'm not sure that evolution has much to say about it. The only thing I would observe is that in our evolutionary past to judge from the way that small scale societies have operated in recent years, it's been very dangerous to be a nonconformist. And the power that the men in the group can bring to control. The bullying alpha can also be used to control anybody that they don't like. And very often, you see in quite trivial ways that nonconformists suffer, someone who comes in with new ideas and challenge the traditions of the society can come can be exiled or or killed. So In our evolutionary past, it's very likely that non conformism has been so dangerous that there has been selection for people to be conformist to not be the nail that sticks out. So I think the non conformance is a sovereign, unusual and somewhat brave position to take the the sort of significance of the particular types of non conformance who argue for non violent and gentle approaches, seems to me enormous. And that's partly because if they can persuade others to take a non violent approach, it turns out statistically, that this is very effective. I don't if you know, the work of Erica Chenoweth?

Andrew Bolton 40:54

Yeah, yes.

Richard Wrangham 40:56

So yeah, that's so impressive that nonviolent movements tend to be more likely to bring about political change than violent movements, provided you get enough people to come along. And so, you know, the seeds of those movements are going to begin with the kinds of people you were talking about the non violent, the gentle ones who worked through persuasion to bring about essentially, such a large coalition, that they don't need to use violence.

Andrew Bolton 41:34

Yeah, it is their capacity to appeal to the equivalent of lots of bita humans. The something is unethical. By their I mean bull karma, setting dogs and fire hoses on children in Birmingham, Alabama. It was a headline news that did more good for the civil rights movement because it appealed to People's basic sense of fantasizing enemy knighted states.

Richard Wrangham 42:06

Yes, I mean, there's that sort of commerce of appeal. And then at another level, there's the emotional appeal of once you realize that you've got lots and lots of people on your side. Once you see a leader who is attracting lots of support, then your fear of being a nonconformist goes away. And then you can act on the way that you think is right, rather than you know, rather than other fear

Andrew Bolton 42:39

Yes very, very interesting. So this is an area for us to continue to explore. I think. I want to go back in the story a little bit. So Jane Goodall, I think, was the first to find this serious violence in chimpanzees and then her supervisors and your supervisor It was Robert Heine, who helped the story get out as well. And then you talk about a friend, a colleague, David Hamburg. So none of you suppressed this story chimpanzee violence. It got out. And at the same time, James Jane Goodall, john. Hi, Robert. Hi. And David Hamburg. We're also personally very committed to peace work. Would you like to comment on their their stories?

Oh, thanks for mentioning them. Andrew. I think it's a really interesting story this because those of us like myself, who have tried to grapple with the question what it means to discover that one of our two closest relatives, chimpanzees, makes deliberate efforts to raid and kill members of neighboring communities. We have sometimes been critical sized by people who have got all the right motives, you know, are worried about this peace and war and aiming for nonviolence. And they say, you know, you shouldn't draw attention to this. Because if people think that we have got some kind of tendencies to make war that come from our evolutionary past, then they will just give up and do nothing. And it will leave people so pessimistic, that the chances of war will just increase. So there was a kind of moral pressure not to talk about this stuff. Well, you know, my answer to that is that the three people who were most involved as senior academics in this discovery, all spent the rest of their lives very active in the search for

peace. And I think it energizes you to know what the possibilities are. So James Goodall, you know, I mean, she was really shocked when the discovery started coming in, of, of the deaths occasioned by the chimps that she had come to love and admire and enjoy so much. And when she discovered that dark side, what she said is, well, you know, they're not as nice as I thought they were, but it makes them even more human. Well, she spent much of the rest of our life being a United Nations messenger for peace. She wrote her book *Reasons for Hope*, where she explicitly lays out what it is about humans that means that we can have a hopeful future and thinking about Secondly, the young and 300 days a year she travels around the country around the world, giving her optimistic perspective on humans. But also recognizing that we have dark tendencies, and that we need to be sensible and take those into account as we develop our future. Her advisor, her PhD advisor was Professor Robert Hind at Cambridge University. And he was a leading animal behaviorist deepening the research science. But after this discovery, what he did was to he kind of melded it with his own experience. His brother had been died awful death during the Second World War. He was always very anti war, but then he became really engaged. And he became the chair and co chair of the Pugwash movement to try and ban nuclear weapons. He wrote a series of books with titles like *War No More*. Showing that, by him a lesson that humans have got an evolutionary component to our aggressiveness just meant that we needed to understand it better, and to take all the more seriously the threats that we face. And David Hamburg, who was Jane Goodall's American advisor, and was financially organizing grants to support the working in Gambia at the time. He did very similar things. He co chaired with Cyrus Vance, who was the secretary of state in America, a multi year Commission on preventing deadly conflict. He was involved in reducing nuclear arms he was involved in working with Mikhail Gorbachev to bring the United States and the Soviet Union into a better understanding of each other and reduce the challenge. of the Cold War, becoming a hot war. So these three people, the ones who, as senior academics first appreciated the fact that humans are not alone in making war on the neighboring groups of their own species. And the chimpanzees are about to close his relatives also do that. They responded by very positively, actively thinking about how to bring peace to the world. And I think that's a great lesson for how knowledge can really help.

Thank you. So really moving set of stories. And William Wilberforce, the British Member of Parliament who led the successful campaign in Parliament to first of all abolish, the slave trade and then actual slavery is your great great, great grandfather. Either, according to my research, yes, it's your sister Kate. He also said, Kate, how found the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. So concern for animals is a long history meal. And and we've already talked about Jane Goodall, Robert Hind and David Hamburg, how they have been committed to peace and justice. The tagline for Peace Projects EU is what would you do for peace? I could ask you, Richard, if it's not rude to ask, what would you do for peace?

Richard Wrangham 49:35

Well, it's a question I suppose that all of us to be challenged with and I didn't feel particularly well organized to, to respond to it. You know, Wilberforce is a very daunting ancestor to have because in addition to co founding the RSPCA, as you say, he was involved in supporting children stopping work in factories, he was supporting prisoners. He was trying to stop

excessive alcohol, gin palaces. He was engaged in all sorts of things. He was just, you know, nobody could be a better advertisement for a Christian life. It's it's hard to imagine anyone being quite so virtuous nowadays, I generate my own sort of contributions, I suppose, going the direction of thinking about conservation. You know, I find it very daunting, that in the future, if we carry on as we're going as a world, then we are going to turn the entire surface of the planet into just a giant garden, farm feedlot to feed humans. And I don't think that that's going to be a very nice way to live and it's not going to be very safe way to live either. So I think that the one of the components of a peaceful future is including a natural world, which, if you like, can provide ecological services and act as a buffer for humans. It can provide all sorts of important biological sources that we need resources. And it may also serve a really important emotional tie for humans to to the earth. For one reason or another at any rate I involved with conservation of chimpanzees. The forest in which I have been studying chimpanzees for 32 years in Uganda is the as the largest population of Gemzar now and I think that for the people living around the park, it is it's a benefit to them to be able to live next to the forest, what they would really like to do is to cut it down. And then within a few years, you wouldn't have a forest there at all. And the same thing would happen all over the world. I think that in future generations, they will be their descendants will be pleased that they do have a remnant of the natural world right next to them not just for economic reasons, like bringing tourists, although that is important, but because to connect to that aspect of our lives, is it has spiritual significance. So I, I hope that among the many ways in which people work for peace, and working for maintaining enough of the natural world to give people a sense of where we come from. And a sense of enjoyment and appreciation of other species will always be one component.

Andrew Bolton 53:11

Thank you so much for sharing with us in this podcast. You've been incredibly generous in doing both a webinar now a podcasts for us. My interactions with you have been consistently lovely. And I really appreciate that. I recommend your book, The Goodness Paradox to our listeners is a very good read. I know people still have many questions for the webinars, no doubt on this podcast and some of those questions can be answered by reading Richards book. This is a podcast, a Project Zion Podcast. And today I always your host, Andrew Bolton. Thank you for joining us, and may in closing ask you our audience to ask consider this same question that I asked Richard Well would you do for peace? Thank you, Richard.

Richard Wrangham 54:04

Thank you very much, Andrew.

Josh Mangelson 54:13

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