

**354 | Cuppa Joe | Historic Site Foundation Autumn Lecture Series | Barb Walden**  
Project Zion Podcast

**Josh Mangelson 00:17**

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

**Karin Peter 00:33**

Welcome. This is Cuppa Joe where we explore Restoration history. And I'm your host, Karin Peter. Our guest today is Barb Walden. Barb is the Executive Director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. And Barb is in historian and author, a past president of John Whitmer Historical Association. She serves on the Community of Christ Church History Team, and she's a frequent contributor to Project Zion Podcast. And we appreciate that very much. Welcome, Barb.

**Barbara Walden 01:04**

Thank you, Karin. It's always a joy to be with you, thank you for the invitation.

**Karin Peter 01:09**

Well, I always learn something new when we have these conversations. So, I'm all a twitter waiting to see what that will be today from our conversation. So, we are doing a series of for all of the Autumn Series of Lectures from the Historic Sites Foundation, and your contribution to that series was titled Community of Christ history in the Holy Land, Women of the Palestine mission 1910 to 1935. So, this already brings questions to mind for me. And the first one is why a lecture on the Holy Land? What made you choose this topic?

**Barbara Walden 01:52**

Personally, I find it's a fascinating story. It covers 180 years of history. And you know, historians love to share good stories. But much of what I shared in that lecture came from the research for the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundations group tour, to the Holy Land that happened in the fall of 2019. And our little group of 50, people spent an awesome two and a half weeks exploring church history, and traveling through Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and Egypt. And on the tour each day, we had a history class that would focus on Latter Day Saint connections to the Holy Land. So, what I shared in that online lecture was really a condensed version of what was shared in class during that 2019 tour.

**Karin Peter 02:40**

Well, that's good to know where some of those photos came from, as well. So, we encourage our listeners to go to the Historic Sites Foundation website, view the lecture and see the great slides that Barb provides as well. So, I want to I want to stay on this topic just a little bit longer, because I have to admit, when I first saw the title, my, my little red flags came up. Because when we talk about the Community of Christ history in the Holy Land, there are all kinds of reasons why the early church

looked toward Palestine, that are theological or maybe more doctrinal reasons during that period of time. So, I think before we enter the discussion about all those connections, let's talk a little bit about why. Why did the church have a mission to the Holy Land?

**Barbara Walden** 03:32

Good question. It's like, "What were we thinking?" I feel is what you're saying?

**Karin Peter** 03:38

Yes, that is exactly what I'm thinking, but I thought it would be impolite, so I'm glad you said it.

**Barbara Walden** 03:45

You know, throughout Community of Christ history, there has been a genuine fascination with ancient Palestine. And in our first church newspaper, WW Phelps publishes his new hymn called Redeemer of Israel. And in the 1830s, Kirtland church members were encouraged to study the scriptures, and to model their lives off the earliest Christians in the book of Acts. They attended Hebrew grammar classes at the Kirtland Temple. They have Joshua Seixas, who is a Jewish scholar, lead the Hebrew grammar course for our first church seminary, which they called the Kirtland Ohio Theological Institution. So just as the early members are looking to Acts chapter two as a template for disciples' way of life and organizing a faith community, they are also learning Hebrew with the idea that they can go back to the earliest writings of the Scriptures. So, they're, they're rather hardcore about this. So even though Palestine was on the other side of the world, it seems to be on their minds in the 1830s and 40s. So, at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in March of 1836, you have Joseph Smith Jr's prayer of dedication includes this passionate petition on behalf of Israel. Orson Hyde receives a blessing that says he will one day go to the Holy Land during this time, so their thoughts are finally turning into action. During a church conference at Nauvoo in 1840. When Orson Hyde and John Page, were given the assignment to actually go to Jerusalem. Sadly, John Page never made it out of the country. And he was eventually replaced by a guy named George J. Adams. And the two men Adams and Hyde arrived in Liverpool in 1841, were the church leaders in Liverpool in Britain, asked Adams to remain in England while Hyde continues on to Jerusalem alone. And he gets there by October of 1841. And once he's in Jerusalem, or said I climbed the Mount of Olives and offered a dedicatory prayer, he builds a pile of stones as a witness connecting to those in the Hebrew Scriptures like Joshua and Samuel, and it's fascinating to see how many other missionaries do the same thing. Following Orson Hyde, they build a pile of stones on the Mount of Olives over the next 100 years. So, Hyde departs Jerusalem in October of 1841. And it would take him over a year to return to his family and Nauvoo arriving home just in time for Christmas, he was gone for almost 32 months. So something was happening here that would pull them away from his family for so long and I should also point out before we leave Orson high loan, but there's also a theological component to our historic need to go to Jerusalem that I think is a podcast episode all unto itself. And keeping in mind early church members believe that they were the literal Latter Day Saints that the end times were coming, and they needed to prepare. So, Jews returning to Jerusalem was a part of their interpretation or idea of the Second Coming. And you also see that there's a certain power of

place for church members during this time, a sacred geography if you will. Jackson County, Missouri was important. Adam-ondi-Ahman is significant in their story, the Kirtland Temple structure is essential. And as they are reading the scriptures, they recognize the physical places in the Holy Land are significant. In the Latter Day Saints story, it was important to them that there be a Latter Day Saint footprint on the land, where Jesus and the ancient prophets once walk. So, Orson Hyde goes there and literally builds a stone altar to mark his presence and place in the history of the Holy Land. So, with all that said, I don't want to give our listeners the impression that what Orson Hyde and his fellow church members believed in the 1840s is what Community of Christ believes today. We have come a long way and have gained a greater, greater understanding of historical context of the Scriptures today. We focus less on the end times and more on the now a leaving alleviating those in poverty now, expressing the worth of all persons now, building a peaceable Kingdom now, thank goodness, we are greatly blessed with people like Tony and Charmaine Chvala-Smith, who can explain the complexities of our evolving theology from where we once were with arsenide in 1841, in Jerusalem, to where we are today. And that really can fill an entire podcast episode, and more. It's a fascinating journey that we've been on. But I want to make it clear that what we believed in the 1830s and 40s, about the role of Jerusalem, in our Latter Dy Saints story is not where we are today.

**Karin Peter 08:49**

That's a really good reminder, Barb, thank you. There are threads of it that remain, and the one that stays is our idea of sacred place, right? This idea that somehow, where God is, is holy, and so we've expanded that. Even in our own tradition of thinking that Zion was Jackson County, Missouri, and everybody had to go there, to this idea that Zion is where you are when you participate in God's reign. And so we've still held on to sacred place, we just understand it in a completely different way.

**Barbara Walden 09:21**

Absolutely. I mean, there's a reason that there's a spiritual formation center, at the Kirtland Temple, at the Kirtland Temple Visitor's Center. That is an essential part of who we are today.

**Karin Peter 09:31**

Absolutely. Okay. So, we'll keep that in mind as we go through all that you share in your lecture on the mission to the Holy Land. So now that we've got the "why" out of the way on why they went, let's start with George Adams, and this colony that provides a base for the mission and tell us that whole part of the story and what that was all about.

**Barbara Walden 09:56**

Yeah, you know, I find the history of the church and the Holy Land so fascinating that I have a tendency to get overexcited about it. So, if it becomes too much you feel free to tell me to, "Tone it down, Walden. Tone it down." And in the George J. Adams part of the story I find especially fascinating. So, the guy that stays in England and as Orson Hyde goes on to Jerusalem alone, he ends up going to Palestine after all. It's just decades later, he has a really interesting story. So, after a rocky relationship

with Brigham Young and James Strang during the 1840s, after Joseph Smith Jr's kill, Adams eventually starts his own church and he calls it the Church of the Messiah that begins in 1861. And by 1864, church members approved a conference resolution to begin a mission to the Holy Land. So, after a scouting trip to Palestine, GJ Adams returns home, goes to Maine and inspires a bunch of people to go with him to the Holy Land. And we're talking about average people feeling this burning, calling to reunite the tribes of Israel and usher in the last days. So, by August of 1866, after the Civil War, a group of 157 passengers including Adams own family members, board the Nellie Chapin and they depart Jonesport Maine with building supplies and food just set for the Holy Land. But despite their their faith and the best of intentions, the trip turns out to be a sad affair. Some would even say a total disaster. They arrive in Jaffa, but they don't have permissions to live there. So, they end up building a temporary tent community on the beach, where they wait for the permissions to come. But soon begin dying of dysentery, the polluted water their bodies are not ready for or not strong enough for some of the local elements and so sickness plagued the community and parents were burying their children not long after their arrival. They were also met with so many other challenges, economic challenges, social challenges, cultural challenges, they're facing these challenges while there's this plague of sickness that is taking out many of the the families. Land was overpriced and difficult to purchase farming techniques and seasonal planning used in Maine, were not very effective in the Middle East. Adams doesn't handle the situation very well at all as a church leader. He had a history of struggling with alcoholism, and he began drinking excessively during this time. And at one point he encouraged his followers to begin drinking to fight the dysentery. And it doesn't take long for his followers to lose faith in him and faith in their Holy Land community experiment. Most of the people return home to Maine, there's a great story that Mark Twain is involved in this and helping them get back to Maine helping fund their return ship. To be clear, Mark Twain was not a follower of George J. Adams. He has a strong opinion on him and these followers, but yet, he helps them with his rich friends financially helping them get back to the US. George J. Adams eventually returns to the US as well. But he returns as a man without a church at that point and on an interesting side note, years later, GJ Adams eventually tries to join the reorganization, and asked if he could preach and serve as a missionary on our behalf years later. And it places Joseph Smith III in a really interesting place where some church members, some who were former followers of Adams, were telling him "Don't do it. You can't trust that man. He's a narcissist!" While there are other church members who were encouraging Joseph the third welcome Adams into the fold saying, "We are a church that believes in redemption." So, it's just interesting to see how Joseph Smith III struggles with that decision of, do you forgive a man and believe in the redemption story and welcome him into the fold and have him serving as a missionary as the face of the church? Or do you not recognize him at all and not welcome him into the church? So, what do you think Joseph III, would have done?

#### **Karin Peter 14:23**

So, I'm thinking about the limited knowledge I have of Joseph III's personality and really practical nature, and I'm thinking he would have found a modified way to welcome him. Yeah,

**Barbara Walden 14:35**

yeah. Well, what's interesting is Adams was ill health he died before Joseph III ever got back to him about his decision. So, in the end, Joseph III didn't have to make the decision, but I've often wondered if he did what he would have done. And, and I don't know, I don't know?

**Karin Peter 14:55**

We'll have to compare, compare and ask Lach since he is the lecture on Joseph III. Give him that question. What do we think Joseph III would have done?

**Barbara Walden 15:08**

Right.

**Karin Peter 15:09**

So GJ Adams dies, the colony, the whole thing was a debacle. How then is that experience connected to the Reorganization and the start of the Palestine mission, then at the beginning of the 20th century, because it doesn't go away. There's still a connection.

**Barbara Walden 15:34**

Right. Not all of Adam's followers returned to the United States, and that's where it gets good. A few remain behind for a number of reasons. And it's a small group that remain behind. Some like Rolla Floyd saw an entrepreneurial opportunity in the Holy Land, and he quickly establishes himself as a professional guide, offering tours of the Holy Land to pilgrims visiting. One family set up a successful hotel that still stands today as kind of a boutique hotel in Jaffa. That's called the Drisco named after the Drisco brothers who were from Maine who helped set up the hotel in the 1860s. And then there were others that felt this spiritual calling to remain behind. Abigail Allie and her sister Anna Watts were two who stayed at Jaffa after the community dissolved in 1867. And both Anna and Abigail's husbands returned home to Maine. While the women stayed and worked as hired hands. Anna passes away in 1869. And Abigail stays there in Java until her death almost 30 years later, I'm feeling this spiritual calling that there's a reason that she came to Jaffa with the Adams colony and there was a reason that she needed to stay. And that story is fascinating. Her and her son Willie, they toughed it out in Palestine and they're living in poverty. Abigail learns that the RLDS church from her relatives in Maine who, who joined the church who sent her copies of the Saints Herald and she begins writing letters to the Herald and begging the church to send missionaries to the Holy Land. And it's through her letters that Marietta Walker kind of crosses her path, and invites Abigail to be a church correspondent, a writer from Palestine, and she starts up a column in the Autumn Leaves called "The Leaves from Palestine" where Abby describes her life in the Holy Land and gives these wonderful descriptions of historic places found in the Scriptures, so readers were thrilled to read these firsthand accounts. And soon church leaders begin considering seriously considering setting up a mission in Palestine. And the locals, people like Rolla, Floyd and his wife, Mary Jane Floyd agreed to assist in those church endeavors. So, the first

missionary arrives in 1906. And he's followed by others in 1910. So, the Palestine mission really began because of the few people who remained in the area connected to George J. Adams former church.

**Karin Peter 18:06**

Who somehow came across the organization through this relatives in Maine. So as you're talking about some of these early figures who stayed behind, it makes sense to me when I think about Maine, and I think about the determination that we associate with folks from Maine, that they would be stalwart and they would be willing to stay. But it also explains some of the difficulties in working with them throughout the mission in the Holy Land. So hopefully, we'll get to some of that as well as people who were very adamant in their own perspectives contributed, and also at times frustrated the mission in the Holy Land. So, you talked about a couple of the people there, there are some other names that become important in this whole mission experience. What are some of the other names of some of the leaders before we kind of go into more about the mission?

**Barbara Walden 19:09**

Oh, there's a lot of colorful people that are just too many to mention. Mary Jane, Floyd, Rolla Floyd's wife, becomes the matriarch over the mission. She wasn't an assigned missionary, per se. She was just the stable force that lived in Jerusalem and owned a lot of the property that was used by the church to establish the mission. So, she's really important. Rolla has to wait a year the mission began. But Mary Jane lives on another 25 years and I think was the force behind the Palestine mission. And she was a force. I wish somebody would do a book on her she just was was incredible. Well, each of the missionaries have their own story and on the bus tour, they had their own 40 minute class where we went into great detail and I don't want to bore your listeners with that and in a five hour podcast, but it's tough to know where to start. Gomer Griffith, along with the newly married FG Pitt and Rosa Parks Pitt were the first to serve for an extended time in Palestine. And they were replaced by Hannah and Rees Jenkins, who served through the really challenging time of World War One. Rees was imprisoned during this time and passed away while, under arrest in Damascus. Hannah didn't learn about his passing until months later. It's a really sad story, but an incredible story about a woman who survives alone in Jerusalem while her husband was in prison and the world is at war. Others who served in the Palestine mission were former teachers, church appointees, bankers and artists. Many of them were couples serving together, people like Arthur and Edna Koehler, Harry and Lil Passman, Dan and Gladdie Swordan and Homer and Maude Dodie. Good old Mary Jane Floyd appears in their photos is a long-standing stalwart of the missionary startup schools, a congregation, they build a beautiful mission house made of stone that still stands today. And they establish a community garden because travelers and tenants and they do what they can to create a footprint in the Holy Land from 1910 to 1935. And they sometimes get along sometimes don't get along there's some ugly fights that breakout among missionaries and and the local people they they struggle with cultures and conflict. They struggle on a global scale is the world is at war. You really see a raw insight into humanity or reading their letters and learning more about these missionary couples, but you also see this sense of perseverance to get through it, and to get along, and that all they have is one another. And this sense that they are being called to this

mission and it's it's persevering in that mission through everything that is thrown at them from divided cultures from religious groups intention to even bedbugs, and inability to get so it's they really encounter a lot during their time there.

**Karin Peter 22:26**

So, one of my favorite individuals in watching the lecture is Harry Passman, because he gives a Master's class and how to write a letter immersed in sarcasm, his descriptions of trying to deal with the personalities there as, as he was engaged in this Holy Land mission is just marvelous. So, I encourage our listeners to go and watch the lecture and learn more about Harry Passman and his,

**Barbara Walden 22:52**

He never loses his sense of humor.

**Karin Peter 22:54**

Yes, very, very much so. So, in your lecture, you chronicle the different people who participated in this mission into Palestine. And you shared that it was different than the missions to other countries, as the local or indigenous participation in Palestine was much less, most of the participation was that of Westerners who found themselves in the area for different reasons. It was almost like it was a mission to an expat community there in Palestine. So, as we talk about that, how did it kind of become that and how did it? How did it remain kind of that and rather than an indigenous kind of community?

**Barbara Walden 23:37**

Yeah, that was really a disappointing part of the research is that the majority of the sources focused on the American people who traveled as seekers and missionaries to Palestine during that 19th and early 20th century. I could find very little information related to those few church members who are native to the region of the Latter Day Saints or the RLDS message didn't seem to take hold in the Holy Land. With few exceptions, most of our church history in the 19th and 20th century Palestine is a story about guests living in a foreign land. And that was, that was disappointing to me. It's a fascinating story, don't, don't get me wrong, it's fascinating history. But unlike the other lectures in the autumn lecture series, where you hear about local church leaders in Congress in India, and southeastern Nigeria, working to build Community of Christ in their native countries, our holy land history doesn't really include that local environment. There were some local members, and there were people in the local community attending our schools and doing some of the the other activities or events but as far as becoming church members and becoming immersed in the local congregation, we just don't see those stories. It just wasn't there. And for those who joined the church who are living in Jerusalem, I could find very little about personal stories and experiences, the history of the church and the Holy Land is primarily about people from the outside learning to connect the cultures and customs of a foreign land.

**Karin Peter 25:13**

So still an important story, it teaches us a lot about what we consider one of the important elements of discipleship, which is hospitality. And that seems to be a thread throughout this mission story with the Floyd family and others offering hospitality in different significant ways. I am curious about one local person, and that would be George, and I'm not sure how to pronounce his name. It's either Njeim or Njeim, so we can have that discussion first. But let's talk a little bit about him. He was from the area he ended up going to Graceland. And it's in your lecture that he went under church appointment after a while and I believe you said he even served as a president of 70 which was really surprising to me because I think that would have made him one of the first non Western People of Color to serve in a leadership council of the church. So, let's talk about George.

**Barbara Walden 26:16**

George is Njeim or Njeim, I'm I'm corrected either way that I say it so I'm not sure what the proper pronunciation is. So, I'll say George Njeim. He was introduced to the church through the Palestine mission. His uncle Solomon regime was one of the first baptisms in in in the Jordan River for the RLDS church. You can say he was a founding member of the congregation in Jerusalem, and along with Mary Jane and Rolla, Floyd. So, Solomon travels up to Lebanon with U.W Green, one of the church missionaries, and he meets, Green meets with Solomon's extended family, including Solomon's nephew, George Njeim. So, George showed a great deal of interest and eventually moved to Jerusalem. He lived in the mission house and worked in the British post office in Jerusalem for a short period of time, before moving to the United States to attend Graceland. And like you said, he later becomes an appointee and president of the 70 for the RLDS or Community of Christ church, and some of our listeners may have even known him. He passed away not too long ago in 2000, I believe so a little over 20 years ago. Was he the first non-white general officer? I don't know, but it's certainly worth looking into. And after his uncle Solomon passes away, most of his family leaves to the United States, and his son, Solomon's son, Joe, who would have been George's cousin, attends Graceland around the same time, George does. And they even have an interesting story as well. A book was written about Solomon, just recently, where his notes, his journal, living as a tour guide, before joining the church, his notes were discovered on eBay, and a professor purchases those notes and discovers through his writing, it just unfolds this fascinating history of his travels in and outside of the Middle East, and just a fascinating story, and I hurried up to purchase the book to see what it said about Solomon and the RLDS church. And it says very little, it was towards the end of Solomon's life, he was in ill health. And I think the author just didn't find that part of his life as fascinating as his life as this professional tour guide, traveling through the Middle East and running into all sorts of scenarios, but it does mention that most of the Njeim family immigrated to the United States, living in New England and the Midwest and all over.

**Karin Peter 28:50**

So, an interesting look at that from the historical perspective on the Njeim family, and then coming to the US because they were one of the few local families and so their life in the church ended up here, which is interesting, because all the missionaries ended up there. It seems a little backwards, a little



convoluted. So as you went through all of these different parts of the story, you talk about these really determined women in the Holy Land. Mission, Mary Floyd is a determined woman. All of the conflicts all the difficulties World War One this was it was a horrendous story when we talk about the Jenkins family and World War One and their story, which is just a terribly sad story in that but when we look at the greater context and what was going on in the world, we can see all of these different connections and all of these different influences that this small mission and these determined women were connected to. So how or what would you say were some of the key key learnings that stayed with you from this mission experience that continue to kind of live with us in Community of Christ?

**Barbara Walden 30:11**

That's a great question and there definitely were fierce women in this story that she ran across. I, I've been lifting up Mary Jane Floyd, but I shouldn't take away the spotlight on women like Hannah Jenkins and others. And throughout this story, you see this importance of education, whether as teachers or learners in Palestine. And you see that this continuing to value the importance of education and the women are often the teachers in these classes, whether they're teaching English as a second language or their art classes going on in the mission house in a number of classes, you can see them emphasizing the importance of education, emphasizing the importance of educational outreach in the local community in a number of things. And I think there were times when Worth of All Persons appears again and again in our story. The story of Rhys Jenkins really struck me and you mentioned he and Hannah, Rees was a missionary assigned to Palestine with Hannah, and they were in Jerusalem during World War One. Reese was arrested by the Turkish police on allegations that he was a British spy. They were absurd allegations, but he was imprisoned and later sent to Damascus along with other American and British prisoners. And during his six months in Damascus, he becomes seriously ill and typhus. And during this time, he crosses paths with Reverend Archibald Porter, who was an American missionary taken prisoner in Jerusalem and like Rees was sent to Damascus. Well, rubber quarter was under house arrest by the time Rees arrived in Damascus, and Porter literally rescued Rees from prison and gave him a room and his own quarters. And Porter shares his food and nurses respect to help during this time. And unfortunately, the neighbors reported for her to the authorities and Reese was moved back to a hospital he has another flare up for stayed by Rees side in the hospital for as long as he could, and Rees dies in the hospital in May of 1918. His body was sent off with others to be buried, but Reverend Fordern didn't leave it alone. He went searching for Reese's body and he found it thrown in a mass grave with other corpses left to decompose. So, the group of helpers, the Reverend took Jenkins' body had a coffin made and buried Rees' remains in a Protestant cemetery there in Damascus. And years later, our church president FM Smith visits with foreigner and here's the story and further agrees to publish the story in the Herald for mortaring about it. And it's truly a good samaritan story in church history. You can still see Rees Jenkins grave today in Damascus. And it's just this powerful story of someone outside of our church, taking in the struggling, ill church member and just believing in his worth, as a person.

**Karin Peter 33:13**

Thank you for sharing that. We forget sometimes we like to be the heroes of the story when we look at church history. And it's wonderful to hear the stories where others are the heroes of the story. So if you have continued your study of the mission to the Holy Land, which I assume with this tour that you all took to the Holy Land, you did a whole bunch of study beforehand. How has it influenced you as a disciple? What is most meaningful to you as an individual?

**Barbara Walden 33:47**

Well, on a personal note, my family goes back generations and Latter Day Saint history, but the first encounter was through George J. Adams and his Jaffa experiment, his Jaffa colony. The 157 people from Maine that traveled to Java that I mentioned earlier, my ancestors were on the ship. My great great grandparents bury two children in Jaffa. So, researching the GJ Adams period hit home for me personally. My grandfather used to tell stories about how his grandmother's family traveled out, or it would have been his great grandmother's family traveled out to Israel and Mark Twain saved the day by helping fund their return trip and it always was that kind of a little crazy story that grandpa used to share. While researching church history in the Holy Land, you realize, you know, Grandpa wasn't all that crazy that this really did happen. And this really was a group of people that believed faithfully they were doing the right thing and found themselves in an awful situation where they're burying their own children and really struggling to survive. When when I think about threads and themes and the larger story of Community of Christ in the Holy Land, something that stood out to me was the running theme of humility and forgiveness. The missionaries didn't always agree with each other, or their neighbors and we talked earlier, Harry Passman and Mary Jane Floyd couldn't stand each other, quite frankly. But time and time again, they appear together and photos and continue to live beside one another, and come together to fiercely fight for the continuation of the Palestine mission in the 1930s. And I think that says something about keeping our eyes on the larger mission. And looking beyond our personal differences. I think it says something about forgiveness. And the humility part is observing how people adjusted to a new way of life and in a new culture, moving to Jerusalem humbled them really quick. And for some, well, perhaps it didn't humble them enough. But even thinking about those in the George J. Adams colony that returned to Maine, you know, people like my ancestors, you would think that they would be done with organized religion after this failed experiment that they would want nothing to do with a Latter Day Saint movement. Nothing to do with the likes of Adam. And and yet, you find RLDS missionaries traveling up the coast of Maine talking to these people. And soon they're becoming pastors and priesthood members of RLDS congregations in Maine, they're planting congregations. And so it was really amazing to me to see people who felt so burned so badly, or ashamed of what took place in Jaffa, returning to the United States and still willing to give Christianity another go still willing to give in this case, the Reorganization ago despite what they've been through.

**Karin Peter 36:52**

Perseverance.

**Barbara Walden** 36:54

Yeah, yeah.

**Karin Peter** 36:55

Perseverance and faith, right? Endless hope.

**Barbara Walden** 36:58

Right!

**Karin Peter** 36:59

So as we bring our, our little discussion about the mission to the Holy Land, to a close, any last thoughts have anything that we didn't cover that you really would like to share with our listeners, and encourage them to go and view the lecture?

**Barbara Walden** 37:14

Closing thoughts? Perhaps this is the pandemic speaking, but my only closing thoughts are to encourage your listeners to get out there and discover the history in their own part of the world. I had no idea Community of Christ has such a long history in the Holy Land until I began researching it and working on this project. And I think there is so much more about our global history that we don't know yet. We're certainly learning that in the Autumn Lecture Series, but there are so many more stories that are left untapped. For example, I've been in touch with this wonderful guy, Michael Wright, a friend of yours, who has lived in Italy for years, and he is uncovering some awesome stuff on early church members in Italy. One of the first missionaries, John Avadet was from Italy, he immigrated to the United States joined the reorganization was sent back to Italy, as a missionary in the 1870s. And Michael is discovering all sorts of fascinating things about John's story. I'm already thinking the historic sites foundation needs to start planning a group tour to Italy. And who knows, maybe I can even get you Karen to join us on the journey. It's just there's so much more of the story that's, that's out there in our global history that we I think we need to get on and learn more about,

**Karin Peter** 38:33

And in our local histories

**Barbara Walden** 38:35

Absolutely we also your story is search history. And I really believed that believe that whether you're you know, in in Iowa or you're in Israel, or

**Karin Peter** 38:46

Or in my case in Washington State, at Sunstone, I attended a lecture where an amateur historian had tried to trace his family and discovered one of them joined the Reorganization and became the first letter de Saint, although reorganized one on the north side of the Columbia River in what was then

Washington territory. So, didn't know that. And that's an area of my own interest in research there. So, Barb, I want to thank you for joining us today. And for the encouragement for people to learn the story of church history, where they are, whether it's in the United States, in Italy, in other places where you find yourself. And we encourage our listeners to go on to [Historicsitesfoundation.org](https://www.historicsitesfoundation.org). And to view this lecture and the others from their Global Church History series, there's just wonderful information, slides, maps, pictures, all kinds of things to view as part of the lecture. And so we thank you, Barb Walden, for being with us again, and encouraging us in this way. This is Cup of Joe, part of the Project Zion Podcast. I'm Karin Peter, thanks so much for listening.

**Josh Mangelson** 40:08

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