

390 | Cuppa Joe | Historical Changes of The Sacraments 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. I'm your host, Karin Peter, and today our guest is Peter Judd. Peter A. Judd is a minister in Community of Christ. He retired from full time church appointment at the 2005 World Conference. I didn't realize it's been since 2005, Peter. He served as a member of the quorum of the First Presidency and as a member of a Council of Twelve Apostles. Peter was assigned in many places, including South Central and West Central USA, what we call Mission Fields. He was secretary of the Council at Twelve, and he served in various capacities in the church's international staff and as a staff appointee in the North Central Mission Field. As a volunteer now in his retirement, Peter has edited a number of resources published by Herald House, which is the Community of Christ publishing arm of the church and also Community of Christ Seminary Press, and the John Whitmer Historical Association. A native of Enfield, England, Peter received a Bachelor of Arts in Religion and Business Administration, I'm learning so much as we go through this, from Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa. Graceland is the Community of Christ affiliated university now in Lamoni. He also earned a Master of Arts in Economics from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, and a Master of Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry from St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri. Peter has authored or co-authored 10 books, and a number of articles, pamphlets, study resources, and many other publications for the church. He is married to Kris Judd, and has two daughters, and three granddaughters. Those are the most important biographical facts there, are the grandchildren, Peter. So, I want to welcome you, Peter, to Project Zion, especially our Cuppa Joe. Thanks for being here.

Peter Judd 02:54

It's my pleasure to be here, Karin.

Karin Peter 02:57

So, today we're going to be talking about sacraments. Now, more specifically than just what the sacraments of the church are, we're going to be talking about the historical changes that have been made to the sacramental practices of the church. And that might sound surprising to some of our listeners when we talk about changes to how we practice sacraments. So, let's start out with a basic overview. When we're talking about sacraments, Peter, to what are we referring?

Peter Judd 03:31

Well, I suppose, Karin, that sacraments can be defined in a number of different ways, but I would say that sacraments are specific acts or rites that the church has designated to represent the grace of God present in the lives of individuals or groups. Community of Christ recognizes eight sacraments, and they are as follows: baptism, confirmation, the Lord's Supper, blessing of children, ordination, laying on of hands for the sick, marriage and the evangelist blessing. Each sacrament is based on a specific act that Jesus is described as doing or sanctioning in his ministry, according to the gospel accounts in the New Testament. There is one exception, the evangelist blessing, and that is based on Old Testament practice. So, we'll talk about that later. Each sacrament has three core elements, a sign or symbol, words that are spoken, and a covenant.

Karin Peter 04:44

So, that's important for us to remember going forward, this three-fold, the three core elements of sacraments. Let's, and hopefully we'll manage to identify all of them as we go through. So, at one time, the sacraments were referred to not as sacraments but as ordinances, but we use sacraments, now. Why the change in that?

Peter Judd 05:09

Well, that's true. From the start of what we call the Restoration movement in the 1830s, the term "ordinance" was more frequently used. As one exception, though, in the case of the Lord's Supper, that was often referred to as just simply "the sacrament", and is even referred to that way sometimes today. The term "ordinance" refers to a principle or commandment or law, as in local government ordinances in the USA. So, by participating in ordinances, we are following what God is asking us to do. On the other hand, the term "sacrament" emphasizes God's presence and action in the specific ritual or act. We say, as do other Christians, that God's grace is conveyed in and through the sacraments of the church. So, "sacrament" emphasizes the action of God, whereas "ordinance" emphasizes the action of humanity in response to God's commands. The change in use is kind of difficult to track, because both were used on and off over the years from very earliest years. But when the church restated its basic beliefs in 1970, in a Basic Belief Statement, and in the book, *Exploring the Faith*, the term "ordinance" was still in common usage. But since I wrote the book titled *The Sacraments*, in 1978, the term "sacrament" has been the more popular term. During this time period Community of Christ theology has placed more emphasis on the concept of God's grace. That is God's self-giving on behalf of, and God's unconditional love for humanity. Generally, in the church, we're shifting from being rule based to being principle based.

Karin Peter 07:23

So, I wanted to go back, if we could just for a moment, to the distinction that you made between ordinance and sacrament, that ordinances are the actions that we make in response to God, and the shift for us to sacrament as God's action. When we talk about that, in how we, as individuals, look at

sacramental expression when we participate in sacrament, does that say something different to us as disciples?

Peter Judd 07:55

Well, I think it places emphasis more on the response as disciples that we make to what God is doing in our lives and in the world, rather than the following of commandments, which are important, but that can, kind of, create the sense of, well, the commandments were issued a long time ago, and we still follow them, or we're obligated to follow them. Whereas the concept of sacrament, I think, has a more active sense of God is alive and doing things in our lives and in the world today.

Karin Peter 08:43

Thank you. Well, thanks for the overview. So, let's take a look now at each individual sacrament, maybe talk about how it's changed, how it's practiced, taught, referred to and perhaps even how it has been experienced in diverse settings. So, let's start with baptism. Has baptism always been by full immersion?

Peter Judd 09:09

Yes. Ever since the beginning of the Restoration in 1830s, it has always been by full immersion. This follows the specific instruction regarding the mode of baptism that is included in Section 17 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, paragraph 21. This indicates that both minister and candidate go into the water. The words that have to be spoken are prescribed and immersion is specified. It's interesting, I think, that the words specified are almost identical to those used in most Christian churches from the earliest times. A slightly different version, just one word difference, is found in III Nephi 5:25 in the *Book of Mormon*. There have been some recent suggestions by some that the wording be updated to reflect modern language. But these suggestions have been rejected by church leaders as not really appropriate and that the emphasis of the historical use of those words that are prescribed is more important. But, yes, immersion is required for all baptisms in the church.

Karin Peter 10:31

I think there's something wonderful about repeating words that, phrases that have been used for centuries and centuries by Christians around the globe. I think that's marvelous. So, the immersion has not changed in the life of the church, but has the meaning of baptism in Community of Christ changed any over time?

Peter Judd 10:55

Well, actually, there are a number of meanings that baptism has in the church. They are not officially specified or defined but I would say they include these: commitment to follow Jesus, covenanting with God and with God's people, receiving new life, baptism as a pathway to salvation, and as the remission or forgiveness of sin, and as entrance into church membership. Now, this last meeting is the one area where there has been a change in recent years. *Doctrine and Covenants* section 20, issued very early, back in the 1830s, was used as justification for requiring individuals, previously baptized in other

denominations, to be rebaptized in order to join Community of Christ. Originally, and for many years, this was justified by claiming that only our church's ministers have authority to perform sacraments, and that previous baptisms don't amount to anything and therefore rebaptism is required. But this changed in 2010 when *Doctrine and Covenants* section 164 was approved. Paragraph 2c of this section grants permission for persons previously baptized to become members without rebaptism. Now, there were some limits placed on this and it was defined by the First Presidency as those having fulfilled three conditions. They had to have been baptized by a Christian minister, and in water or using water, and at the age of eight years or above. Baptisms occur in the church in fonts within church buildings, in swimming pools, in rivers or oceans, sometimes in hot tubs, and in rare circumstances, I have heard that that has occurred in bathtubs, but that's pretty unusual.

Karin Peter 13:12

Yes, I've heard the same about some in some lands having to do that. So, are there restrictions on who can be baptized in Community of Christ?

Peter Judd 13:25

Well, generally not, but we don't baptize a child who is under the age of eight. That age is sometimes referred to as the age of accountability. This is because we believe the one being baptized should make their own decision to be baptized. But an interesting situation arose in 1967 when Apostle Charles Neff was baptizing some people in a river in Orissa Province in east India. A man who Neff knew had two wives presented himself for baptism. On the basis of the church's long-standing opposition to polygamy, Neff refused to baptize the man. After this occurred, there followed some months of discussion among church leaders about how to deal with a situation where someone from a culture that condoned polygamy, wanted to be baptized. This culminated in the decision, formally approved in 1972, as part of Section 150 of the *Doctrine of Covenants*, which provided for the baptism of such men, but under the condition that they agreed to take no additional wives on penalty of being expelled from the church if they did. This was a controversial move, as many members could not get past the church's historic position on plural wives. Leaders tried to assure the church that monogamy was being taught throughout the world, and even in these cultures. The alternative would have, be to require a man to put aside or divorce additional wives if you wish to join Community of Christ. And this was considered unacceptable, and that it would leave a woman without support and she would have been ostracized by her community.

Karin Peter 15:33

So, this was a pastoral decision as well as a theological one.

Peter Judd 15:39

Yes, yes, certainly.

Karin Peter 15:41

All right. That might surprise some of our listeners from, who come to us from the LDS tradition, that we would have the discussion about polygamy in 1967 to 1972, or Community of Christ. Are there materials that we can point people to, to go and look at what that discussion was like?

Peter Judd 16:07

Well, now from my memory, I would have to say that there would be letters in the church archives when people, because what happened was, in the *Herald*, the church publication, there was a policy statement that was issued, and I can't give you the exact date and year of that issue, but in the time following 19, say 1968, when the Counsel of Twelve, with the approval of the First Presidency, issued this policy that I referred to. But then, people objected to that and wrote letters to the *Herald* and wrote letters to the Presidency and so on. And the Presidency tried to clarify the fact that, well, no, we still believe that monogamy is the basic principle, and that's important, and that's all we teach. But that still didn't take care of some of the objections. And so, then it was determined by the president of the church in 1972, that inspired counsel would be appropriate to be brought. And so that's, that's done that now. Though, I believe there was an article written in the *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* by former church historian Richard Howard, that does talk about all of this, and, but I don't have that reference at hand right now.

Karin Peter 17:46

We'll let folks know that post-pandemic, if you find yourself in Independence, you can visit the library in the Community of Christ Temple and search for some of that on your own. And also, Apostle Lach Mackay did a great Project Zion interview about the issue of polygamy in the Reorganization, so I can point you to that as well. Okay, so we're sticking with baptism. What about section 108, and baptism for the dead? This has an interesting story in Community of Christ.

Peter Judd 18:22

Well, yes, this is a complicated issue in some ways. This section, 108, was included in all editions of our *Doctrine and Covenants* until World Conference action in 1970 moved it to a historical appendix. And then in 1990 that appendix was deleted entirely from our canon of scripture. I would say that baptism for the dead has never been practiced in the Reorganization. Why, we might ask? This was due for years, to the lack of a temple in which to practice it, and also the lack of additional instruction on its practice. We might say, well, what about the Kirtland Temple? Now, the Kirtland Temple has been officially legally owned by the Reorganized Church, Community of Christ now since the late 1800s, but this rite was never practiced there, in its earliest days or since then. Some of our members over the years have wondered if our church might practice this rite someday, or a few even hope that we would. But the matter was settled for sure when the church accepted *Doctrine and Covenants* 149A in 1968. This section stated, in reference to the forthcoming Independence Temple, that there is no provision for secret

ordinances now or ever. And so, baptism for the dead was assumed to be included as a secret ordinance, and that led to the removal of that section from the *Doctrine and Covenants*. I would also add that in the preface in Community of Christ editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* usually refers to something as a revelation when it came from Joseph Smith. But section 108 was never described as a revelation as such.

Karin Peter 20:29

So, again, some of our listeners might be surprised that in Community of Christ, actions often come to the World Conference at the behest of the members, as opposed to everything coming to conference from the First Presidency, or from the leading quorums of the church. And so, when you say that, “by action of World Conference, the appendix was removed from the *Doctrine and Covenants*” that can be surprising for some people. So, we do have a history of dissent over issues, whether it's polygamous baptisms, whether it's things like the appendix in the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

Peter Judd 21:15

Yes, we do. And we vote and sometimes someone will call for a count of the vote, and that will be done in our, in the conference assembled. And sometimes, even things are presented and they are voted down, so they are not approved.

Karin Peter 21:39

The call for the count of the vote usually elicits a groan on the conference floor when we experience that. Okay, so that's actually quite a bit on baptism. So, let's move on then to confirmation. When I was confirmed, it was traditional to speak about the, I was receiving the Holy Spirit through confirmation, the elders were bestowing the Holy Spirit on me, but I don't hear that now. Is that still something that takes place? Have we moved away from that? What change has happened here?

Peter Judd 22:17

Well, first of all, confirmation is authorized in, by the church in *Doctrine and Covenants* section 17, paragraph 18b. And it is to be performed by the laying on of hands by two elders, one of whom offers a prayer of confirmation. This rite occurs following baptism, and is tied very closely to the presence of the Holy Spirit, as in the dissent of the Spirit on Jesus at his baptism. And Jesus promised that he would send the Spirit to be with his disciples after he left them, and the events of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts chapter two. You're right, it was common in earlier years for the confirmation prayer to often include words such as, “receive ye the Holy Spirit”. And I would say the main reason this is not heard as much in recent times, is the recognition that the Holy Spirit is present in the lives of people from their birth. And it is not something that even in a prayer of confirmation that ministers can give to a person. It is a gift that comes from God. For example, the work of the Holy Spirit in someone's life would be where a person is led by the Spirit to desire and request baptism. Now, that doesn't mean to say that the confirmation prayer leaves out reference to the Holy Spirit. It does include that. And that's important element of the prayer and still is. It's just that it's more of a recognition of the work of the Spirit in the person's life. Confirmation has taken on a more significant meaning, I would say, as entrance to full

membership in Community of Christ, since rebaptism is no longer required in many cases, as we've described earlier. This is emphasized in *Doctrine and Covenants* 164:2e. And after confirmation, an individual's name is entered into the records as a member of the church.

Karin Peter 24:47

So just to be clear, if someone wishes to be rebaptized to join Community of Christ, they're welcome to do that, but it's no longer necessary. If they meet the criteria of our current baptismal policy they can simply be confirmed.

Peter Judd 25:02

Absolutely, yes.

Karin Peter 25:04

So, other than that shift, have there been any other changes historically to the sacrament of confirmation?

Peter Judd 25:12

No, not that I'm aware of, Karin? I don't think so.

Karin Peter 25:16

Okay, that might be our winner for the fewest changes, as we'll see as we go along. So, let's talk about communion or the Lord's Supper, now. Even in my memory, we've had several changes to how we practice communion over the years, the most recent being the provisions for online communion. So, let's go back and could you tell us how the practice of communion, or the Lord's Supper, has evolved in the church?

Peter Judd 25:43

Well, yes, this one will take a little more time. The Lord's Supper, as practiced by Community of Christ, is authorized by *Doctrine and Covenants* sections 17, paragraphs 22 and 23. This section provides the words of prayers to be read prior to distribution of emblems. These words are also found in Moroni chapters four and five in the *Book of Mormon*. The precise procedures are stipulated in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and also in general conference resolutions. I find it interesting that this sacrament is practiced a little differently in this church than in others who use the same scriptural basis. Community of Christ does require that the priest or elder kneel with the church. That is that the priesthood member reading the prayers kneels, and also the congregation will kneel. And that's the only time in Community of Christ where kneeling is indicated. And so, the person will "kneel with the church", is the term used, and read the prayers and also serve the emblems directly to each individual receiving them. Passing of the tray down a row of seated persons is not permitted in Community of Christ. Okay, so in the earlier years of the Reorganization and into the 20th century, use of the common cup was typical practice. But this was abandoned in deference to individual cups for health reasons, but not without controversy in

some congregations. I heard said that, when this occurred in one congregation, a man who was an apostle in our church, changed congregations, went to a different cup, different congregation where the common cup was still used. And I would say it still is used on occasion, special occasions, where that would have significance. In recent decades, some congregations have adopted the practice of inviting worshipers to come to the front of the sanctuary to receive the emblems, either on occasion on a regular basis. And there is no official policy in the [inaudible] prohibiting this. Another change, evidence exists that during the time of Joseph Smith, Jr., the Lord's Supper was celebrated on a weekly basis as part of Sunday worship, when practicable. It is unclear how long this lasted into the Reorganization, but weekly versus monthly observance with apparently the subject of a lively discussion in 1887, when Joseph Smith III offered instruction that either practice was acceptable, and that the church should stop arguing about it. This is found in Section 119 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. In more recent times, communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month in most current Community of Christ congregations. It is also shared on other special occasions at the discretion of local leaders. On another matter related to the Lord's Supper, some congregations follow literally the instruction of Joseph Smith Jr. in making their own communion wine. Others use commercially procured grape juice. Water is permissible but rarely used. In non-western countries, some congregations use liquids from other fruits if grapes are not available. Latitude is granted in choice of appropriate breads and juices. It is, however, against church policy to use alcoholic wine. Then, another change, for much of its history, Community of Christ practiced close communion, restricting participation in the Lord's Supper to those who were baptized members of the church. And I remember occasionally this happening and other people telling of it happened, that one of the responsibilities of an assistant to the pastor at each communion service would be to look out over all the people assembled to see who was present who was not known to be a member, so that the priesthood serving could make sure they didn't serve such a person. It was, that happened in some places. But in 1994, the World Conference authorized the First Presidency to issue guidelines for communion that allowed offering the emblems to all Christians. And open communion has been the practice since then. Going on still with the Lord's Supper, Karin, you mentioned online communion. With the increasing popularity of computers and the internet, some members of Community of Christ have begun meeting as online groups and congregations. And in response to their requests, the First Presidency in 2019, authorized processes whereby the Lord's Supper can be celebrated online using Zoom or other means of video conferencing. With an elder or priest in view, reading the prayers, participants can then consume elements that they have prepared in their separate locations. This method of sharing in this sacrament has become widely used throughout the church when congregations have been unable to hold in-person services during the COVID-19 pandemic. And I think that wraps up what I can think of with regard to changes in communion. There have been several.

Karin Peter 31:59

So, I have a couple of just clarifications, maybe just one clarification. When you talked about in some congregations, people are invited to come up and receive communion, rather than have it served to them in their seats. When that happens, though, are we still following the, "each person is served individually" part of the policy?

Peter Judd 32:23

Well, usually the way I've seen it happen is that a priest or elder will stand at the front of the congregation, or if it's a large congregation, a number of servers would be there. And people would walk up, and they would take from a tray that's being held by those priests. So, it's so being served individually by...

Karin Peter 32:49

Wonderful. My only other comment was, I think it's a marvelous sense of what it means to be a prophetic people, that we were able to participate in communion online before the pandemic hit, and we were prepared for that unintentionally, in a way that's been a blessing to so many people. So, I get a lot of questions about the communion prayers, particularly from our friends coming from the LDS tradition, and why we have several versions of the prayers. They see them in the hymnal and they hear them used. So, when you think about the discussions that we had in the church around contemporary language prayers, and how that came to be, what stands out for you?

Peter Judd 33:36

Well, this was in the context of the later decades of the 20th century and on into the 21st century, as members of the church have become increasingly conscious of the need to broaden our language, to avoid exclusive use of male terms in reference to humanity, and also to God. And so, the concern was over the use of term “man”, for example, to refer to both men and women, and also the use of the pronoun “He” always to refer to God. So, during that time, use of inclusive versions of the Bible, inclusive language versions of the Bible, has become more widespread in the church. And in response to this concern, the 2004 World Conference, authorized the First Presidency to prepare and release alternate communion prayers for use in the church. The longstanding prayers from *Doctrine and Covenants* section 17, were the basis for the new prayers, but the new ones avoided male references to God. The wording is very similar to those found in the scripture. At the same time, new combined prayers were issued to recognize those settings where both bread and wine were distributed essentially at the same time, as I mentioned, we mentioned earlier as people will walk up to the front of the sanctuary and receive. So instead of reading separate prayers on the bread and wine, which use much of the same wording, a single prayer could be used to bless both emblems. The combined prayer was issued in two forms, one, using the actual *Doctrine and Covenants* 17 language, and the other one, the new inclusive language. Some members objected to this accusing church leaders of changing the scripture, but leaders have tried to make it clear that the inclusive language and combined prayers are optional. They are not required. And the availability of the communion prayers in inclusive language is an expression, I would say, at the church's desire to become more inclusive, while maintaining appropriate aspects of our tradition, and remaining consistent with church law and scriptural direction.

Karin Peter 36:04

So, Peter, you were in the First Presidency, at this time, when this discussion took place. Does anything stand out to you personally from that discussion?

Peter Judd 36:16

Well, I welcomed it. In fact, personally, I had, before I was in the Council of Twelve, I had suggested, through the high priests quorum, that the resolution be include, be introduced, authorizing change, availability of inclusive language. But so, this was nothing that was new to me. And I was personally responsible for preparing the first draft of the inclusive language prayers when I was in the Presidency. But I would say that this has been welcomed by a number of people who have concerns about the kind of language that we use in our worship.

Karin Peter 37:06

Yes, absolutely. Thanks for sharing that. So, as a member of the Council of Twelve, and the First Presidency, you traveled extensively around the church, across the globe. So, are there cultural differences that you observed in how communion is practiced?

Peter Judd 37:27

Well, there are differences. Many of them are quite subtle. The same basic formats are used throughout the world. But I mentioned earlier, the substances used for the emblems in communion may vary according to cultural circumstances. I remember sharing in communion in French Polynesia and being served the liquid from coconut instead of wine or grape juice. But other than that, things are pretty much the same. Around the world of Community of Christ celebrates the Lord's Supper uniquely as that sacrament that unites us, as we together receive very small tokens, all of us receive the same tokens of the body and blood of Christ, the one we follow and we serve. It's significant to me that these small tokens are sufficient. They're enough in a world that so often proclaims that bigger and more are better.

Karin Peter 38:31

I hadn't thought about the emblems in that way. I will, from now on, though, when I receive them. So, communion did have several changes, and it's interesting to go through those. The next sacrament we're looking at is laying on of hands for the sick, or what was termed, when I was growing up, "administration", which always seemed a bulky, un-descriptive term for what was taking place. So, when and why did it become called "administration"? And why is it now "laying on of hands for the sick"?

Peter Judd 39:11

Well, this sacrament has been with the church since the beginning. It is based on Jesus' practice of healing, and on instruction, found in James 5:14, and in *Doctrine and Covenants* 42:12d. But in terms of the way it's referred to, that's, you can go back through history and you can find different terms. The term "administration" is really not, it's really of unknown origin, but I found references to it in the *Saints Herald* as far back as 1874 and on up to the recent times. My observation would be that the term, you said the terms "administer" and "administration" in this context can be confusing because those terms

have a much broader application in the church. They really refer to priesthood members and other leaders carrying out any of their official duties prescribed in the church law, including the sacraments, all of the sacraments. Also, the move away from using the term “administration” to refer to the sacrament is a response to concerns over how difficult it is to translate certain English words into other languages where the church has presence. The term “administration” is difficult to translate and church leaders have become increasingly concerned that we provide written materials, written references in languages where, that are the languages of the people where the church is present.

Karin Peter 40:54

So, what about the move to now choosing “laying on of hands for the sick”? Is that a traditional phrase?

Peter Judd 41:01

Well, it has been used early, but it's being used more and more as the standard term or the preferred term. It can be “laying on of hands for the sick”. It could be “laying on of hands for healing” or simply “laying on of hands”. And I saw it referred to as, early as, that way, as early as 1866 in the *Herald*. It is important to note that the term has referred just as frequently to the sacraments of confirmation, ordination, and the evangelist blessing, that is the term the “laying on of hands”. But it does get, take us away from the term and the confusion over the term “administration”.

Karin Peter 41:49

Yes, a welcome change, from my humble, in my humble opinion, that's a welcome change. So, early in the 20th century, the *Doctrine and Covenants* had a caution about what we would call promising healing in the laying on of hands. The elders who were doing the laying on of hands, promising that God would heal a person. What was happening that caused this caution to be included?

Peter Judd 42:19

Well, I think that it was a time period when sometimes the elders would feel that they, caught up in the passion of the moment, like that they wanted to say that the physical healing would definitely occur and relief from the symptoms of, that were present in the individual the time. But that's a problem when we refer to it, healing, as just relief from physical symptoms. Promises were made, as I said, and sometimes they were not forthcoming. It's often used, I would say, on a slightly different matter, that, also problematic, is praying that healing will occur, if it is God's will. So, when I stop to think about that, I say to myself, surely, God does not will some people to remain sick or even die. So, that's a puzzle. So that whole question of promising or prophesying or talking about relief from particular physical symptoms is problematic. I found the term “anointing the sick” used in the *Herald* on occasion. I thought that might, that was quite interesting as reference to the use of oil on this sacrament. But the Community of Christ overall does see this sacramental prayer as the opportunity to petition God for the individual's wholeness and well-being in a total sense.

Karin Peter 44:05

I appreciate your comment about the healing, “if it's God's will”. I've heard that before, in laying on of hands. And when you really do look at that phrase, that's painful to individuals, if healing then does not happen, that God would will someone to not be healed. You're making me think through these, Peter. That was unexpected as we go through. I was anticipating being enlightened. I didn't know we were going to delve into the theology of some of our practices that have been very relevant in the life of the church. So, this one, the next one, we're going to talk about, marriage as a sacrament. It's a little bit different than the rest of the sacraments, mainly because it can be done by a justice of the peace and still be considered acceptable in the life of the church. So how is marriage practiced in Community of Christ as in a sacramental way?

Peter Judd 45:11

Well, I would say that it would have been natural in the early Latter Day Saints to adopt marriage practices that were common among other Christian denominations at the time, and many churches made it a rite of the church, even though it was, and still is, a civil function, as you mentioned. But the manner of practice has remained the same. It is, at the center of marriage, is a covenant and that is important as, in the life of the church and the life of the individuals. The procedure for marriage in our church is outlined in Section 111 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. This was adopted by the church in August 1835 and printed in the very first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* published that year. That section, and more recently section 150 in 1972, also pronounces belief that marriage should always be monogamous. Section 111 has remained in all Community of Christ editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* since that time.

Karin Peter 46:25

So, section 111, is that the same as what was, did that replace what was section 132 in the LDS tradition of 1876? Our Latter Day Saints background listeners are familiar with section 162 in the LDS *Doctrine and Covenants*. Our Community of Christ folks, maybe not. But was it not a revelation? Wasn't it presented as a letter to the general assembly? And why was it brought, section 111?

Peter Judd 47:06

Well, it, as I said, it was introduced and approved in 1835, and it has remained, it remained in the only other section of the *Doctrine and Covenants* published before the time of Joseph Smith in his death in 1844 edition. But up to the time that that section was approved in 1835, all the previous sections have been authored by the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. He was understood to be the Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and as such, was the only one accepted by the church to bring revelation. But section 111 was not authored by the prophet. In fact, he was out of town when a general assembly accepted this section in 1835. It is therefore understood not to be a revelation, rather it is a statement of church policy. Furthermore, this section includes the words, and I quote, “In as much as this church has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy.” And that was prior to the declaration of the belief in monogamy in that section. So, apparently, we would have to assume that one or more members of the church had been accused of such practices. And this was an attempt to clarify that that was not a

part of the church's belief. Plural marriage and marriage for eternity were introduced into the church by Joseph Smith Jr. at a later time, after 1835. But these have never been accepted by the Reorganization or Community of Christ.

Karin Peter 48:55

So, section 111 is a good example of our continued practice of the body of the church influencing decisions and policies that are made.

Peter Judd 49:06

Yes. Yeah, certainly.

Karin Peter 49:08

Interesting. Okay. So, Charles Fry, in his 1950, *The Nature of Priesthood: A Textbook for Priesthood Study*, included an ordinance that's the washing of feet. And now, this was 1950 again, but he did not include marriage in there as an ordinance. So, was marriage always considered a sacrament? It wasn't a revelation but was it always a sacrament? Or is there a difference here when we're talking about ordinance and sacrament in the *Doctrine and Covenants*?

Peter Judd 49:49

Well, over the years, marriage has sometimes been included in lists of sacraments and other times it is not. An article in the 1917 *Saints Herald* refers to marriage as one of the church's sacraments and other articles referred to it as an ordinance. In recent decades, marriage has always been recognized as a sacrament. New Testament authority is based on Jesus' presence at the wedding feast at Cana, where he performed his first miracle. And central to marriage is the concept of covenant, where a couple covenants with God and with each other. So, there's evidence of, throughout the, say the Reorganization, of this being an ordinance or sacramental rite of the church.

Karin Peter 50:41

So, we talked at the very beginning about the three core elements: sign or symbol, words spoken, and a covenant. So, in that sense, marriage does indeed meet, kind of, the criteria of the three core elements.

Peter Judd 50:56

Right.

Karin Peter 51:58

So, have there been changes in how the sacrament of marriage is practiced in the life of the church?

Peter Judd 51:07

The only one I can think of is that since being approved by several national conferences in the years since 2013, the church has now authorized its ministers to perform marriages for same gender couples,

but only where permitted by the laws of the specific country. Previous to this, only marriages between one woman and one man were permitted in Community of Christ.

Karin Peter 51:36

So, people might be wondering, what about where it's not legal in a specific country?

Peter Judd 51:41

Well, the church does provide for a covenant ceremony where the recognition of the relationship and a covenant between the couple is given a place in the church for that to happen.

Karin Peter 51:57

So, still the sacramental nature, just not the civil nature of marriage. Okay. So, I want to take a brief tangent back to foot washing that we mentioned with Charles Fry. Is there any additional evidence other than this one priesthood text from 1950, that foot washing was a sacrament in the church?

Peter Judd 52:16

Well, not really, although it, from time to time, it is referred to as an ordinance of the church. That was based on *Doctrine and Covenants* 85:45 and 46. But if you read that section, it was indicated that it was a practice of when the priesthood were gathering together for study and for their own sessions, and not one that was widely practiced among the membership. And so, this has never received systematic practice, or been instituted in any official way in Community of Christ. It obviously has scriptural support from Jesus washing his disciples' feet, but it's not been included in lists of sacraments or ordinances in the church with the one exception. The only place I found it really listed is in that publication by Charles Fry, and he was a church minister in, around the time, in 1950, but he, really, he was not one of the general officers or major leaders of the church.

Karin Peter 53:25

So, it didn't have the authority of coming from the institution then.

Peter Judd 53:28

Right.

Karin Peter 53:30

All right. So, one of the sacraments that you've talked about as being a little bit different than the rest is the evangelist blessing. And Joseph Smith used the terms "evangelist" and "patriarch", kind of, interchangeably in the 1830s. When I was growing up, they were combined. So, we talked about the Office of the Patriarch-Evangelist giving blessings. So, why the switch in language in Community of Christ?

Peter Judd 54:00

Well, yes, both terms were used, and even the combination term as you said, and that's even true in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. In the Reorganization era, that's from 1860 up to 2001, the term "patriarch" is based on an Old Testament usage, blessings based on those given by fathers to sons. Patriarchs were ordained during the Joseph Smith Jr. era, and they gave blessings to family members and others. But it was not until 1897 that this office was instituted in the Reorganization. But in terms of the preference now being given to the term, the title "evangelist", after women became ordained in the church in 1985, in an era of increasing sensitivity to inclusive language, the term "evangelist" was universally adopted to apply to that priesthood office, and evangelist blessing to what was formerly referred to as patriarchal blessing.

Karin Peter 55:08

So, are there ways that the evangelist blessing has been changed or expanded or even the ministry of the Office of the Evangelist has been expanded in recent years?

Peter Judd 55:20

Yes, certainly, that has changed. Traditionally, the blessing was a once in a lifetime sacrament given to adults and to youth over the age of around 16. But that changed in the year 2000 when continuing life blessings were instituted. This allowed individuals to be given additional evangelists blessings, usually at times of important change in their lives. Additionally, the evangelist blessing can now be given to couples, families, households, congregations and other groups. Inspired counsel in this regard was given to the church in 2013 and is contained in *Doctrine of Covenants* 165:5b. This reference states, "Offer the sacrament of evangelists blessing not only to individuals and congregations, but to families, households, and groups seeking spiritual guidance to more completely give themselves to Christ's mission." So there have been several changes.

Karin Peter 56:28

So, one of the things that I've noticed when visiting with folks about evangelist blessings, is a lot of people experienced the blessing when it was almost, kind of, prophesied what your life was going to look like, what was going to happen. That, kind of, aspect in the blessing. That has changed over the years. Can you share anything about that?

Peter Judd 56:53

Well, again, I think it's probably just cautionary, because there's not really, for the most part, serve a useful purpose to give very, very specific prophetic statements about what will happen in a person's life. Another part of it used to be an indication of the lineage of which tribe of Israel a person was descended from. And that does not happen very much anymore.

Karin Peter 57:28

So, I wasn't gonna bring that up, Peter, but thanks for bringing that up.

Peter Judd 57:33

But, so, this is more of insight into the person's life, which the evangelist does receive, as a result of prayer and interaction with the individual prior to the blessing, but that advice and counsel be given that will help the person make wise decisions into the future.

Karin Peter 57:58

I received my evangelist blessing as a young married person in my first marriage, and I still can quote the line that counsels me to be more willing to show compassion. So, obviously, that evangelist followed your comments on good counsel and advice going forward. I'm still working on that one, too. I should probably, should let him know. So, let's go on to ordination. Changes, obviously, were made to open ordination to women following section 156. It's so meaningful in the life of the church, that's simply what we refer to it as, before section 156 or before 156. Can you tell us a little bit about how that all came about, this change to opening ordination to women?

Peter Judd 58:51

Okay, well, a little bit of context that ordination to priesthood office has been with the church from its beginning, in fact before the church was officially organized in 1830. Ordination though, was reserved for men until President Wallace B. Smith gave instruction in 1984 that women should also be considered for ordination on the same basis as men. This instruction is contained in Section 156, as you mentioned, Karin, and it came after church leaders had called for increased inclusion of women in leadership roles in the church. For a decade or two previous to this change, the First Presidency had received recommendations for the ordination of women but felt an obligation to withhold approval due to traditional church practice. Following the 1982 World Conference, a survey was taken of church membership to ascertain readiness to accept the ordination of women. Although more respondents indicated they were not ready than said that they were, President Smith felt a strong sense of inspiration to express support for the change as God's will. The first women were ordained to the Aaronic priesthood, and the Office of Elder in November 1985. And ordination of women to the high priesthood occurred first in 1987. Unfortunately, following this change, a significant number of members left active participation in the life of the church. Some estimates have put this as high as 30%. For some, this was the last straw and culmination of a number of changes in theology and practice that dated back at least as far as the 1960s. These people wanted the church to return to the way it was when they joined decades earlier.

Karin Peter 1:00:50

That is a significant event in the life of the church, and it still has repercussions today. One thing that I didn't think to ask about and I think is important now, is that Joseph Smith III addressed the issue of the ordination of people of color. I'm springing this on you now. Do you have any insight into that? I bring it up because our friends from the LDS tradition have a different experience with that then how it was expressed for us?

Peter Judd 1:01:33

Well, I don't have the specifics in front of me, but Joseph Smith III was ordained as President of the Reorganized church in 1860, and that was the time of the Civil War in which slavery and so on and race relations was important in the United States. And so, the question came up about should African-American men, or referred to at that time as men of the Negro race, should they be eligible for to be considered to be ordained? And that was discussed, and then it was presented as part of a revelation of counsel presented to the church by Joseph III in the 1860s and was approved by the World Conference. So, that was permissible for that, for them to be done, that to be done and so that, there have been no restrictions with regard to color, race or anything else since that time.

Karin Peter 1:02:44

Thank you. Have there been any other changes to the sacrament of ordination?

Peter Judd 1:02:50

Well, one other change has been the ordination of same gender men and women in some nations. This was perceived so potentially divisive that the 2010 World Conference authorized individual nations or groups of nations to hold conferences to determine if such ordinations would be acceptable. And this change has been approved. It was approved by the church in all the nations where it has been presented. I might mention, I don't have the list of nations in front of me, but the United States, Canada, Australia, British Isles, and several other European nations are the nations where it has been approved for those ordinations to take place. And lastly, I would say, and this is just anecdotal, that I would say that recent decades have seen a reduction in the number of teenage members called and ordained to priesthood. I was first ordained as a priest when I was 17, but that was 60 years ago. Now this happens less frequently. But in the Community of Christ tradition, I would point out there has never been any link, direct link to, for one office to a specific age.

Karin Peter 1:04:14

Right. That's a good distinction to bring up. Thank you. Okay, so let's see, what do we have left. We have blessing of children, one of my favorite sacraments. The blessing of children is available, not just to Community of Christ families, but to families who are not part of, who are not official members of the church, as are many other sacraments, I think most, except ordination. Has that always been the case, blessing of children open to people who are not members of the church?

Peter Judd 1:04:47

Well, it's very difficult to determine that actually, from church records. In fact, I'm not even sure the records exist. This is the sacrament, of course, based on children receiving children, excuse me, Jesus receiving children and blessing them as recorded in the Gospels and it's a way of acknowledging children's importance and place in the church and their being loved by God before they are eligible for baptism at age eight. This blessing of children expresses a covenant between God and the child and the

parents and between the family and the congregation of the church. There has been more emphasis placed on offering this sacrament to families who are not members of Community of Christ in recent years, as a form of outreach and service to communities where the church is present. This has been in response to inspired counsel given to the church in 2007. And this reads, “Generously share the invitation ministries and sacraments to which people can encounter the living Christ.” The church has never had a policy that restricts who can receive this sacrament, except that it is not offered to children above the age of eight who are eligible for baptism.

Karin Peter 1:06:17

So, have there been changes in how it's been practiced in the life of the church?

Peter Judd 1:06:24

No, none that I know of. The norm is for two elders to perform the sacrament with one offering the prayer of blessing and the other holding the child. Typically, the parents and sometimes siblings of the child and other family members will stand close to the elders during the sacrament at the front of the sanctuary. It is permissible for one of the parents to hold the child if that is considered more suitable. If only one officiant is available, this sacrament may be offered by that individual. But this is also true for the sacraments of confirmation, ordination, and laying on of hands for the sick.

Karin Peter 1:07:09

I think with that we have covered all eight sacraments, well, 8.5, if we're going to include our little conversation about washing of feet there for a moment. What changes, when we look at the overall historical changes to the sacraments in the life of the church, which have had the most profound effects on our theological understandings? Or maybe it's more that our theology has brought about the changes in sacramental practice? I'm not sure. But which of those do you think are most profound?

Peter Judd 1:07:43

Well, before I get to that, Karin, I can't resist saying that some people in our church have suggested that there be a ninth sacrament and that that be the potluck after church.

Karin Peter 1:07:58

I think a lot of people are missing that very, that ninth unofficial sacrament of the church during the pandemic. Yeah, absolutely.

Peter Judd 1:08:09

Well, I would have to say that theologically, the most significant changes have been opening of the Lord's Supper to persons who are not Community of Christ members, and the acceptance of baptisms performed by other ministers in other churches. These changes came about as a result of our movement away from a traditional exclusivist, “we are the one true church” identity. We have responded to the council offered by President Grant MacMurray in the year 2000 when he said, claim your unique and

sacred place within the circle of those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ. This is contained in Section 161 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

Karin Peter 1:08:55

Which also is linked to our participation in ecumenical councils and interfaith councils as well. Yeah. So now I want to ask you, a maybe, a more personal question. What changes and how we understand and practice the sacraments have been most meaningful to you?

Peter Judd 1:09:19

I think, in a general way, Karin, that our viewing of the sacraments, not in the possessive way, but as ministries to offer the world, is very meaningful. We have come to understand that we are not in a position, either as members or leaders of the church, we are not in the position to judge the worthiness of people to receive the sacraments. They are offered freely by God. And so, our willingness to be more flexible in our practices while maintaining historical understandings, I think, is significant. The policy that allows online access to all sacraments except baptism is an important way of proclaiming that we will not let problematic circumstances limit people's access to the sacraments.

Karin Peter 1:10:14

Well, Peter, I want to thank you for all of the time and preparation that was involved to have this conversation about the historical changes to the way we have participated in sacramental life of the church. But I wanted to give you an opportunity even after all of this wonderful information to share any closing thoughts you might have.

Peter Judd 1:10:38

Well, I became particularly interested in the sacraments of our church whilst studying St. Paul School of Theology in the 1970s. Specifically, while taking a class on the sacraments taught by United Methodist professor, who actually is now a Roman Catholic priest and monk. He was amazed when I told him that our church had eight sacraments. He exclaimed, "That's one more than the Catholics". This professor led me along a path of expanding my understanding of the sacraments, in general in Christianity and also in our own church. This led me to write the book, *The Sacraments*, the first edition of which was published by the church in 1978, followed by a second edition in 1992. I suppose the sacraments have been so very important to me for those reasons. One last thing I would add is that although the sacraments are specific rites and practices offered by the church, in specific situations they express a broader principle. We understand that God's grace, extended in and symbolized by the sacraments, is all encompassing. In this way, we can understand Jesus Christ as the primary sacrament or revelation of God to humanity. Expressed most obviously in the Lord's Supper, Christ's body, the church, becomes sacrament to us for the sake of the world. We are called to be a people who live sacramental lives. Lives strengthened and nourished by our participation in the sacrament of the church.

Karin Peter 1:12:27

Thank you so much, Peter, for joining us today, for your detailed explanation of sacraments and how they're practiced in the life of the church, and for the wisdom that comes from your life of service in the church. So, again, this has been Cuppa Joe, part of the Project Zion Podcast. I'm Karin Peter, your host. We've been visiting with Peter Judd. Thanks so much for listening.

Josh Mangelson 1:13:07

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