

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.

Mike Hoffman 00:33

Welcome to Project Zion Podcast Coffee in the Swarm. This is an opportunity to hear from Community of Christ students who are at Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa. I'm Mike Hoffman, campus minister and your host for this, this program. A few months ago, I had the opportunity to interview Humberto Tinsman as he became the graduate assistant for campus ministries here at Graceland. He just received recently word that he's been hired as a full time minister in Community of Christ. I thought he and I might talk about this exciting time in his life as he makes this change, this move. So, welcome, Humberto.

Humberto Tinsman 01:12

Hi, thank you for having me.

Mike Hoffman 01:14

We're glad to have you here. So, uh, let's introduce you to our listeners a little bit. What have you been doing?

Humberto Tinsman 01:21

Yes, of course. So, like Mike said, my name is Humberto Tinsman. Um, and recently I've been serving as a graduate assistant to the campus minister here in Lamoni, Iowa at Graceland University. Uh, so, while at Graceland, I was a history major, uh, with a, uh, specialization in secondary education, and I graduated in 2020. And I'm now starting into my second year of seminary where I am studying, uh, peace and justice theology.

Mike Hoffman 01:49

Great. So, you were part of the class of 2020 which (I was.) was the class that didn't really have a ceremony here.

Humberto Tinsman 01:56

Exactly. I say we're the class that never graduated. We all

Mike Hoffman 01:58

(. . .) different times. So, so, let's start with what has, what has it been like for you to serve as the graduate assistant in campus ministries here at Graceland?

Humberto Tinsman 02:10

Yes, it has been a fantastic journey. You know, it has been so amazing to be able to come back to Graceland and to be able to serve in this different way, in this different ministry. You know, as a house president, uh, it has been really cool to see those freshmen transition into, you know, upperclassmen life and, you know, returning student life and seeing them develop in that way. Um, but it's also been amazing to meet the new students, who has only known me in this way, um, and has gotten to know more about Campus Ministry, has gotten to know more about the church. Um, and we have been able to see just so many amazing, beautiful, wonderful human beings that come across Mike and I and through our work. And it's also been great to kind of see, uh, the inner workings of how things work. You know, as a student, I think I took, and I know I took a lot of the things that happen on campus for granted. But now I get to see all the hard work that comes from Dave Schall and the rest of the Student Life team as they try to create amazing experiences for the Graceland students.

Mike Hoffman 03:14

Yeah, well, thank you. So, yeah, it's, it's been a, it's been a bit of a tough year, this year. And this will, of course, be your only a year now that you're moving on to full time ministry, in this position. So, it's been, um, challenging in the fact that with COVID-19, and, you know, I, I ended up with COVID the very last day of December and then January is sort of a blur to me and I really appreciate the way you stepped in. I think that's, um, probably just worth noting that you had a year to be a graduate assistant in one of the what I would consider a tougher year because of COVID. But it also had a lot of, a lot of blessings to it, too. So, you know, so I appreciate what you've done and what you were able to help me with and those kinds of things. I really appreciate that. So, you're what, you're a student that's actually been here long enough now, the one year graduate assistant, but also prior to that, you actually went through four years of Inspire. And so Inspire is the missional ministry and leadership initiative here at Graceland for Community of Christ students. And, uh, I'd just like to ask how, how do you think the whole experience with Inspire has shaped your ministry?

Humberto Tinsman 04:27

Yeah, that's a great question. So, for our listeners who are listening, I want to explain a term that Mike mentioned, and it's called missional ministry. Um, the idea of missional ministry that we, you know, tell our students who we work with, is missional ministry is taking what you're already doing, but adding that extra elements of asking, you know, why does it matter? How is this serving God's plan and God's Zion? And how is this bringing peace in my community? Um, some of the biggest lessons that I've learned while working in Inspire and now, you know, uh, in my current position as a graduate assistant, is that people who seem so radically different, still have levels of common ground, you know, and sometimes, uh, we have to look deeper. And we have to dig through all the things that divide us. But once we find that common ground, we can start having some amazing conversations and start making new realizations of the people we are and the people who surround us, um, and through that time at Inspire, I think I learned most to persevere to get to that point to where you can start having those conversations, because that's, that is where ministry starts to happen, when you can start opening up those pathways of peace and justice.

Mike Hoffman 05:45

We, we've talked about community a little bit, but, you know, I know that Graceland is unique, I think, in that how we build community, you said you were a house president for a year, and, and, and those kinds of things. What do you think is the, the primary driver of that sense of community here at Graceland?

Humberto Tinsman 06:04

Yeah, that's a great question. You know, for those who are listening, who are maybe considering Graceland as an education opportunity, you, one of the things you will find here that is so unique compared to anywhere else you'll go into the world or into the United States is that Graceland takes what other universities do, which are, you know, if you, you're live at a university, you live in one building, you live in a, a hallway, you know, they take that living space and they turn it into its own unique community. You are challenged to live in harmony with people who come from all over the world, people all the way from Germany, Colombia, Brazil, and you are told to make it work. And that's such an amazing opportunity, not only for you as a minister, but also just as a human being. Because this might be the first time and the only time in your entire life that you can say, I had a true global perspective because when we talk about things like the COVID pandemic, and we talk about things like international disputes, when you see the people that that is affecting your entire mindset of the world shifts and changes. And that's what Graceland gives more than any other university I've ever come to terms with or ever known or worked with, is that they don't allow you to kind of go into your own, you know, cornhole and your own shell, but they push you out and they, you know, on a lack of better term, kind of make a deal with it. Um, but through that growth and through that pain, you get to create those lifelong connections that you would not be able to make at any other university.

Mike Hoffman 07:41

I know, it, it strikes me that Graceland is this, um, you know, there's quite a few international students here, I don't know the numbers exactly, but at the same time, the university isn't very big so there's this sort of dichotomy that goes on where you know people from all over the place, but you get to know them better because they're not, you know, the numbers aren't huge. So, (Most definitely.) it really creates an interesting, almost global community that we have here. You know, one of the things I did want to talk about before we jump into what the job you're going to, is what you did, what you're doing this summer, you know, because you sort of ended up creating your own position for this summer and, um, although technically you are here at Graceland with me, you are not really working in campus ministries this summer. So, (Yeah.) explain to me what you're doing.

Humberto Tinsman 08:32

Of course. So, you know, I am, uh, along with, uh, other people are leading and, uh, head of the Graceland rep program. Um, so what the Graceland rep program is, is where we take current Graceland students who are 21 and above and we send them out into the world into the different Community of Christ church camps all over the United States. Um, what we do is we give them the opportunity to not only make connections across the US, but also to recruit Community of Christ students and kind of share with them, you know, their testimony in their ministry at Graceland and share with them the opportunities that they each have because they are a part of the church or a friend of the church and how that Graceland is a welcoming community and a welcome space for all people.

Um, you know, it's an amazing experience I get to spend with some amazing, uh, Graceland reps, but also the amazing team of the Graceland admissions department.

Mike Hoffman 09:23

Yeah, cuz it's actually (. . .) (Yes.) have admissions.

Humberto Tinsman 09:25

Yes, Yep. Yep. Yep. So, it's been just a really cool opportunity to make some of those, uh, connections with those people.

Mike Hoffman 09:32

Wow, I think that, it was a, a, a very good move on your part to help sort of create that position and vision for, for what it wants or what it was and or what it wants, or I think it was really a great idea for you to sort of create that position and sort of go to admissions and say, you know, you're going to be here and you're going to do that this summer. So, I, I think it's great that you did that. So, so can you, let's shift gears a little bit. Can you tell us about the position that you'll be taking soon?

Humberto Tinsman 10:04

Yeah, of course. So, I have been hired by the Juan Tabo Congregation in the Rio Grande Mission Center. The Juan Tabo Congregation is located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and that's where I'll be living. Um, and so, you know, what I will be doing for the church is that I'll be starting to create different programs and different outreach ministries that really start to, you know, ask and hopefully answer the question, how does a congregation relate to the ministry and the community that's around it? Um, you know, we, and then from that process and from those successes, I will then go to the other congregations around the mission center, and kind of share what we're doing in Juan Tabo and, and try to help foster that growth in other communities.

Mike Hoffman 10:47

So, you'll be sort of experimenting with ministry in Juan or in Albuquerque (Yeah.) where Juan Tabo Congregation is, and then taking that so you'll be traveling. (Yes.) Okay, so you'll be traveling and the mission center is New Mexico, (Yeah.) and then West Texas. (Yes.) So you'll be traveling a fair amount of the time then. (Yeah, yes, I will.) Alright. Okay, that's, that's, are you, is there anything, um, you're, that you're apprehensive about, about at all about this position?

Humberto Tinsman 11:18

Not at all, you know, I am extremely excited, um, to start, you know, that ministry and that work. Some of the, some of the really cool, um, parts of what I've been doing, you know, kind of this transitional period running for admissions and getting ready to make that move is, uh, because of Zoom capabilities, because online worship, I've been able to meet different meter, leaders of the congregation, and those, uh, different leaders in the mission center. Um, and they've been just so welcoming, so supportive of myself, um, and also my fiancée, Emily, who will be moving with me as well, um, when we kind of get settled in the area when we get married. Um, and it has just been such an amazing experience so far. And I'm so excited to kind of get started, um, in full time ministry, but also get started working with these amazing people.

Mike Hoffman 12:07

I guess that's, um, something we've learned by the pandemic is the use of technology. I, I, I knew you had been sort of engaging with the mission center and (. . .), but I didn't even know that Emily had been involved. So, that's sort of cool that you both have an opportunity, had an opportunity or have taken an opportunity to, to get to know (Yeah.) the folks early. So, (Most definitely) that's really good. That will make the transition a lot easier. I, I can understand why you're not so apprehensive. (Oh, yeah.) So what excites you most about this whole opportunity, maybe full time ministry in general? Or this, maybe specifically?

Humberto Tinsman 12:42

Yeah, you know, the thing that excites me most is just going out there. You know, being with the people, but also being able to invite new friends and new people to Christ, but also invite them to a organization that loves them for who they are, who accepts them and uses their talents and gifts to their fullest ability. You know, one of my favorite enduring principles in the church, as you know, is unity in diversity. Um, and I look forward to seeing that in its fruition and in real life ministry as I go out. (That's cool.) Yeah.

Mike Hoffman 13:15

So, um, I don't know, do you have any hopes or dreams for your position? Or you and Emily in this, in this new role?

Humberto Tinsman 13:24

Yeah. So I think my, my biggest hope, um, and my biggest aspiration is that more mission centers, more congregations will kind of take this leap of faith that Juan Tabo and Rio Grande has done. You know, I think that one of the things this pandemic has shown us is that there is real hurt in our world. And to paraphrase, uh, a little bit from President/Prophet Steve Veazey is that the world is crying out. That there are inherent injustices in our world that need to be met. Um, and that I hope through, you know, my success and also the success of the congregations around me and, you know, you know, willing of the Lord and the Holy Spirit, uh, that other congregations and other mission centers will start to realize that we need to start making active changes, that just showing up on a Sunday is not enough to make the world a different place. And if we are going to build Zion and if we are going to do all the things we've been challenged to do, we've got to start doing them, (Yeah.) that this has been a historic experience for each of us. We can all agree and all sympathize in that pain. So, let's use that experience to then change the world. Let's use this experience that we've all gone through universally and start answering some of those questions and finding real world sustainable solutions to those problems that plague us all.

Mike Hoffman 14:52

Is there anything else you'd like to share with our listeners about yourself or about Graceland, the church, ministry?

Humberto Tinsman 15:00

Yeah, yeah, you know, for me, the biggest thing that I hope each of our listeners will understand is to be inspired, to know that the church is doing and the church is growing in some amazing ways that you, listener, are key elements of that change, and that you need to take those steps and start asking those questions and start challenging those assumptions of what it means to be a member of the Community of Christ, that we are a denomination that is on the move. We're a denomination that is starting to ask those questions and are starting to tell people that change is possible, that the world has been designed to be a beautiful and loving place. And let's make that dream and that prophetic vision a reality.

Mike Hoffman 15:50

That's very, very good. Thank you for sharing with us today. And thank you for your patience and working quick. And this interview, I, I appreciate, uh, I've appreciated being (. . .) working with you. And, of course, even though you've worked in this graduate position for one year and we were together four years for the, prior to that, so and will miss you and so, um, but thank you for this interview and, uh, I just, uh, look forward to hearing great things about you in your position out in Juan Tabo and the Rio Grande Mission Center. So,

Humberto Tinsman 16:27

Well, thank you, Mike. Thank you for (. .) having me.

Mike Hoffman 16:30

And listeners. Thank you for tuning in to this edition of Coffee in the Swarm by Project Zion Podcast. Until next time, this is Mike Hoffman. Thank you.

Humberto Tinsman 16:39

Bye, bye.

Josh Mangelson 16:48

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