

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.

Linda Booth 00:33

Welcome to the 29th episode of Coffee Buzz, a podcast conversation with a member of Community of Christ's First Presidency. My name is Linda Booth and I host this monthly Coffee Buzz, uh, podcast. And I provide episodes for Coffee Connect which are God with us stories that I've collected over the years from serving about 23 years as a Community of Christ Apostle and Director of Communication. Today, I'm pleased to be talking with my good friend Stassi Cram. Stassi serves as a member of the First Presidency, a counselor to Prophet/President Steve Veazey, and Presiding Bishop. Welcome, friend, I believe over the holidays your daughter, Shannon, shared some exciting news with your family. Is it time to share the great news with Coffee Buzz listeners?

Stassi Cramm 01:23

Yeah, Linda, I'd love to do that. So, um, our daughter and her husband, who live in Boston, are expecting which is exciting news unto itself and her due date's in May. Um, but the even bigger news is that they are expecting twins. Oh, my goodness. They may come in April because, of course, you know, twins often, um, are born early. But for sure she's been told by her doctor that she, they will not let her go past the first week in May. So, somewhere at the end of April or early May, our lives are going to be kind of turned upside down. So, we're excited about that. They are fraternal twins. And, actually, my, uh, daughter's husband, Kevin, he's a fraternal twin, although I don't think this is related to that, or you know, genetically, but it's still kind of cool. So, Baby A is, um, XX in her chromosomes and Baby B is an XY. Um, so, we're so excited and we're just praying for a healthy third trimester because she's just right upon the, you know, just right, the last few weeks of transitioning from the second trimester to the third trimester, and obviously, for a good delivery. So, it's so exciting.

Linda Booth 02:42

It's exciting. I'm so excited for you. You, yes, you've watched so many of your colleagues become grandparents, you understand a little bit about what that might mean. And you have other Cram family news. I read it in your family Christmas letter that you and your husband, Steve, are selling your home in St. Charles, Missouri, and that you're going to reside, um, a lot of the time in your older home near the Temple in Independence, Missouri. That must have been quite a project and lifestyle change for both of you.

Stassi Cramm 03:15

Yeah, it sure is. In fact, um, just before this podcast, we just signed the closing documents on our house in St. Charles and FedEx'ed them off. So, hopefully, if all goes well, that will occur next Wednesday. So, our whole life has pretty much been a tale of two cities. Um, but the cities in our story have shifted over time. Since 2015, the two cities in our tale were Independence and St. Charles. Um, our primary home, as you mentioned, was in St. Charles, Missouri. And then I had a work home that

Steve called our cottage that is just a few blocks from the Temple in Independence. Um, I think we've talked about before how Steve is now retired from Boeing. However, he's still consulting about half time, but he can do that anywhere because it's, it's a lot of travel, but his office can be anywhere. So, with the coming of the twins, we decided we needed to change one of the cities in our tale. So, we're selling our house in St. Charles, we're updating the cottage in Independence since it's gonna' serve as kind of our home base, and will soon be looking for a second home near where the twins will live. So, it's been a whirlwind in the past 30 days because it's all been unfolding really, really fast. On the one hand, that has been overwhelming and a bit stressful, but honestly, you know me, I'm kind of grateful that it's all falling into place so quickly. We imagine that we'll spend two to three weeks working remotely in Boston and spend the other one to two weeks working in Independence. Travel is always a bit exhausting and splitting time between two cities can sometimes feel a bit daunting. But I think it's gonna' be totally worth it. And we've concluded that life is just too short and we don't just want to see our new grandbabies a couple times a year. So, we want to be able to check in more regularly, be part of their support system. So, here's to our ongoing tale of two cities as we start the Boston-Independence chapter.

Linda Booth 05:19

I love it. And I, and I really know that you're making the right decision to be able to spend that time with those grandbabies. And to be, be the support that's going to be needed with two babies. Yes. Well, last month, I talked with, uh, Prophet/President Steve Veazey about First Presidency priorities and three-year strategic outcomes. Before we started taping that podcast, we briefly talked about the global pandemic and its impact on the church. And he mentioned in passing, that in retrospect, it was really a good idea that the First Presidency postponed the 2022 World Conference to April, 2023, because of the emerging Coronavirus variants, uh, the lack of vaccine availability in some countries, and pandemic travel restrictions in many nations. Now, I know the First Presidency is working with staff and leaders to organize online gatherings in 2022 to prepare for the next World Conference, uh, how is that planning going? And is there any further information on the online gatherings?

Stassi Cramm 06:30

Yeah, so, planning is kind of in full steam right now. So, in June, 2022, we will begin a journey of opportunities in preparation for the 2023 World Conference. Uh, the original concept when we did a hold-the-date announcement was that there would be a three-day online event in June, 22. Um, as planning began, this idea transformed into more of an ongoing journey, a series of conversations and experiences over the months leading to World Conference 2023 with a kickoff experience in June. The theme "Courage" will guide us all the way through World Conference. So, as a worldwide church, we will experience worship and live online discussions in many languages. We will hear and tell stories, learning from one another and listening to the Spirit as it leads us. Each month from June to March, opportunities will be provided to shape and guide us as we move towards the World Conference in April. So, on Sunday, June 12, plan to join in worldwide worship. We'll start to explore and interact with the story of the Good Samaritan as we journey with the example of Jesus the peaceful one and reflect courage and hope's light in our world. So, um, I want your listeners to watch for more details because there'll be pushed out through social media, the website, and other world church communications. But I think it's going to be a really positive experience as we prepare for the important decisions that we'll be making in 2023.

Linda Booth 08:17

Absolutely. That sounds like a wonderful plan. And I like the idea of reflecting courage and hope's light, uh, into our world. Um, I believe one of the purposes of the online gathering is to explore a very important topic that will be addressed at the 2023 World Conference. And that's World Conference Resolution 1319 which was passed by delegates at the 2019 World Conference. This World Conference action encourages, uh, Community of Christ to engage in conversation about the role of nonviolence and living Christ's mission. Stassi, can you please briefly review, uh, WCR 1319 and how the role of nonviolence impacts our call to live Christ's mission?

Stassi Cramm 09:07

Yeah, absolutely. So, like you said, this resolution was adopted on 12 April 2019, and it has three resolved statements, um, but I'm just going to summarize those. So, the first one asks the church to explore together what role nonviolence plays in our pursuit of peace on and for the earth. The second resolved, asks for resources to be made available to support the discussion around the church. And the third resolved is the homework for the Presidency to bring either a report or a statement about nonviolence to the next World Conference.

Linda Booth 09:53

So, how's your homework going, Stassi? I know you, that you're writing and will present that report or statement on violence, nonviolence to the church. And, and you've decided that you first needed to work on some definitions, uh, specifically for violence, nonviolence and nonviolent action. And you also invited the church into the process of developing those defin, definitions based on three questions. And those questions are, What is violence? What is nonviolence? And what is nonviolent action? So, before we get into those three questions in the draft statement to answer those questions, I'd like to explore how your past profession in United States Air Force might have influenced your perspective on nonviolence. And has your perspective on nonviolence changed over the years as you've worked for the church as a field minister, Apostle, member of the First Presidency, and Presiding Bishop?

Stassi Cramm 10:57

Wow, well, that's a really good question. Um, it's also kind of a really personal question in that it gets at what motivates and guides me as both a person and as a disciple of Christ. I could probably spend all of our time exploring this, so, let me try to be brief and, um, and just kind of share some highlights. As you stated, I worked for the United States Air Force and I, I worked for them for about 16 years. During that time, I worked as a flight test engineer and manager working on the development of next generation weapon systems. Some of your listeners may be disturbed to learn this. Some may think that as a person, um, or that a person cannot go, really, from a career where you're testing and developing weapons systems to full time ministry within Community of Christ without some kind of total and complete change similar to what happened to the Apostle Paul. But for me, going to work for the church was not about turning against what I was previously doing and taking a totally different new path. It was kind of part of an evolution in that my hope, and the hope of most of my colleagues when I was working for the Air Force, was that the technology we were developing would never have to be used. So, we didn't want to see us have to go to war. We did not want, you know, bad things to happen. But we knew that tragic realities of failed diplomacy, um, can happen. And we had had those

experiences ourselves up front. And, so, you know, it was very personal of what happens when diplomacy fails. At the same time, we were also aware that diplomacy does not, you know, work, um, the way you sometimes want it to. That doesn't mean you don't try every possible avenue first. And so we always wanted, uh, diplomacy to work. But in the event a wartime engagement was necessary, we wanted to make sure that, um, in our case, the United States had the capability to achieve an objective with the least amount of unintended loss. In some ways, this may sound very idealistic to some, especially in light of some of the current headlines highlighting abuse of power and power implementation of objectives that were not well planned or executed. So, I realize that, you know, that the, the military is not always good at doing what they're supposed to be doing. We could unpack this question, um, I think, like I said, for the rest of our time, but I know we don't have that much. So, let me kind of summarize by saying, I am an idealist in that I always seek and work towards the ideal solution. So, in the topic that we're discussing, I always want to find the non-violent way forward. I'm a realist in that my experience leads me to conclude that the ideal is not always achievable. There are bad actors in the world. And, so, from my personal experiences, you know, sometimes you have to make less than ideal choices. And that leads me then to the fact that I am a pragmatist. I am committed to always seeking a non-violent solution when working for justice in the world. But I also recognize that, at least in my lifetime and experiences, there may be times when another choice just has to be made. You don't make it lightly. You don't slough off have responsibility to try to avoid violence. But sometimes I think you have to make a different choice. It reminds me of the story that many of your listeners may know about Deitrich Bonhoeffer who was a pacifist, um, but ultimately participated in a plot to assassinate Hitler because he did not see another way to stop the harm Hitler was causing. And he recognized that Hitler had to be stopped. Ultimately, Deitrich Bonhoeffer lost his life based on the decision that he made, um, you know, but, but again, as a, as a pacifist, a committed pacifist, he just finally came to that space where he felt like, you know, a different way was required. I come to the discussions about World Conference Resolution 1319 and the role that nonviolence should play in the life of the church with all of this as part of my background and experience, for better or for worse. And I am open, I hope, I'm trying to be very open to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to continue to shape and transform me into faithful discipleship on this topic, and many topics, recognizing that I definitely don't have it all figured out yet. So, again, I'm not saying that I just want to find the easy answers. I've never wanted to find the easy answers that come through the use of, of, you know, bringing harm to others. Um, I, I want to live in a world where we can get along and where we can respect each other and where every voice is valued. And that's what I love about Community of Christ. Um, and so that's why I want to work towards a statement on nonviolence ultimately. But for me, in the midst of that statement, I acknowledge that my, my idealism, my realism, and my pragmatism will shape and form what I think is an appropriate statement as we work together.

Linda Booth 17:08

Thank you, Stassi, I'm really, uh, thankful that you've shared your background and how the complexity of this issue and we all bring our own context into it. And so that's part of, of the wonder and also the dilemma of coming together to, uh, struggle with these questions. So, thank you very much. Let's explore the first draft definition for violence, or the answer to the question, What is violence? First, I'll read that draft statement, and I quote, What is violence? Violence is individually or collectively by intention or neglect, bringing harm physically, emotionally, spiritually, or relationally to oneself, another person, group, nation or creation, end quote. I know the statement is broad so that the definition can

include violent actions or situations in different cultures and contexts. Uh, please tell us about some of the discussion that led to this draft statement and how this draft statement will inform the final report or statement that will be presented at the 2023 World Conference.

Stassi Cramm 18:28

Yeah, so, our goal in the Presidency, as we were, um, continuing to work on what our response should be related to nonviolence was, we came to the realization that the first thing that church needed to do was to develop simple, brief definitions that could easily be translated without loss of meaning. So, uh, so this definition is one of those brief definitions. And we call it a draft definition because we're seeking the church's input and we'll be doing that in a variety of ways in the coming months to help us refine the definition. So, as we look at the definition on violence, um, when we talk about violence in the context of our discussions in the church, we are talking about violence that's either done by a person or a group. I mean, perhaps that's the only way it happens, but we wanted to emphasize that it wasn't just individual violence. It could be violence of a country or, you know, violence of an organization. Second, we, um, want to talk about violence, uh, or not want to talk about it, when we talk about it, we mean violent actions that were done on purpose and also violence that results from when we actually choose not to act. So, again, you know, we'll talk more about that, but, but it's, it's intentional. That's why the word intentional was so important. And third, we are talking about all forms of violence. So, um, obviously, you know, people think immediately of physical violence, uh, but the definition is in, is intended to make that definition much broader to include all of the ways that a person or group can cause harm to another person or group. And, uh, fourth, we're talking about actions that bring harm, which, of course, I've used the word harm multiple times. Don't you hate it when people use the word in the middle of their definition? So, um, you know, again, it's, it's, it's causing, uh, something bad to happen. And it's focused on, and that's kind of the fifth point, it can be harm to a person, harm to a group, harm to the environment. So, basically, harm of anything that God created.

Linda Booth 20:58

Well, that was a, that's a great statement, then, because it is broad enough to include just about anything that could bring harm to a person or a group. So, well done First Presidency. I look forward to seeing how that might, um, morph a little bit as more people bring their ideas and experiences into that definition. Let's look, let's explore what is nonviolence. And here's the draft statement that answers that question. And I quote, Nonviolence is avoiding actions, as much as possible, that harm through intention or neglect in one's life context, end quote. Like the first draft definition, what is violence, this draft definition on what is nonviolence includes the phrase intention or neglect. Why is intention or neglect language important? And tell us about the discussions and input that led to this draft definition on nonviolence?

Stassi Cramm 22:03

Yeah, so, once we agree on a definition of violence to guide our church conversations, in some ways then, nonviolence is going to be the opposite of that. As we discuss these definitions and, uh, listen to different perspectives, um, you know, because there were earlier versions of this, it became clear that we were talking about actions that intend to bring harm. So, that was, that was really bubbling up when we talked about violence. It was clear that accidents happen in this world. So, sometimes harm happens, you know, from one person to another, accidentally without intent, without a motive to cause

harm. Um, our focus, as we fer, uh, work on a statement about the role of nonviolence, is not about unintended actions that caused harm. So, we're not saying, you know, we're not saying anything about those. We're just saying that for the sake of this conversation, our conversation is focused on intentional harm that can be brought, um, and the choices that we make, which is, you know, where we exercise our intention. As we lived with a definition that included the word intentional, we heard people talking about the violence of ignoring situations and choosing not to act. So, that had an intentionality to it, but we weren't quite sure that it got, uh, picked up by just the word intentional. And, so, we felt that this form of violence needed to be in the scope of our discussions and that's why the word neglect was added. So, we are talking about the conscious choice to bring harm or the choice to do nothing when you see harm happening or the harm that you cause when you completely ignore an unjust situation. So, so again, for both violence and then nonviolence, we're talking about the choices that we're making as a disciple.

Linda Booth 24:13

Yes. This draft definition on nonviolence also has a qualifier, qualifier, a quote, "as much as possible". And I'll read again, that definition for nonviolence. Nonviolence is avoiding actions, as much as possible, that harm through intention or neglect in one's life's context. So, are there situations you can think of, or came up in your discussions, where it's not possible to avoid nonviolent actions that might harm someone?

Stassi Cramm 24:48

Yeah, well, whenever you put a qualifier in a definition, there's always some level of danger, um, because "as much as possible" is going to be very interpretable by each one. So, uh, our, our presumption in all of this is that we're all committed disciples and that we're, you know, seeking to do what God really wants us to do. So, on a personal level, I really like this phrase because it speaks to the pragmatist in me. But I realize that some people won't like the phrase, because they'll be afraid that it gives permission to people to bring harm maybe when they should choose another way. So, it, it does call us to a level of accountability. I think one example, um, that, you know, that we've talked about in, already in this podcast is the story about Deitrich Bonhoeffer. "As much as possible" is not a casual statement. Um, he didn't just casually decide to going from being a pacifist to participating, you know, in a scheme to take someone's life. So, by putting this, these words into the definition, we're still seeking to be challenged as disciples to always look for all the possible ways to avoid violence. So, let me share a personal example, which again, I know is going to be debatable. Um, but as I reflect on the role of nonviolence in my discipleship, I think about what I would do if someone was threatening one of my family members, such as one of my soon to be grandbabies. I would try to de-escalate the situation through nonviolent means. I would look for any possible way to avoid violence. Um, for instance, if I could flee with them, you know, and get away, I would clearly choose to, to take a path that did not harm another. But if I'm being honest, I have to confess that if the only way I could figure out to protect my new grandbabies from harm was to harm the attacker, I would likely, uh, make that choice. Again, I don't say this casually. This is where spiritual preparation comes into play. I hope that through my ongoing disciple formation, I will continue to grow in having the skills to navigate complicated situations, um, to, to protect others, you know, to, to bring about justice without causing harm. So, for me, this is why the phrase "as much as possible" got included. Um, but I understand that this phrase is probably one of the things that will be discussed a lot, as we say, are these the appropriate definitions to guide

us? This definition, as written is not defining nonviolence as purely pacifism. So, I know some people think that when the church says nonviolence, they see that equal to pacifism. And I know for some people, that is their committed way of life. Um, but that's not what this definition says. This definition challenges people to seek nonviolence, but also acknowledges that sometimes that may not be possible. And at that point, people have to choose wisely and faithfully how they should respond as a follower of Christ.

Linda Booth 28:33

Yes, it, it goes back to one of our enduring principles, responsible choices. And, (Exactly.) yes, you've said that over and over again, to choose wisely and faithfully. And now the last draft question and its corresponding statement of definition, what is nonviolent action? And I quote, Nonviolent action is the practice of spiritual preparation and then pursuing justice and positive change by confronting specific situations of injustice, using nonviolent strategies. Tell us about the discussion and input that contributed to this draft statement. And I want you to know, and the First President know, that I really appreciate that nonviolent action is linked to a spiritual practice.

Stassi Cramm 29:26

Yeah, we had some marvelous, um, conversations about this. Uh, we discussed how some nonviolent action can be driven by other than religious reasons. If you Google nonviolent action, you're gonna' see a whole host of websites that talk to it, and some of them are secularly, uh, based, um, and they're just about kind of doing the right thing. But for us, we are part of Community of Christ and the conversations we are having in the church are guided by our best understanding of what it means to be a disciple. So, we are saying when we use the term nonviolent action, we're not just talking about a secular response or methodology. We are talking about spiritually preparing as disciples who follow Jesus, the peaceful one, and learning ways to navigate complex situations that avoid the use of violence, but still actively engage in seeking to bring about justice. A person can avoid bringing harm by simply not getting involved. And that's not what we're talking about. We are saying, as followers of Jesus, the peaceful one, we are called to be engaged in the world. We are called to take a stance against injustice. But that means we have to commit to spiritual practices of things such as discernment to seek where to get involved and how to get involved. We don't commit to nonviolence by just staying away from difficult situations. Our spiritual preparation helps us discern how and when to get involved. So, this preparation also helps us match the right tool of nonviolent action with the situations we face. And it also says that we are then carrying the Holy Spirit with us into those difficult situations. Our spiritual preparation helps us feel ready to step into the breach when we need to face injustices. And it gives us the courage to know that we go as God's ambassadors of peace into those situations.

Linda Booth 31:51

I love that observation, Stassi. Thank you. As I reviewed the draft questions and statements, I realized that the word peace was not included. And I know this wasn't an oversight, I don't think. So, often, when we were, read the word justice, it is followed by the word peace or peacemaking, justice and peacemaking. So, I was looking for peace to follow the reference to justice in this draft definition. Why was peace not mentioned in the three definitions? I'm assuming it's because peace will be a focus in the report or statement presented to the church?

Stassi Cramm 32:30

Yeah, that's a really interesting question. And actually, I think your assumption is generally correct. We kept, we kept trying to put things into the definition. And then it's like you're trying to make the definition become the statement. And, so, then we had to keep backing ourselves away from that and saying, No, we're looking for that simple definition of just the word, not the intended outcome. So, peace, of course, in its broadest understanding, um, which we often refer to as shalom, is the ultimate goal of what we're all about. We are called to be builders of God's vision of shalom, the peaceable kingdom, Zion, communities of joy, hope, love and peace, and all the many names and phrases we use to try and talk about how God wants the world to be. The definitions that we are sharing are not the actual statement on nonviolence. It is tempting to want to include everything, like I said, in that definition such that the definition actually becomes the statement. So, again, the intent was for a clarifying agreement on what exactly we would mean as a church when we use the three words in our discussions. In that way, the word peace was not in, was not actually needed to define the words. It's hard to know exactly what will be in the actual draft statement on nonviolence that ultimately gets written and shared. But I'm confident it's going to build on World Conference Resolution 1177 which is titled Peace. This resolution was adopted in April, 1982, so, quite a few years ago. It upholds five major points and several additional points. For the sake of time, I won't go into that resolution, but I would encourage your listeners to look it up. You can find it on the website. The fifth point in that resolution, uh, says, and I quote, We as a church emphasize that peace is not attained by mere non-participation in violence. So, the discussions that we are having on nonviolence builds on this concept. So, if peace is not attained by just staying out of violence, then that says we have to find a way to be engaged in the world that helps bring about peace. And that's where we're talking about what the role of nonviolence is. So, we are needing to decide as a church how we will act in the world to bring about justice and peace because, obviously, if your end goal is just justice and peace, that could happen through violence. So, we are attempting to answer the question, What role does nonviolence play in the pursuit of peace on and for the earth? And in the life and mission of the church? Our collective answer to this question will become the church's statement on nonviolence. Responding to this question is complex. And there are a variety of perspectives on the best way forward. We live in different contexts, as you've already mentioned, that influence our experience in the world and our understanding of what responses are most faithful. Together, we are called to discern how the Holy Spirit is leading us to respond as a faith community. We need to listen and understand each other as we journey through this process, because we're never sure exactly where the Spirit is going to bubble up.

Linda Booth 36:23

Yes, absolutely. So, what's the next step in the development of the World Conference Resolution 1319 report and/or statement on nonviolence?

Stassi Cramm 36:34

Yeah, so for right now, we need to continue to engage in conversations about the role nonviolence plays in the pursuit of peace on and for the earth, um, and in the life and mission of the church. That's obviously the challenge of the first resolved. Um, and, of course, the second resolved was for resources. And you and I have talked before about, uh, resources that were provided in 2020 and again in 2021, um, and following Jesus, the Peaceful One. So, there's just a whole host of resources. Uh, every voice and perspective needs to be heard. And people should not assume that there is a

predetermined answer. For instance, people should not assume that when we're talking about nonviolence we're talking about the church, um, engaging in solely pacifism. So, we need to do the important work of discerning together our response. Um, and, and part of that will be working on these definitions. So, in the coming months, there will be opportunities for people to have conversations and to explore, um, and to talk about these draft definitions and for us to work on finalizing them. Also, the First Presidency is going to continue to prayerfully consider what should be included in a statement on nonviolence, which was our homework from the third resolved. So, that's why, to support all of these activities, the Presidency is now providing these draft working definitions for violence, nonviolence and nonviolent action that we've been discussing. These working definitions are not a replacement for a statement. Um, but first we need the church's input and, um, and we need that input so that we develop the best definitions to use to guide our conversations. And then, when we kind of have these final version of these three definitions, we will be using those as the church then talks about what does the role nonviolence play in the life of fulfilling the church's mission. And that will ultimately become our draft statement that we'll work on. In the end, the statement is not what's important. What's important is what we as a people are willing to commit to in regard to the role of nonviolence in pursuing the church's mission. You know, like I do, I mean, just because the conference passes a resolution, if we don't bring that resolution into our being and let it transform who we are, then the resolution doesn't have a lot of value. And, so, again, just getting a statement isn't, isn't the important work. Transforming ourselves into being the people that God is calling us to be as what's important. And I believe that the conversations we are having are helping us grow into the people that God needs us to be. It's part of the disciple formation process where we are continually growing and changing, um, in our understanding of how to both follow as well as incarnate Jesus, the peaceful one.

Linda Booth 39:54

Yes, Stassi, I believe that, too. A, and, so, when do you expect that report or statement to be released to the church.

Stassi Cramm 40:02

Yeah, so far everything is taken so much longer than I expect it would have as we came out of the 2019, uh, World Conference. At a minimum, we will definitely provide a report, uh, by the time we get to conference. Um, but I think we're going to spend much of 2022 listening to each other as we discuss the draft definitions and then the Presidency will be soliciting inputs from those conversations to help refine the definitions. So, that is why they are marked as draft at this point. I'm sure this process will help improve the definitions and, like you said, I look forward to kind of how they will morph as all of the voices are heard and as they are perfected by the body. Um, they do, um, we want them to do the best possible job reflecting our collective understanding. It's possible that, you know, things may move quickly enough in 22 that the Presidency would bring an actual statement to the 2023 World Conference, but I don't think that's likely. I think it's, it's more likely that the Presidency will be bringing a report of what's been happening and kind of a plan for what will happen after the 2023 World Conference. And, um, and so we'll, we'll meet our first homework by simply reporting to the conference where we are and where we're going. Our goal is not to rush to complete a draft statement. Our goal is, uh, to make sure that people around the church are having the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations that are Spirit lead and that will ultimately shape our understanding and response as a

church to the injustices that exist in the world and that will help us really refine not just a statement on the role nonviolence plays, but it will help us refine nonviolence as a tool that we commit to using.

Linda Booth 42:11

Yes, and as I've listened to you discuss these three definitions and then the draft statements on each question, it's, uh, come to my mind that this is just a part of us, being those prophetic people--not a people with a prophet, but a people who are prophetically searching for and discerning where God is leading us. And especially in a world where there is so much violence, uh, to learn to be a people of peace and just making, justice and peacemaking. So, I'm so pleased with the work that the First Presidency has been doing and the leadership that you've provided to lead us into that discussion as a prophetic people. Is there anything else you'd like to add to our conversation on nonviolence?

Stassi Cramm 43:01

Well, I want to just circle kind of back to where we began. So, as I already mentioned, everyone needs to mark their calendars for June 12th. Um, on June 12th, there will be a worship that begins our journey of Courage to the 2023 World Conference. Um, and from that worship experience, we will, will, there will be discussions around nonviolence and other resolutions that will be coming to the conference. And so I just hope everyone will, um, make themselves available to really engage in the journey that we are launching on June 12th. Um, we can plan all these events, but the events are only valuable if people actually, you know, make the time to, to show up and to be actively engaged. So, I really, really encourage people to do that. The definitions of violence, nonviolence and nonviolent action are important for our further exploration of how we individually and as a people, uh, will respond to violence and injustice in our world, you know, how we will be those peacemakers. And from this exploration, we will ultimately create a statement on nonviolence to guide the church. So, I think that kind of wraps up that discussion. But before you wrap up this podcast, I would like to do a shameless solicitation for help on another topic. As Community of Christ looks to the future, um, especially in the USA and Canada, we are curious about the needs and desires of our younger members and friends. We know many people in the 18 to 50 age range have a connection to the church from childhood, uh, through camps or reunions or Spectacular, um, vacation Bible school or whatever. But many, um, are no longer active in regular church activities. And we would really like to hear their thoughts and opinions. But for us to be able to make contact with them, we need the help of the church, um, and those who are active and the help of your listeners in collecting contact information. So, if you have family or friends who are in, uh, that age group of 18 to 50 who might be willing to participate in a simple survey, um, we're asking you to have a conversation with them and to get permission from them to share, um, their email address or their mobile phone number. Um, we will be, uh, making announcements through social media, um, where there will be a link where people can connect and provide email and phone numbers for us. But it's important that if you're providing the email or phone number of someone else, that you actually have their permission, um, before you share it with us. But we want to be able to kind of do a direct reach to people and, uh, send them a link to a survey. And we'll only use the information for this one survey. And we'll let everyone respond because we'll be able to ask demographic questions, but, but in this survey, we would like to be able to get to that group that we know has ties to the church, but isn't always paying attention to what the church is doing. So we need the listeners' help.

Linda Booth 46:29

Yes, listeners do please write down and (. . .) you won't forget to send in, get permission for and send in that contact information. Well, sa, thank you, my friend, Stassi. I, I always enjoy, uh, our conversations. And I'm so thankful that you're an idealist and that you're a realist and that you're pragma, uh, that you're pragmatic because I know that has really helped to lead the church. And this has been an enlightening conversation. And I thank you and the First Presidency for all the hard work that you're doing on behalf of the church. Your leadership is powerful and impactful. So, thank you. (Thanks, Linda.) You're welcome. And thank you Coffee Buzz listeners for joining our conversation. Remember to mark your calendar for June 12th for that worship which began, begins a journey of courage to the World Conference 2023. And you're also invited to enter into the discussion on nonviolence and what role does nonviolence play in the pursuit of peace on earth. So, watch for opportunities to make your voice heard. Coffee Buzz listeners, please watch for next month's episode of Coffee Buzz. I'll be having a conversation with Scott Murphy, counselor to Prophet/President Steve Veazey and Director of Field Ministries.

Josh Mangelson 48:03

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