

Josh Mangelson 00:18

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

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Welcome to a Cup of Joe, part of the Project Zion Podcast where we explore restoration history from a Community of Christ perspective. Today, our guest is Seth Bryant. Now, Seth is the Director of the Kirtland Temple Historic Site. He has multiple geeky academic accreditations, including a master's degree in religious studies from University of Florida in Gainesville and from Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Seth is a Seventy in Community of Christ. He's also an Eagle Scout, a former Navy chaplain, and he serves on the board of the Historic Sites Foundation. So, he's a busy guy. Welcome, Seth.

Seth Bryant 01:15

Thank you. Happy to be here.

Karin Peter 01:18

So, Seth, where do you live now and just tell us a couple of things about yourself, in case folks didn't catch that.

Seth Bryant 01:26

So, I live in Kirtland not too far from the temple. My wife, Jen and I have been here just over two years. And we have three kids. We love Kirtland. It's a great place. It's a great little community, and yeah, I think that's, I guess we've been members of the church about 11 years now. So, we're converts. Yeah, good

Karin Peter 01:51

for you. Oh, yeah. Welcome, welcome. Welcome eleven years late. So, thanks, you and I met because we've served together different ways. But one of the things we have in common is we both serve in the office of Seventy. Right. And so today, we're gonna chat a little bit about an episode in restoration history called Zion's Camp, and how it led to the formation of the Office of Seventy. So, I realized I need to probably share just a little bit with folks that in Community of Christ, the office of Seventy, is an office of mission or missionary work, and that the Seventy are organized by quorums. And each Quorum has a president of Seventy. And those individuals serve on a Council of Presidents of Seventy. So just kind of give a brief structural organization of what that looks like. Seventy are both employed by Community of Christ like Seth, and I are. And most of the Seventy, however, are self-sustained Seventy who work at regular jobs, and then also serve in this capacity. So, with that in mind, Seth, why don't you kind of introduce us to the context and set the stage a little bit for our conversation about Zion's camp? What was it?

Seth Bryant 03:14

So, Zion's camp was? Well, it all starts in February of 1834, when the saints in Missouri were forcibly removed from their homes in Jackson County, Missouri. And the idea behind the camp was that you were going to have this, I hate to use the term army, but that's basically what it is. It's a peacekeeping force of at least 100, but as many as 500 men that are going to go and restore and redeem Zion. And they're going to have government help, they had a promise from the Governor that they would receive reinforcement when they get there, so that they can go and with this, with this show of force that they can help the saints who have been displaced move back into their homes. So, several church leaders go out and they recruit and they're able to get 230 people. Now, 20 of those are women and children. The main contingent leaves Kirtland in May of 1834. And they're marching throughout the summer of 1834. You have a group that leaves from Michigan Territory, led by Hiram Smith, Joseph Smith's brother, as well as Lyman White. And eventually these two bodies come together at Salt River in Missouri. And they had all these big hopes, right, but it doesn't come together like they had planned and so the governor doesn't pull through with his promise. And it's pretty clear that if they actually go through with any show of force that it's going to be catastrophic. And so, you know, I guess, other than we, we look at the history of it, but I can't help but step back a little bit and just and just say that I cringe a little bit because I don't know how you maintain peace through this kind of approach. Because it's, it's ultimately, it's a flawed approach, even if their intent was peace. You know, I think of, of Gandhi saying that, that peace has to be the object of who you are, not a tactic. And they were certainly using peace as a tactic. And so, and they're trying to back that up with arms, and it ultimately fails. And so, they're left with this question of, what are we going to do. And it's at that point, that there's a new revelation that's given. So, we have section 100, in Community of Christ Doctrine and Covenants in this revelation that says, you need to organize up to 500, at least 100. Well, the next revelation that's given after this failure is section 102. And 102 says, and again, I say unto you, sue for peace, not only the people that I have, that have smitten you, but also to all people, and lift up an enzyme of peace and make a proclamation for peace sent to the ends of the earth, and make proposals for peace, and to those who have spent you according to the voice of the Spirit, which is in you, and all things shall work together for your good. And so, it's, a shift in, in focus, and I think it's, it's taking an element of what they were trying to do, they're trying to, to reinforce peace in that area. But it's saying no, you can't just see peace as one part of it, peace has to be the central focus, it has to be the object of, of what you're doing. And ultimately, this becomes a key moment for Community of Christ, and who we are today.

Karin Peter 07:16

So, let's go back a little bit to the organizing of this, because there were a couple of events that contributed to failure beyond not getting the reinforcements that they wanted. One was that they couldn't get enough people really, they couldn't get as many as they wanted. And the second was typhoid.

Seth Bryant 07:33

Yeah, yeah, they have a lot of sickness that goes through the camp, and as somebody as a combat veteran myself, as having been a chaplain who served with Marines who went to Afghanistan, you know, as I read their accounts, I almost have a sense that, that this is a group who is struggling with post-traumatic stress from the experience that they went through. Notice that I didn't see disorder. One, I can't diagnose PTSD, but, but I see markers of it in some of the descriptions of what they're giving, with all of the sickness that they and the deaths that they faced along the way, and the privations that

they faced as they're marching, and what they're heading to do, because they're facing death, and they know they're facing death. And they, they actually form up and martial and practice, you know, what it would be like to go into battle. I mean, they're, they're facing the prospects of, of actually dying, and all of this.

Karin Peter 08:39

And yet, when they arrive, the focus shifts because of the revelation and all of a sudden, they're learning this huge lesson about peace, which, as you said, was a real, real shift. In that time, we're talking frontier America.

Seth Bryant 08:58

Yeah, well, and I think that you really hit the nail on the head, because you have to place things in their context. So, in frontier America, you know, defending your home, and being willing to do so with arms, that wasn't out of the norm. Right, forming companies of men and marching hundreds of miles. That's out of the norm, right? But okay, we'll give him that. But being willing to defend your land, and they saw this as their land, they saw you know, as, as their friends, their family, many of them had been there, had made trips there. So, it is within the norms of the time and the place, but there is a shift in saying, you need to focus, you were trying to defend the peace through arms, you need to forget that and just focus on the peace element that is a shift.

Karin Peter 09:53

And as we look at that with the revelation that happens at a fishing river, then the shift also becomes almost a way to recognize the loyalty of the men who marched and who were willing to serve. And this is where I find it really interesting, because it's after this, that Joseph Smith receives recommendations for and appoints the first Council of 12. We didn't have a Council of 12, that is a traveling Council, at that point, there was just the Standing High Council. And two weeks later to the day, he appoints the first 70. Now, when you read a lot of history about this, there's lots of stuff that goes around on why that was, and why two weeks later, the 70. And let's see if we can unravel some of that. But most, if not all, of the men who became part of the Council of 12, had shown loyalty to Smith during the Zion Camp expedition. That's where they came from. And some historians have written that the 70 were loyalists who were less about the leadership credentials, perhaps to serve in the capacity of the Council of 12, and more about blind loyalty and a willingness to do what needed to be done. So, let's unpack that a little bit. What are your thoughts on that?

Seth Bryant 11:18

Well, I guess, to back up to the very beginning the idea of this of ordaining apostles to start at the very beginning, you know, the concept of apostle had been around before February of 1835, we get Oliver Cowdery calling himself an apostle, back in 1829. And elders were called apostles from the earliest days of the church. But as you said, we didn't have a council, or an administrative body that was serving in that capacity. And so it wasn't, it was a major moment in the life of the church, when we have these 12 men that are chosen. That happens on the 14th of February, I always remember that because it's Valentine's Day, right? So, it's 1835. And if we go into the Joseph Smith papers, which I pulled this up this morning, and we look, we see that a meeting was called. And I'm reading right, right from the notes, it says it was called, of those who journey to Zion for the purpose of laying the foundation of its

redemption last season. So, they're in the spring, not quite spring, February, in Kirtland, I mean, it's still in so we're in late March here, and it's still miserable, cold outside, but so it still would have been winter, but they're saying, you know, last season for the redemption of Zion. And so, we've got all these people gathering with these with the men and women who would make the march. And it says President Smith arose and stated the reason why this meeting was called, it was this, God had commanded it, and it was made known to him by vision, and by the Holy Spirit, and then he gave a relation of some of the circumstances attending us, while journey, Zion, our trials, sufferings, etc, etc. He said, God had not designed all this for nothing, but that he had it in remembrance yet, and those who went design with the determination to lay down their lives, if necessary. It was the will of God, that they should be ordained to the ministry, and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, or the coming of the Lord, which was nye, even 56 years, I think that's 50 or 60 years, it should wind up the same. And he said, many, many things such as the weak things, even the smallest and weakest among us shall be powerful, and mighty and great things should be accomplished. We shall be endowed with power from on high. So, I, this is a classic moment in the life of the church, and it happens, you can go all the way to the book of Acts, but it happens over and over that there's some sort of difficult moment, some difficult question, things don't happen the way they thought that it was supposed to, and then they make meaning out of it. And we do this with our lives over and over again. But they're trying to say, okay, so we didn't redeem Zion. So, what's coming out of this? And, and so there's meaning making going on here. And that's what religion does. And the fact that you know, you're lifting up with these, were these men that are willing, you say it the way that you said it. How did you put it?

Karin Peter 14:43

I said that they had shown loyalty to Smith, and that the council of 12 were appointed, but then there were also loyalists who were less about the skills of leadership and more about loyalty and a willingness to do what needed to be done. And they ended up as the first 70.

Seth Bryant 15:01

Well, these are certainly this is a group of men that have gone through the fire and were willing to put their life on the line. And he's saying he's, you know, it's right there at the founding of the 12. And this turns into the founding of the 70. Because these meetings morph into each other. So yeah, it's, it's right there.

Karin Peter 15:23

So, Mark Sherer in his history of Community of Christ, in the first volume Journey of a People Volume One on page 232. He writes that through the whole endurance of that episode of Zion's Camp, the pain and the anguish that there were a cadre of individuals identified, and then I quote, who could be depended upon to build a viable priesthood structure, unquote. So not only was there meaning making, and a sense of spiritual endowment that came from this experience, but also this kind of extended priesthood structure, administrative structure, began to appear after this out of this group of loyal followers. So, I guess my question is, when we talk about the institution of the first 70, it was two weeks after the institution of the Council of 12. Do we know what happened in those two weeks?

Seth Bryant 16:29

Well, we know that the 12 are concerned enough to ask for more clarification, from Joseph. And out of that, we get Section 104. So, the 12 originally don't have, they have a really cool title, but they don't have any clear administrative role within the church. At that point, all the all the officers are set up. And so, Joseph goes, he prays, he comes back with Section 104, or what in the LDS Doctrine and Covenants is one of seven, and it's really quite genius, because it gives them an entire administrative realm that didn't exist before. And it says that the 12 are equal in authority to the standing High Council, and the standing high council is the second Presidency of the church. So, the 12, or become parallel to the Standing High Council, they become a second presidency to the church, but that's outside the stakes of Zion. So, we've gone outside the organized church, and we've given them all the authority, and which makes sense. They're an evangelizing traveling Council. But I, this this is me, you know, you ask the question, what happened in the what's going on in those two weeks was there were revelations being given, I think there's concern among the 12, that there's no teeth to their office. And so, we get this, this revelation that actually becomes key in baking in some of the concepts of priesthood that are formative and essential today, but at the time, were not. So, concepts that we take for granted, like Aaronic, and Melchizedek, having different officers in each grouping, none of that was fixed up until 1835. And it's still squishy at that point. So 104, when it comes out and says there are in the church two priesthoods, it's because it had to say it for the first time, nobody had ever really thought that through. So that's what's that's what's going on during those two weeks. They're defining the role of the apostles and the role of the 70. And they're telling the apostles, don't worry, you have a really special role. In fact, you're to be special witnesses of Christ. And oh, you 70 You have a special role too, but we don't want to step on the apostles' toes. So, you're a special witness of Christ. So, you're both apostolic witnesses. You're both apostolic in the sense that you're sent forth. That's what the word means. You're sent forth as witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. But apostles, you're special, and 70's are especial with an E on the front of it, because they want to make a distinction and make sure that the 12 seems set apart and special. So, all of that's being teased out in those two weeks,

Karin Peter 19:47

along with some clarification about the roles that we traditionally understand as congregational roles as well,

Seth Bryant 19:53

yeah. Yeah. And I think a lot of that had already been, you know, the congregational site had already been worked out, but it's It just gets further codified within Section 104. And the relationships now with these two new bodies, these two new administrative bodies that now exist.

Karin Peter 20:10

So obviously, Joseph Smith is looking at the New Testament for how he is setting these things up, and we know particularly in Luke 10, when we're talking about the 70, that previously, Jesus sent out the 12. And there's a lot of discussion about what that number means. And as a Bible scholar, you might want to enlighten us a little bit on that, and then sending 70 others. So, tell us about the correlation between the New Testament and what Joseph did.

Seth Bryant 20:38

Well, Joseph believed he was literally restoring the New Testament church. So, I think he just took it at face value that if Jesus had 12, and Jesus had 70, that he needed to do the exact same thing. So, it was logical to him to do that. And what Jesus is doing with the 12, the 12 disciples, as judges in Israel, you know, and then with the 70, Moses actually had, and you know, this, Moses had 70 elders that helped, whether it was 70 or 72. There's some debate on that, and the Sanhedrin, I think, I think the Sanhedrin pulls from that legacy. So even in Jesus's day, there's a there's a sense of the elders in Israel, that, that draw that legacy from, from Moses. So, Joseph Smith is pulling from this biblical precedent. Now, were the 70, in Jesus's day, doing the same sorts of things I, you know, I don't know I, the church, that that they conceived of, in the 19th century, as existing in the first century, is a mythical thing. And then it just, it doesn't, doesn't exist. It's a beautiful, wonderful thing. But it's, you had a group of followers, trying, if you know, trying to follow the teachings of a person in the desert, you don't have an administrative body with all these rules and regulations like they presupposed existed. Now there were, you know, when you read the Pauline letters, there is there is some organization going on, but not to the degree that Joseph Smith and others thought, and it's not like we can capture something from the first century, and just plop it in the 19th century. And well, and restore it, what we're doing is something completely new. And it's wonderful in its own way. But it's a little naive to think that it's exactly the same, because it's not exactly the same.

Karin Peter 22:49

So, what when we look at Zion's camp, and then the institution of the 70, a year later, almost a year later, what we're looking at then is taking a structure as understood from the New Testament and saying to people who had risked their lives, who were loyal, who were willing, and saying to them, this is a way to acknowledge your service. In a way that this new office was a way to acknowledge your giftedness and your willingness, let's say, to lay down your life in the in the service of God's reign. In looking at that, we then move into a period of our restoration history that we don't talk about a whole lot. And that is that some of these same loyal men that Joseph Smith had called to serve as both members of the Council a 12, and a 70. We find their names on a list, as well of people who are referred to quite often as Danites, particularly in 1838, it seems that whoever and however the Danites were formed, that they drew on some of these same men to participate in that organization, men who are willing to, quote, do anything, unquote that the Prophet instructed or intimated. And so, was there an overlap of, of people between the 70 and the Danites as several of them appear in a list? I have a couple of names here, but let's see what you came up with.

Seth Bryant 24:40

Well, I mean, there certainly is overlap. And what you've identified is an overlap in the fact that these are kind of rough and tumble, willing to willing to die or to go into dangerous situations, this is a group that's willing to do that. So when I look at the ordinations of the very first 70, that took place in late February, early March of 1835, the ordination for example of Nathan Baldwin, his prayer ordination prayer, it says, we ordain you to be an elder and one of the 70, because you have been willing to suffer and die for your brethren, that was a phrase and an idea that was repeated throughout several of those initial ordination prayers that was given. That was that was one of the markers of a 70, somebody who was willing to die. And when you think about missionary laborers, in the early 19th century, that you know, that that kind of went with it. So, if you're going to leave, and go, especially if you're going overseas, you're going to a very dangerous situation, these people living on the frontier anyway. But

you're selecting from the people willing to move to the frontier, you're selecting those who are willing to then go off and do something even more dangerous. So yeah, this is this is a group who's willing to suffer danger and death. And when you see crossover, in, you know, when you look at a list, and you see crossover between the 70 and the Danites, it doesn't surprise me. Because there's, you know, there's already in my mind, you've pre-selected the people who I would expect would be engaged in that sort of thing.

Karin Peter 26:40

So just briefly, can you tell some of our listeners who maybe don't know who or what the Danites were, just what that group was about?

Seth Bryant 26:49

Well, the Danites we're a group during the Missouri period that we're willing to engage in, oh, how do we put it? I don't know. paramilitary is the right is the right term, but they were they were willing to do, to go above and beyond the, the average person in defending their fellow saints and, you know, part of my hesitation in defining this is there's so much that has been said and put out there. There's a lot of lore, and there's a lot of lore involved. And there's a lot of, and I hate the term, but I'm going to use it there's a lot of anti-Mormon propoganda out there that they were out there slitting people's throats. And

Karin Peter 27:45

thank you, Zane Grey in the Westerns of old Yeah. So,

Seth Bryant 27:49

you know, how much of this was, were they a group of men who, you know, if church leaders said, hey, we hear that brother so and so's in trouble, can you guys get together and ride out there and help him out? And how much of it was, we need you to go and take care of this individual. And secrecy was something that marked all of this. And so, it makes it makes it difficult to pin down some of some of the facts on them. But it's, it's a dark period and a difficult period in our church history. And it's one that certainly doesn't reflect who we are today.

Karin Peter 28:37

So, when we think about that, again, the context on the frontier, that expelled from homes, have physically, been seen loved ones, killed, houses and farms burned, et cetera, et cetera, we're talking about a really volatile situation with a volatile response which, like you said, doesn't reflect who we are now, but it does reflect the time in which these individuals lived. So, when I look through it now to try and kind of equate for people what that looks like, I think of what you see, I'm going to, I'm going to put it in a context away from anybody's actual life, what you see in the movies, on the bouncer at the door of a club, right? The big guy who kind of enforces the rules. That's kind of what we're talking about here. So when I look at some of the names of people who served in that, who were also 70, I would have to say that some of them were pretty rough individuals that were willing to do what needed to be done and I think about in the New Testament where Jesus sent out the first 70 and one of the things that happens is the first 70 Go out and they do the things they're supposed to do and they come back and they're elated. And they tell Jesus how exciting it was because all the things that Jesus said what happened, and they're like, who knew this was gonna work? This is so exciting. And then they go off on

their way. And Jesus turns around and utters a prayer that basically says, thank you for having me send these infants in the faith because basically, the religious people would have never gone. Because they were not going to do it. So, from the beginning 70 Were the people willing to go right? Willing to risk?

Seth Bryant 30:29

Well, I mean, they're, they're ordinations, when you look at the ordinations, they're, they're following that same scripture, or precedents. So, the very first person ordained to 70, that I could find was Roger Orton. And it said, hey, look, if there's no other way to escape, you'll be able to walk on water, your promise, you'll heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, causing the lame to walk. So right out of the gate, you've got these incredible promises. And at the same time, they're told that you're incredibly as a group, you are incredibly weak, and yet the weak things are going to overthrow the mighty things of the world. And so, you've got a gregarious group of men who are willing to go out there, in these dangerous situations, they've already proved it with Zion's camp, and they're going to go out, and you know, in there, potentially, they're being in the blessings, they're being told you're going to go into the isles of the sea, you're going to go in these foreign nations and do these incredible things. And the world is going to be changed because of your efforts. And in many ways, it

Karin Peter 31:35

was, yeah. So how has the role of 70 then developed from this point with this first group of pretty rough individuals? How did that develop in the life of the church as we went on, in restoration history?

Seth Bryant 31:53

Well, we have pretty early on some tension with the high priests and distinctions between 70, who has more authority, the 70 or the high priests. And it's enough that Joseph Smith, at the second anniversary of the Kirtland Temple, there's a solemn assembly held. And he, Joseph Smith, devotes a lot of attention to dealing with this issue. And so it, it looks like it comes through the grapevine. So, um, yeah, here we go. So, Joseph Young, who would have been Brigham Young's brother and the senior president of 70, he was noting that there are members of the quorum that are arguing who has the greatest authority, this this sounds like scriptural, right. So, he wrote in 1878, he actually wrote a history of when the 70 were formed, that the debate developed with quote, with so much warmth, that it amounted to jealousy. And then you get others, so you've got Brother Winchester, a 70, and Brother, Jared Carter, a High Priest got to contending which held the highest office, Carter was rebuking him on account of his folly, which he said he had no right to do as he held a higher priesthood than he did. And Jared contended he didn't because he was a high priest. So, you've got a 70 and a high priest going back and forth. And so eventually, this debate between Winchester and Carter goes, it comes to the attention Joseph Smith, Sr., who then informs his son, Joseph Smith, Jr., and Joseph Smith, Jr. at this solemn assembly at the second anniversary of the dedication at Kirtland Temple takes the time to take everybody up to the to the upper, all the 70s up to the upper floor of the temple, and He blesses them, and they have anointings that happen. And then he says, Look, I want to I want to lay down any inconsistencies, I want to put an end to this. So previously, and this is his solution, previously, some of the presidents of 70 had been high priests. Well, that was incorrect. So, if you were a high priest and a president of 70, you need to go back to the high priest's quorum. And then they called new presidents of 70 in and basically what he says, not basically I'll quote it and this is from the Messenger and

Advocate. He says, the 70s are a sort of traveling council or priesthood and may preside over a church or churches until a high priests can be had. The 70s are to be taken from a quorum of elders and are not to be high priests. They are subject to the direction and the dictation of the 12 who had the keys of the ministry. So, he's not saying one is more important than the other, but that they have different roles which interlock with each other. And by saying that they're distinct enough, almost in kind that they're distinct enough that a High Priest can't serve as a 70. He's defusing the situation. It's kind of funny because Levi Hancock was one of the presidents of 70. He's away on. I don't know if he's away on church business, but he's away from Kirtland. He gets kicked out of the council, the presidents of 70. Because he was a high, they thought he was a high priest. So, he shows up in town. He says, Look, I was never a high priest. And so they turned to John Gould, who they had put in Levi Hancock's place. They say sorry, John, you're out, and Levi Hancock's back in. And so, this solution of kicking out all these former high priests, Joseph, when he heads to Missouri, in for a September conference there, he reinforces that, again, that with the church there, and he goes even further, and he tells the conference there that if any of the 70s won't follow this order that, let's see, and I'm quoting from the conference minutes that they should have that the President should have power to demand their license, and they should no longer be considered members of the church. So, you can be excommunicated, if you're not going to follow this order. But I guess it was causing enough tension within the church, between the high priests and the 70 fighting, that this was the solution that they came down with. And it was it. It came down with a lot of force. So

Karin Peter 36:54

I'm sorry. So far, we've got the 70 Behaving pretty scripturally. all

Seth Bryant 36:58

the way along. Yeah, exactly. Okay. All right.

Karin Peter 37:02

So, we've got that going on. And I would say there's still some, in some places, some contention between administrators, and people who serve missionally. So, between high priest and 70, in some settings, so it's a good reminder that we're called to work together and work in an integrated way. Yeah.

Seth Bryant 37:23

Yeah, absolutely.

Karin Peter 37:25

So, having now served in the rule of 70, for some time and Community of Christ, what are some things that the current 70 role has in common with those early 70?

Seth Bryant 37:37

Well, the early 70, and our current 70, are both called to be, and they wouldn't use this term, but it's true. They're called to be forerunners. And so, we use the term forerunners of Christ peace. And I would hope that they would embrace that idea of Christ peace, but were all definitely forerunners, that they were on the cutting edge, they were being sent out to new places to break ground where the church had never been before. And the way that they were working with the 12, all of that holds true

there's consistency. Throughout the history of the church, there, I think of the role of or the not maybe roles, the right word, but I think of John the Baptist, and, and Jesus and, and the way that there's a forerunner, and an announcement of Christ with John the Baptist. And I think that 70s go into places and they announce Christ in preparation for the church to be established there. And that's what the 70s were doing back in the 1830s. And that's, that's why they're apostolic ministers. And that's, that's what they're doing today. So, at the end of 1835, when you get your very first year of having 70's in the church, Joseph Smith meets with the presidents of 70. I think it's 28th of December of 1835. And he asked for a report on their apostolic ministry. So, he's calling them apostles at that point. And I could be, I could be wrong, because I don't have it right in front of me, but I think they had 159 baptisms into the church from their efforts. So, it was an incredibly difficult ministry. If you think about them going out into the frontier, and having 159 people where a few years before, there were hundreds and hundreds of people maybe, you know, 1000 people that joined in Kirtland, it seemed like, in a very short period of time. And here we have all of these men going out and only 159, and yet Joseph Smith praises them for their efforts, thanks them for their efforts, blesses them for their efforts, knowing just how difficult and hard fought that was. Ultimately, with, with the 12, going to the British Isles and the 70, and others going there. That was, that's the right place, right time sort of thing, just like Kirtland was, in 1831. There are certain moments when people are ready, when it just, that's the right moment. And you have large influxes of, of converts. And so, 159 was hard fought. Later, in, in the British Isles and elsewhere, throughout Europe, we see 1000s of converts that come through that.

Karin Peter 40:53

So, from Zion's camp, in 1834, and the fishing River, revelation to sue for peace, rather than resort to armed conflict, all the way to where we are now as forerunners of Christ's peace, it, it took us a while to get back to that for the 70. And yet each thing that happened, whether it was structural, whether it was missional, whether it was defining the role of the 70 has brought us more and more into that original. It's not a request the original commandment to sue for peace, to focus on peace, and to share Christ's peace. So, we carry that with us and 70 today. And I find it wonderfully comforting to know that that was the directive of 1834, as well for some of these men who served as the first 70. So, as you serve in the office of 70, how, as looking at the history of how this came to be this office, how does that stay with you? How does that live in you as a 70? Today?

Seth Bryant 42:04

Well, I'm reminded that I'm supposed to be a little uncomfortable, that I think a 70 is doing what they're supposed to be doing, you should be out there breaking new ground and looking for new areas, and that it's okay, if you're a little uncomfortable with the established church. I mean, the whole point in the 19th century, was you're looking for a rough and tumble group who's willing to go out and experiment and put yourself out there. So, I've tried, and you know, we've seen some success in establishing new expressions of the church and meeting new people, and just seeing some really wonderful ways that Community of Christ can grow and can continue to see the sacred story develop and expand.

Karin Peter 43:07

Continue to serve and Christ's mission. Well, thank you, Seth Bryant, friend, 70, historian, director of the Kirtland Temple historic site and all the other roles that you fill, any last thoughts that you'd like to leave our listeners with, as they maybe have their curiosity piqued by this information?

Seth Bryant 43:32

Well, you know, as I went back, and I read some of these ordination prayers of the very first 70, yeah, I you know, some of the language was a little rough, as you would expect it to be. But I also saw that there was some beauty to it as well. And there is something that's kind of sweet about this group that has enough faith and enough belief, from 1830s Kirtland to believe that they can impact the entire world.

Karin Peter 44:12

Thank you. Well, for our listeners, if you'd like to learn more about the office of 70 and Community of Christ, you can go to see if christ.org/seventy. To learn more about Community of Christ historic sites, or to contribute to their preservation, you can check out historic-sites-foundation.org. And you can always visit Seth at the Kirtland Temple historic site and hear more from him. So, thank you again, Seth, for being our guest today on Cuppa Joe. Well, thank you. Yeah. I'm Karin Peter. Thanks for listening.

Josh Mangelson 44:58

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