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Project Zion Podcast

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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 00:27

Welcome to, uh, Coffee in the Swarm, part of Project Zion Podcast. This is Mike Hoffman, Campus Minister, and today we have with us Grant Warner. Uh, Grant, welcome to Project Zion Podcast and Coffee in the Swarm.

Grant Warner 00:27

Yeah, thank you for having me.

Mike Hoffman 00:40

Hey, glad to, glad to be able to interview you and talk to you about this. So, so, Grant, tell us a, tell us a little bit about yourself, like, uh, major, year, what's going on in your life.

Grant Warner 00:59

Absolutely. So, my name is, like Mike said, Grant Warner. I'm originally from Elk River, Minnesota. Uh, I am a senior here at Graceland University. I'll be majoring in health and movement sciences with an endorsement in education. Um, hope to be a PE or health teacher one day. Uh, what else? Oh, I'm on the Agape House and, yeah, what else?

Mike Hoffman 01:21

Alright. Well, so, I know you from, uh, CSL, which is the, uh, Council on Student Life (. . .) and, uh, you are the ASC chair. (Yes.) ASC stands for?

Grant Warner 01:33

I'm the Academic Student Council President here at Graceland. Um, so, yeah, I handle some of the academic affairs with students and I help promote academic success here on campus in any way and shape and form. And sometimes that looks like some events, some fun trivia nights and other, otherwise it looks like, um, giving students supplies that they need to be successful for studying and getting good grades.

Mike Hoffman 01:58

That's cool. I didn't know about that last part about the supplies. I, I, I see your events on, like, Brains Versus Bronze, that's a popular thing to do and that kind of thing. So, (Absolutely) Well, cool. So, so, you said you're from Elk (Elk River) Elk River. I started say Elkhart, but I knew that wasn't right. Elk River, Minnesota. So, what was it like, um, what was it like, your experience in the church in that area growing up and that kind of thing?

Mike Hoffman 02:23

So, I actually went to the Apple Valley Congregation (Oh, okay.) and so, and that was probably an hour away, I think, (. . .) So, it was quite the commute, um, every morning, but, uh, I like the way my mom always says like, it's worth the commute because the people there, uh, we haven't made as much any connections in the other churches that we have tried. So, um, Apple Valley Congregation is awesome. I've been going there ever since I can remember. But, um, yeah, that's kind of where, uh, I call home and (Yeah.) kind of why I came to Graceland as well because that connection through Graceland and Community of Christ is really cool as well.

Mike Hoffman 03:01

Okay. So did you go to camps in Minnesota then?

Grant Warner 03:04

Absolutely. So I went to some camps. They had minimal camps because, um, our congregation at the time, like, our kid population was kind of small. (I gotcha'.) Um, but yeah, I went to camps in Minnesota, Wisconsin, um, of course, here in Iowa SPEC. SPEC had (Sure.) a huge impact on me and why I came to Graceland especially. So. (Okay.) Um hmm.

Mike Hoffman 03:22

Did you get one of the scholarships through SPEC to come to Graceland?

Mike Hoffman 03:23

Um, I don't believe so. (Okay.) Yeah.

Mike Hoffman 03:28

I guess that was a long time ago.

Grant Warner 03:31

I might have. I don't remember.

Mike Hoffman 03:32

That's alright. That's okay. Well, cool. So, we sort of covered, like, what brought you to Graceland, then your connections to the church. (Yeah.) Did, did an interest in a particular major, you said you're an allied health major. So, well, that's a relatively new major. Was that your major from the beginning or

Grant Warner 03:48

So, I actually came in freshman year and had no clue what I wanted to do. (Okay.) Didn't have a major decided, was kind of floating around the classes, um, trying new things. I tried some communication classes. I tried, what else? There were some other classes. Um, I'm huge into sustainability, so I tried a lot of sustainability classes which I'm also, um, want to call, getting an endorsement in as well is sustainability (Really? So, like to teach sustainability?) Yeah, so, I've been thinking about how that's going to look, too, but the teachers didn't really, would probably be ideal, and I think would be really cool and if I could get that program maybe started in a school one day. But, yeah, that's just something that I'm super passionate about so I thought I can maybe use it in my career. (Yeah.) (. . .)

Mike Hoffman 04:31

That's, that's really cool. So, so a lot of times we talk about the Graceland experience, which I'm always intrigued about, because I didn't go to Graceland as an undergrad. But how would you, how would you define your Graceland experience or (. . .) how, the term in general, I mean.

Mike Hoffman 04:50

So, like I said, I've been coming to Community of Christ and also coming to Graceland ever since I can remember because my family has always come to Graceland. I think, um, oh, I don't want give the wrong number. I think I'm, like, the 59th person in my family to attend Graceland). (Oh, wow! Okay.) So, I've always heard stories growing up about this amazing Graceland experience, this campus that we call home and all that stuff. So, as soon as I got here, it was like, Wow, I can see where all the hype's about because this place is awesome. Like, Graceland experience can simply be, like, summed up in the connections you make with people. I've made friends, especially on my house, but also on the teams I've been on that, it just, it, it means so much to and be like a close knit family, I almost like to call it, but the events, of course, make it something special as well. So, it's really, it's sometimes it's hard to describe, but it's something special for sure.

Mike Hoffman 05:43

So, you mentioned teams. Wyhat teams are you thinking about?

Mike Hoffman 05:47

Yeah, so, I was a part of my, what was it, freshman, sophomore and junior year, I was a part of the men's soccer team (Oh, okay.) as well as the track and field team here at Graceland.

Mike Hoffman 05:56

Okay. (Yeah.) Okay. And you're not on that team, on those teams now?

Grant Warner 06:00

No, this ye, this senior year, I had a lot on my plate (Gotch'.) so, I had to step, take a step back. So,

Mike Hoffman 06:07

Yeah. So, being the 59th, or something like that, student here from your family, so, that, obviously that makes you what here at Graceland, at least some people call a legacy student. (Yes, sir. Yes, sir.) That kind of thing. So, but I also know you're leaving a legacy and you and I've talked a little bit about that. Well, I've talked about that with the GSG officers, which, you know, I, I didn't really say that at the onset as the ASC President, you know, you're one of the top eight GSG officers this year. So, so, how do you, what kind of legacy do you hope to leave at Graceland? I mean, you know, not that, I mean, you're already doing it, but?

Grant Warner 06:43

Absolutely. I think just like a positive legacy (. . .). Um, I know, I've had so many, like, idols that I've looked up to. Um, some name drops specifically would be Dylan Fox. He was the previous year's, uh, Academic Student Council President. Um, my sister, of course, that I've looked up to. And they've all

played such a huge role in Graceland and you still see it some today, like, in their clubs that they've done, in their organas, organizations that they left behind. But my legacy, like I said, just to be positive to be remembered positive and, like, to leave, it sounds cheesy, but leave Graceland better than when I came in. So, if that's by starting a new, uh, tradition, if that's by, I don't know, putting more money into something that can come up and be nice on campus while I'm not here. I mean, that's the kind of legacy that I want to be, like, left behind, I guess.

Mike Hoffman 07:34

Yeah. That's, that's great. That's really great. So, I know we have lots of clubs and organizations. Are you in a club, club on campus?

Grant Warner 07:42

Absolutely. So, there's a couple clubs I wer, was in and then are pretty much closed anymore. Um, Outdoor Club, which is just a super fun, we get together (Yeah.) outdoors, of course, and just, um, live it up outside. We go on some camping trips. Uh, the other one I was a, a part of the Sustainability Club. (Oh, sure.) Last year, my sister Kennedy Warner was the President of Sustainability and I was the, the Chair or Vice President at the time. Um, we did some really cool events. Uh, this year, it's kind of doing them because we los, we, um, don't really have an advisor right now. (For the Sustainability Club?) Yes. Correct. (Okay.) So, um, I, I've still tried to do some with it. We're, and through GSG, we've kind of been working on that, too. We're gonna' plan a community cleanup. We're working on utensils, like, reusable utensils throughout campus to reduce (Gotcha'.) plastic and stuff like that. Um, but for other clubs, uh, we, there's some other fun ones. There was Lettuce Club. That was a year ago or two years ago. And that's (Yeah.) (. . .), too. But yeah,

Mike Hoffman 07:44

What? Lettuce club is not

Mike Hoffman 08:02

It has. I know, I was so much looking forward to it.

Mike Hoffman 08:11

Yeah. So, uh, just in case you're listening and you don't know what Lettuce Club is, my understanding, you correct me, Grant, it ma, it met once a, once a year and you each ate a head of lettuce? (Yes, sir.) Yeah. So, that was, uh, and that was a legacy that, um, actually, uh, one of the, uh, one of the former student life employees (Oh, really?) headed up. Yeah, so (That's awesome.) that's, yeah. So, (Very cool.) that's very cool. Yeah. Okay. Um, so, um, let's see. You've covered a little bit, but what do you plan to do after you graduate? Teach?

Mike Hoffman 09:25

Yes. So, that's definitely in the cards. Um, I still have to student teach. (Oh, right.) And then, uh, after that, my, my big hopes are, it sounds kind of cheesy, but I really want to get a van and convert it (Oh, yeah.) and kind of live in a van which sounds very hippie style, but I've always wanted to visit all the national parks, so, I plan on doing that, visiting all the national parks. I've also, um, thought it would be really cool, and I'm not just saying this, my mom has really encouraged me to maybe like visit different

churches as well and try to visit as many of the Community of Christ churches (Wow.) around the nation and stuff like that. And then, once my adventure is kind of done, maybe start teaching. (I see.) Yes.

Mike Hoffman 10:05

Well, then you're going to student teach in the fall, (Correct.) the fall semester. So, you'll have, I mean, depends on when you get hired and, (Yep.) probably. (Yes sir.) So, I can see that whole next semester you're in a van traveling around the world. You know, you should, you should turn it into a, a video podcast. (I've thought about it . . . like that.) Yeah, Adventures with Grant. (There you go.) That'd be cool. (Yep.) That would be really cool. So, yeah, (Absolutely.) alright. So, uh, let's turn our, well, let's think about Community of Christ for a minute. You talked about visiting congregations and things. So, do you have any hopes for Community of Christ in the future? Um, you know, or is there any one thing or multiple things, I guess, you would want Community of Christ leadership to know?

Mike Hoffman 10:49

Yeah, I, I mean, like I said, I love Community of Christ. It's always going to be a part of me. It's just what I've been in, surrounded myself growing up and stuff. I guess my one thing that I would recommend or hope to talk to some leadership about is kind of like the world's changing and find a way to appeal to this younger generation. (Yeah.) And I think the easiest way to do that, which I've seen here at Graceland at like Afterglow, which is a prime example, is, um, the music. The music is a huge part, like, upbeat. Um, give them a reason to come to hear this music that they love, as well as just maybe, um, let the voices of the, like, the younger generation be heard, like, hearing the, uh, stories and, um, the messages that some of these Graceland students have given at Afterglow in, uh, various places is, is really eye opening and really cool to hear. And, like, sometimes you don't hear that all the time at (Yeah.) Community of Christ, of course. Um, so, I mean, that would just be my one thing, maybe, like, I know, they do, um, uh, youth services sometimes, like my church did all the time that I was a part of, as well. Um, but like I said, just to try to appeal to the younger generation I think would go a long way.

Mike Hoffman 12:05

Yeah. (Um hmm.) So, if, if, if we were talking about how to appeal, (Yep.) I mean, you know, I think and I'm not trying to put you on the spot here, but I think that's sort of a helpful thing to know. Like, okay, so music is one. When you talk about, like, when you think about or talked about the message and, and that kind of thing? (Yep.) How would you describe a message that would be meaningful to you? (Yeah.) I mean,

Grant Warner 12:08

And my mom's always been like a huge speaker, and very good at, I think, very good at giving messages. And her advice is literally just make it personal. (Okay.) And I think when I hear a personal story from, of course, a college, um, it could be an athlete or just a college student, (Yeah.) and I can relate to it, I'm, like, 100% more intrigued and, like, or even, it doesn't have to be a college or anyone, if they're saying, I was walking down the street and this happened, I'm like, Wow, I can picture what's happening and I can relate to what's happening and stuff like that. I think it's a lot more easy to connect to rather than, I don't know, like, back in the olden days, I can't really relate to that kind of stuff.

Mike Hoffman 13:09

So, not, so, not, so maybe not so much, I'm, I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, but maybe not so tied to the Scripture, (I, absolutely.) but, but sort of tied to your own experience. (Absolutely.) It sounds to me like vulnerability might be built into that, too. Like, like when I, when we've invited students to speak a lot of times, it's from their, I don't know, their struggles on campus and personally and that kind of thing. So, so that kind of thing. That makes sense. I mean, I, I remember, um, I don't know, I was in a class a long time ago and it, you know, if you, you think about a typical congregation and you're sharing something, it's like, if you share something from elementary school, everybody remembers (Of course.) what it's like to go through elementary school. So, yeah, so it's, like, (Very good plan.) you know, so that would be the same for college students. So, yeah. Yeah. Well, that's, that's good. I know we've, we've been talking about, our campus ministries team has talked about, you know, looking at worship a little differently (Yep.) and doing some things (Yep.) and we've been experimenting with it, so. (Mm hmm.) Well, very good, Grant. Is there anything else you'd like to share about you? Graceland? The church? The future?

Grant Warner 14:17

Oh, gosh. Um, I don't know. I'm just really excited to see where it goes. Um, I know COVID has kind of struggled a whole lot. But I'm super excited to go back home because Apple Valley has just opened their doors once again. (Oh, really good. Yeah.) So, my family has sent me some videos and messages and it, it just feels, like, makes me feel good inside that things are getting back to normal and people are there. I mean, it's hard to do, it's also hard to do that over a screen, too. And it's hard, but, I mean, we made it work. So, (Yeah, so your congregation did meet over Zoom?) We did, yes. (Or something over technology.) We did over Zoom and, and it worked pretty well, but like I said, it's, it's (Yeah.) hard behind a screen and (Yeah.), like, errors with the computer and stuff like that.

Mike Hoffman 15:05

Yeah. I've been in a few situations like that where suddenly you lose the feed and you lose connection (Absolutely.) and, yeah, yeah, it's always (. . .) so, (Never good) yeah, so um, it probably should have something I covered us, so, I know you've had two sisters attend at Graceland. Are you (Absolutely.) the youngest of the family?

Grant Warner 15:22

I am the youngest of three sisters

Mike Hoffman 15:24

Oh, three sisters. Okay.

Grant Warner 15:26

and all three of those sisters attended Graceland. (Oh, wow.) My mother attended Graceland. Uh, both her parents attended Graceland. There's just, you name it. All my cousins, pretty much, have attended Graceland. You name it, they're, they probably had a footprint here at Graceland.

Mike Hoffman 15:42

Probably so. (Yes sir.) So, your family's left quite a mark on Graceland. (I, I'd like to think so.) (. . .) So, alright. Grant, thank you for coming and talking to us today.

Grant Warner 15:52

Absolutely. Thank you, Mike.

Mike Hoffman 15:53

All right, thanks.

Josh Mangelson 16:02

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