

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.

Brittany Mangelson 00:33

Hello, everyone, this is Brittany Mangelson. Welcome to another episode of the *Project Zion Podcast*. And today I am on with a friend who I actually was thinking about our time together when we hung out at the Nauvoo reunion a few years ago, but my buddy, Humberto Tinsman, is on and we are going to be talking about mission. So, this is going to be part of our "What's Brewing" series. And Humberto is a full-time minister in the Rio Grande Mission Center. He lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and he also serves as the pastor of the Juan Tabo congregation in New Mexico. So, Humberto, why don't you just say hello. I know you've been on *Project Zion* a couple of times before, so just give us a brief overview of who you are.

Humberto Tinsman 01:21

Yeah, hello, everyone, and welcome listeners to another episode of *Project Zion*. Thank you so much for Brittany, for inviting me back. That means my past two episodes weren't too bad, that we're doing another one. But yes, I'm so glad to be with you here today. And whenever our listeners are listening to this podcast, you know, we're hoping that this inspires you, and living in mission and, you know, hearing a little bit of what's going on in the church in the southwest United States area.

Brittany Mangelson 01:51

Awesome. And I mentioned the time that we spent at the Nauvoo reunion a few years ago, and one of the reasons why I wanted to have you back on is because you and I taught the teen class together, and we taught about church history and our Enduring Principles and the identity of Community of Christ today to a pretty mixed group of kids. Some of the kids had a Community of Christ background, others of them did not, and so, it was really interesting, just, kind of, explaining the relevance of our church and the purpose of our church, tied in with the history of our church. And so, as I was thinking about that, and I knew that you had just transitioned almost a year ago to this new position in New Mexico, so, kind of, combining all of that, I wanted to just talk to you about, you know, what's going on. So, let's start and just tell us a little bit about your job in the Rio Grande Mission Center. So, what do you do? What does a day in the life of being a full-time minister down there look like?

Humberto Tinsman 02:59

Yeah, that is a great question. You know to, kind of, circle back to the Nauvoo period, it's honestly really funny. Some of those kids that we taught in that teenage class have now graduated from college and so I feel old, because I was just a junior in college when we had that time, but no, it's cool, that cool process of life and that cool evolution, you know, and that's kind of at the heart of what I do in the Rio Grande Mission Center. It's all about mission, and, you know, evolution. You know, where are we going, and where is the church moving in a sort of post-COVID and pandemic world, you know, 'cause that's the big question. You know, a day in the life of a full-time minister is always kind of a fun thing

because, you know, your calendar might say, you have two meetings that day, but somehow, you end up doing everything but those two meetings. You have to reschedule them because of different circumstances. You know, the biggest thing that I especially try to do is just being active and being visible in the community, you know, and we've had some really, really great, you know, beginnings in that journey. You know, before we, before this journey started with me here, the church that I'm working for in Albuquerque, we didn't have any scouting programs. Now we have both boy and girl scouts that are meeting here, constantly building that community engagement. We also now have a place at the university here in Albuquerque. So, we're working with the campus ministries, both with myself representing the Community of Christ, a brother from the Episcopal Church, a Lutheran minister and a Methodist minister all working together, you know, just trying to give the students of the university as much of a diverse ministerial background, and that's been some of my most favorite activities is just engaging with the people here in Albuquerque and trying to build those ecumenical relationships. But outside of just Albuquerque, I'm also traveling to the congregations in this mission center, you know, talking about successes that we have had, but more importantly, what is it that they want to be inspired in? You know, what are the projects and the desires for the congregation to move them in that step forward, and, you know, making the Mission Initiatives, not just something that we put on a banner, but something that is a part of our daily lives, you know, and that's really, kind of, at the heart of my entire goal here. And so, in the Southwest is simply, you know, being that active presence in the community and in our lives.

Brittany Mangelson 05:40

So, that's really cool that you are able to connect with the local university and the campus ministries, 'cause I know that you worked closely with Graceland when you were at Graceland doing campus ministries. And so, I mean, I guess I don't know much about campus ministries, but what are some of the differences? It sounds like, well, I'm making an assumption here, but it sounds like maybe it's a little more ecumenical or interfaith even, at this university as compared to Graceland? That might be wrong, but what are some of the differences that you've experienced between the two?

Humberto Tinsman 06:15

Yeah, that's a great question. So, you know, especially the difference between campus ministries life and university ministry, and normal, you know, what we call a quote/unquote, "normal congregation" ministry. It's just really your timeframe, you know. You can spend weeks and months and years really planting seeds and helping develop and trying to grow relationships, but in the university sphere, the large times you only have four years to try to make an impact on this person's life. So, you have to, you know, really bring in the heavy conversations a lot earlier than what we would love to do. But in those heavy conversations, in that time of searching, you know, in my opinion, we find the greatest relationships that are being made. You know, and to be honest, you know, for that engagement at the university level, that's what really kept me in the church was asking those questions at that pivotal age when you're making so many life decisions, that yeah, organized religion is not only going to be a center part of my life, but is going to be a driving focus of what I want to do, you know, not just because of the Community of Christ banner, but more importantly, what the Community of Christ stands for, and that is, you know, being a Community of Christ. And I know that that might be over, an oversimplification of the mission of the church, but, you know, "Christ's mission is our mission" has been one of those taglines that has just made our church so marketable in this area, because this area,

especially, is very predominantly Roman Catholic, and Episcopal, you know, older religious traditions in the Christian denomination. So, you know, I come in as the new and the hip Latter-day Saint minister, and it's honestly just been so cool just sharing those traditions because, you know, there's been tons of fun stories of back and forth. You know, they can't believe that a minister of the church doesn't wear a collar, that the majority of the time I'm in a polo shirt because it's comfortable and it's hot in Albuquerque. I'm still trying to build my summer jeans, you know, those Graceland winters are still in me. But, yeah, it's just that level of sharing, that level of breaking down those barriers and asking and asking and answering honest questions, because people are curious, you know. A lot of them have never heard of the Community of Christ, or they've never heard of the Latter-day tradition. It is only one area of it, and what they have heard is either, you know, sometimes can be negative or a generalization. So, it's really cool to come in and be like, actually, this is the Community of Christ, our own separate denomination, one that is welcoming and affirming, and one that is just actively trying to be a presence in our community, you know. And the eyes widen when they, when the moment you can see that these organizations are not so different, but actually do work in tandem, and are doing so because they want to change the world, you know. And that's my biggest suggestion to anyone who's listening who might be in this field as a local pastor, or, you know, another lay minister is that, you know, that ecumenical work is just about opening the conversation, you know, and being open to joke and to just talk honestly about your tradition and your experience, you know. And to be honest, that's what creates the best relationships is just being honest of who you are, where your religious tradition is, and how you relate with that.

Brittany Mangelson 09:40

So, you bring up a really good question in my mind, or a really curious question, I guess, and it, kind of, goes back to again, what we were talking about in Nauvoo with a lot of these kids who were not really aware of who Community of Christ was, and they're like, wait, wait, wait, wait, you're talking about Joseph Smith. I thought he was a Mormon, right? And we had to be very explicit about where the break off happened and how we're different because maybe they had Mormon friends, but they didn't have any Community of Christ friends, etc., etc. So, in your work now, how, I'm assuming that you get a lot of people like, wait, what church are you? So, if I were to ask you that, like, how do you verbalize who Community of Christ is while making it clear that we're not Mormon but, like, bridging that historical gap? I don't even know if that comes up necessarily. But what is your experience then?

Humberto Tinsman 10:36

Yeah, yeah, most definitely. You know, this has been a conversation not just for, you know, new friends or ecumenical work, but even current members, you know, who are trying to, you know, process that change from RLDS to Community of Christ, you know, in their lives and how do you describe the church. And the way that I describe our church is that our church specifically, is a journey church, not an answer church, that we understand that the power of Christ, the power of our testimony, is through our journey, that our history is something that is so valuable, so rich, and so beautiful, but it is not what shackles us or holds us back, but inspires us to new forms, and new traditions, you know. And that's what being a revelation-based church is all about, you know, that continuing revelation is asking those difficult questions and knowing that we are on the journey. You know, we're not looking for the solid answers so we can tell everyone that we're right. Instead, we're looking for where is the journey leading us now, and how can we reinvent the church in 15 different ways so that it can be the church that the

community needs, you know. And when we talk about, you know, our history, the biggest thing that I talk about is that it was simply a group of ministers just trying to do the best that they could, you know, that the LDS has their own tradition, and we respect their tradition, and we, you know, we wish them well, but our tradition is ours. It's our history, you know, and, you know, we use the *Book of Mormon*. We use the *Doctrine & Covenants*. We use the Bible, but we also use other traditions that are not found in the, in Restoration gospel, you know. Like, Lectio Divinas are not a part of the quote/unquote, "traditional Restoration gospel," but we find great use in, to them. So yeah, we're encouraged to borrow because that's how we become better learners is not by being insular, but looking outward and seeing, you know, what are people connecting to? And how can we be that active presence in the community? So, I know it's a long answer to a short question, but it's hard. But, yeah, my biggest thing that I always tell people is just remember, we're not an answer church, we're a journey church, and I think that's the most important element.

Brittany Mangelson 12:50

Absolutely, I love the way that you were able to frame your answer. I think so often, I have been around enough Community of Christ folks to know that we have a denominational history of saying what we aren't, right? Well, we're not this, we're not that, we're not this, we're not that. And yet, we have so much to offer about who we are. And so, it sounds like you've been able to find that balance of acknowledging our shared history and then branching off and saying who we are today, and the journey that brought us to where we are today, and how that identity connects to our history, but it's not our entire identity. You know, our entire identity is not bound up in our historical understanding of, well, all the things. So that's awesome. So, what are the kinds of things, so you already named, like, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, but what are some of the other things that are going on in your area? What are some of the other ways that you've been able to connect either with other local congregations, other denominations, or just, you know, working in the community? What kind of things do you have going on?

Humberto Tinsman 14:00

Yeah, that's a great question. So, you know, I have the benefit of being in a Mission Center of people that are not only willing to change but willing to ask those hard questions, you know. The Juan Tabo congregation especially is asking how can we be more welcoming and an affirming congregation? You know, we say we're an, a welcoming and affirming church, but what does that actually mean, you know, being able to break apart that onion and not put up taglines but actually have a conversation of what does this mean to me? We've also been doing some things in the community of, you know, contacting the local fire department. That's actually right next to us. We actually had them last October to our trunk or treat, which had a bunch of kids and we did it outdoors because that was still, kind of, during the height of COVID. And we had tons of families come in, you know, and I took, I think, 15 members of the congregation that came up, decorated their trunks. And I want to say we had about 100 Kids come by the church just coming in, and we had the firetruck out, and it was just a beautiful expression of that building of community. You know, another aspect that we're going through is called the neighborhood project where we are constantly asking ourselves, you know, again, that question of journey. That question of being in mission is sometimes, we forget those needs of the community, or we don't ask. We assume that a church is supposed to be X, Y and Z, but unless you ask the members of your actual community what they're looking for and what they need, you know, that, that's where that conversation

starts happening, you know. We've done a lot of homeless ministry, working to those who are without housing or those who are struggling with, you know, different addictions, getting them to the programs that they need. And that's the biggest thing that we try to counsel with people is that, you know, the Community of Christ can't be the name all for every single issue that's in the world, but what we can be is the bridge builders to the resources that are in our community. So, you know, that takes research. That takes knowing, you know, where are the, you know, specific treatment programs? Or how does rehab work in your local county? Because, unfortunately, it does change county to county, not just city to city, but the moment you step out of county lines, you're talking about a whole different ballgame. So just knowing those programs and knowing how you can help guide someone through, to me, that's what it's all about, about being a minister, is just being someone who can be there for those difficult times, you know, and can help guide and nurture and, you know, inspire someone to go through those things. Because, you know, again, it's all about that journey. That's, kind of, the root of what we're trying to do.

Brittany Mangelson 16:43

Absolutely, I love that the way that you've described mission is just being on the ground with the people, seeing the needs of the local area, recognizing that what's a need, you know, across the country might not be a local need, and what's a local need might not be a focus other places, but to really get to know your local environment and the people and the needs and then respond to that within your context. So, I'm wondering, I, did you have a lot of contacts in the church in New Mexico before you went there, like, or any, and, you know, you moved in the middle of COVID, in the middle of a pandemic, so, I don't even know, like, what that looked like, as far as whether you all were meeting in person? Or I'm just wondering, like, how much from the grounds up did you have to build ministry? Or were you able to, did you already have connections? Were there already things going? Does that make sense? Like, how much work has this been?

Humberto Tinsman 17:44

Yeah, totally, totally. So, I don't want to, I don't, so first, let me say that having a supportive and active pastorate team of John Williams and Dan Cathy and Ellen Miller here at Juan Tabo has been fantastic and has been so vital. And also having a supportive mission center president of CC church has been so important. That being said, I had never even been to Albuquerque before I agreed to sign on. So, it was very much, I was in Lamoni, Iowa working as a minister there, and I said, "You know what? I'm kind of tired of these Midwest winters. I'm moving down south." But through that journey and through that expression, you know, we've been able to do some really cool things. You know, one thing that I tell congregations, especially, you will be so surprised what can happen with a pickup of a phone call. So, you know, the scouting program had, the Boy Scouts scouting program had died about a, about three months before the pandemic really, like, skyrocketed, okay, and there was no scouting program whatsoever. I kid you not, I literally, all I did was google "Boy Scouts of America Albuquerque New Mexico." I got their number and I said, "Hey, I'm a pastor here in the area, you know. We would love to start building some relationships. How does that get started? Within two weeks, we had a Boy Scout troop in our church. Girl Scouts, same exact story. I called, said, "Hey, you know, we're wanting to build some community relationships, you know. Is there anything that we can do?" Within two weeks, we had a scout, we had an active scouting troop in our congregation, you know. And that's something that we encourage, not just for the youth of our specific congregation because it gives them another avenue of

meeting at the church, but it's just that simple asking of, you know, there are other charitable organizations that exist outside of the church that are important to support, especially the two scouting programs that teach about, you know, being resourceful, being good stewards of the earth and, you know, being in community, all of those things that the church, you know, supports and tries to teach. But this way, you know, we as the general membership or the leaders of the church, we just get to support. We don't have to do the planning of every scout meeting or the trying to figure out. We can just support and step in when we're asked, but also step back and just take photos and enjoy watching our kids interact with other kids in the community, you know. One moment that, I kid you not, nearly brought me to tears was, you know, like a lot of congregations, we struggled to have a lot of youth, but we had one youth who was leading around the church, to all the different scouts, and they were like, this is my church. This is where I get to go to church. And that just warms your heart. The moment that any child can make that leap from this is this boring place that my parents take me to this is my church. To me, I think that's the entire goal. You know, if we can have that, that is the future in the life of the church, is making that connection of, no, this is my building, this is my church. These are my people.

Brittany Mangelson 20:50

So that brings me up to my next question. What is your youth program like? Because I think that, sometimes I think that we are, we are under the assumption that we have to have the numbers before we do a program. But you just said that you didn't have a huge youth program, and yet, you've been able to sponsor both a Boy Scout troop and a Girl Scout troop. So, what did that look like? And I guess what is the mindset of, like, jumping in even if you don't necessarily have the numbers sitting in the pew on a Sunday morning?

Humberto Tinsman 21:30

Yeah, that's a great question. You, so, yeah, we started and we, you know, and still currently at this recording of this broadcast, we have a decently small youth, you know, numbers that come to church on Sunday. To me, the best thing that any person of the church can do is just have a conversation with the youth, you know, and have one that's not trying to focus about church or trying to, you know, say "Isn't a pre-baptismal class cool?" but just genuinely asking, "What's going on?" You know, "What, what's happening in your life?" You know, a perfect example is that we had a youth here at the church who was, you know, kind of shy, kind of quiet, but the moment that they found out that I loved Star Wars, and that I loved Scooby Doo, we instantly became buddies, you know, and that, and that's just that being open be being a human being and just have, and trying to build those relationships. The other thing that I offer is that, you know, in my personal life, I did not have a lot of extended family in our local community. So, you know, baseball games, choir concerts, and, you know, different things that I was doing or performing, all that I had to look out to the stands were my two parents. But the moment that people realized at the church, that we were doing things, and they came to my games, and I had a giant group of 12 people who all came to my little, little league game, to me, that's family. That is people supporting you, and in a way that is positive, but also, more importantly, gets us out of the walls of the church. You know, that's us being in communities, just simply going to a baseball game and cheering on someone of our church, not because, you know, we want them to, you know, be the next pastor or be a next apostle, but simply because they matter, you know. Their presence is valuable. And we are showing them by telling them that the other things they do that might not be church centered or church

focused, that also matters. That's teaching a holistic view of life and one that I think is so important, especially, to teach our children.

Brittany Mangelson 23:40

I absolutely love that. I remember when one of my girls, my twin daughters, their Sunday school teacher came to one of their basketball games, and they were over the moon, like, absolutely over the moon. And that one act did more to get them excited about Community of Christ than I think anything else. Like, it meant a lot, it, and they saw it. I mean, it was just such a, an awesome moment for them where they felt seen and they felt part of the congregation way more than, you know, even just like being asked to say a prayer or something on a Sunday morning, right? Like, 'cause they were being seen for who they were, not who they assumed the church is, like, trying to mold and shaped them to become, right? Like, the church came to their context and their world and just saw them for who they were. So, I absolutely love, I love that. I love that you also called it, you know, a holistic way of doing ministry. It's really being with the people in their context and just in their lives, way beyond just what happens on a Sunday. But yeah, what happens in between Sundays, I would argue is the most important stuff.

Humberto Tinsman 25:03

Yeah, I would completely agree with you. You know, one of my favorite things that I get to do in my job is training of priesthood members, and starting those conversations, you know. And for some, especially, you know, this is, kind of, a reawakening of their spiritual journey and of that life. Then, you know, the biggest thing that I try to teach is that Sundays should be for celebration. Every other day is doing the work, you know. Every other day is true, truly trying to make those connections and plant those seeds, not knowing where they're going to grow, or, you know, what relationships are going to flower and what you need to, know, still try to maintain and tend to, but, you know, that's the most important element. You know, having a meal with people, having a cup of coffee, going to baseball games, those things that might seem very, very trivial, make lasting life memories that people carry on, you know. And when they start looking around, especially young people, you know, what were the organizations that took the time? Community of Christ has to be at the forefront of that mind, because we take the time to get to know a person and who they want to be, and the type of person that they want to turn into. And we're there just to guide and to nurture and do the best we can.

Brittany Mangelson 26:21

I think that is so important. Ministry on a Sunday has to be paired with other stuff. People want to be involved and want to make their local communities a better place. And so, I really appreciate that you have found different entry points into making the world a better place and really living out our Mission Initiatives in all the different ways that you've already said. You talked about drug rehab ministry with unhoused folks, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, campus ministries. I might be missing one, but you, you've mentioned a lot, which is awesome. I mean, what else is, are there other things going on that you're involved with?

Humberto Tinsman 27:03

Yeah, definitely. So, I'm also involved with, you know, through a little bit more of the ecumenical side, I'm also involved in New Mexico Conference of Churches. So, you know, again, just trying to have our

name at the table is so important. And, you know, when I'm meeting with these new folks, when I, when I'm, you know, introducing the church to them, you know, I give my spiel about, you know, answer and journeys, but I think another important subject that we sometimes overlook, especially when we're trying to, you know, hype up the church and talk about our message is that we forget to also mention that we're human beings who are also on our walks of faith, you know, and to me being vulnerable with people sharing, like, yeah, there are things that I struggle with. You know, we're talking about, you know, non-violence, right now as we're leading towards World Conference, and non-violence means everything. It means, you know, everything from a schoolyard fight to nuclear war. That's not a conversation that you can have in 20 minutes but one that you need to be honest with yourself that you're struggling with, you know, and it could be struggling for all the good reasons, but just acknowledging that that struggle, that asking of questions, is not only natural, but in my opinion, is the spark that leads to the coolest revelations, and the coolest understandings of who we are, not only as a church, but who you are as an individual, you know. And I don't think at times we give ourselves enough room to be doubters, because we're scared that there's gonna look bad. In my opinion and in my experience, that's where you build the deepest relationships, because people realize, yeah, you're not trying to sell me a product, you're serious. Like, you're trying to answer those questions, and it just takes being open, and, you know, sharing where you've stumbled, but also celebrating where you've had those successes.

Brittany Mangelson 28:56

And I think that is so important, because, again, kids these days see through the fake facade, right? They don't want church leadership, or clergy, or any sort of authority figure, and I, kind of, used air quotes there, but that doesn't feel relatable, that feels very untouchable. And so, having a pastor like you who is willing to get on the ground with the people and say, like, "Look, I messed up," or, you know, "I'm not sure what I believe about (X, Y, or Z)," and just being honest about that, I think it's so important because then people can see themselves and their story and your story, and they realize, like, oh, my leader is not perfect, and so they're not going to expect perfection out of me. And you can take, you know, our values, our Enduring Principles, our Mission Initiatives, and then imperfectly live them out today. So, yeah, I really think that it's so important because so many times I know with my own ministry, I can, you know, almost be afraid to take steps forward with something 'cause I want to make sure that I have all my ducks in a row, and I want to make sure, you know, like, it looks perfect. And I have a little bit of impostor syndrome, so I want to make sure that I, you know, I'm able to camouflage that a little bit more, but at the same time, it's like, Brittany, what are you doing? Just do the thing. It'll work out, right? Hopefully?

Humberto Tinsman 30:26

Yeah, no, no, no, most definitely. You know, I think that entire idea of imposter syndrome, you know, I fight through that all the time. You know, as we're recording this, we're ending my first year of full-time ministry going into my second and the biggest thing is, in this, I know, this might seem simple, but I think it's something that we forget to do both as full-time ministers, as lay pastors, as members of the church, we forget that grace is not just something that we give, but also something that we ask for. You know, like you talked about, it's about just being a human and understanding that, yeah, we're gonna have our bad days. We are gonna have days that we did not have enough coffee, or we did not have a good enough night of sleep, and this just isn't it, you know, but, and that's okay. We don't hold it against

each other. You know, in my life, as a, you know, biracial, Latinx male, Unity in Diversity has been just a core of who I am and how I looked at the world, and especially at church life, you know. The things that I say, especially to new ordinands to the priesthood, is that you, especially as a new ordinand, are going to be able to minister to people that I would never be able to relate to, and that's totally fine. I shouldn't be able to relate to everybody, you know. That would be weird if I knew every single life experience, and that would be very, very shallow, you know. And having a diversity that is not just trying to be, you know, token, or trying to be, you know, look good on paper, but is actually attempting to see all the different facets of life, not only do you get a richer understanding of leadership, you get a richer understanding of what it means to be in community, you know. And especially for, especially for friends of the church, or, and people who have discovered us for the first time, the biggest thing that their eyes just get wide of is that ministers, both paid and lay, and members of the church are completely equal when it comes to their voice and their votes. And, you know, mission center conference, congregational conference, World Conference, those are all open events that anyone who's a member of the church not only can attend, but be an active participant in the changes that are being made, you know. And so, that's also what I say to people who might be my age of early 20s or 30s, who have, kind of, distanced themselves from the church and they're starting to look around and realize that, you know, that those rocks of their life are unfortunately no longer with us, I say that's because we're the voice of the church, that we can't wait anymore for a next generation to step up, or, you know, grandma and grandpa to bail us out again, you know. If we want this to exist for our children, for our children's children, now, more than ever, we need to start getting involved, not just so that we can continue to fly the banner of Community of Christ, but so that we can continue to instill those values that from every single age, every single walk of life, every single person is not only valued, but is loved and deserves a spot at the table.

Brittany Mangelson 33:35

Man, that was great. I feel as you were going, I, it was, like, oh, I want to comment on that, but, oh, I want to comment on that. And everything you just said, I mean, I just, round of applause. That was awesome. It's so important, it's so important to have diversity in leadership, diversity in ministries, to recognize that you yourself cannot be like the quote/unquote, "perfect, relatable minister" to every person. And yet, you know, you can be a minister to a different category of people than I can, right, like, a cohort of people who can relate to you on a different level than can relate to me as a straight white woman, right? And, you know, it's, that's why we need queer leadership, right, 'cause you and I are both straight, and so, to be able to have ministers who actually look like, and act like, and love like the people in our pews and in our community is absolutely vital. So, I'm really glad that you raised up that point in that way. So, yeah.

Humberto Tinsman 34:42

Yeah, most definitely. You know, in my life, both in ministry but also, you know, having friends who are throughout the church, a lot of them, unfortunately, run into situations where they're scared to have the hard conversation. They want to be welcoming and affirming. They want to do all these mission things but they say, "Well," you know, "the older generation would never let us do that." And I would humbly push, have you really had that conversation? Has a conversation actually happened, or are you assuming that that will not happen? Now, vice versa, that conversation has also happened and you're looking for a new way to go about and talking about, you know, this diversity is not a trend or something

to be trendy or have a hashtag. In my humble opinion, being welcoming, being loving, being inviting, is the truest sense of a biblical church that you can get, you know. Jesus moved around, went to the people, went to different cities, and did his best, and started with 12 people to start a movement that has completely changed the world, you know. It is loving our neighbor, not because it is easy. It's loving our neighbor because it's difficult to do so. You know, and that includes all neighbors, even our friends in the church and the other members who we love to death, but we struggle with them. Well, that struggle is important, and we can't shy away from it. We need to understand that that struggle is important and that by doing that struggle, by asking those tough questions, we're, again, reliving the mission and the message of Christ.

Brittany Mangelson 36:18

Absolutely. So, you said something about being welcoming and affirming, and then you also mentioned that you are a biracial, Latinx man. So, I'm wondering what you've been able to do to or, and then you talked about having hard conversations, right, so, I'm wondering what you've been able to do to have those hard conversations about becoming more welcoming and affirming to the queer community? And also, I mean, if 2020 taught us anything, and 2020 and beyond, it's that America still clearly has issues with race and racism, and we see that every single day. Just recently, we had the Buffalo shooting which was completely racially motivated, and so, these hard conversations are super, super important. And so not to, like, throw these two topics at you at once, but I'm going to...

Humberto Tinsman 37:14

A super simple topics. They're really easy to talk about. No, no, no, no, no.

Brittany Mangelson 37:18

Right?

Humberto Tinsman 37:18

[inaudible] I can, I'll speak more in depth of my own lens because, again, it's a community that I'm a part of, and then I'll share, you know, what we're doing, of trying to be a welcoming and affirming church. You know, from my background and my history, the thing that I always equated the Community of Christ with was a safe place. You know, I grew up in a very conservative part of the country in the United States, where, you know, racism was not, wasn't, to say it ran rampant would be a little bit of an understatement. It was just a de facto factor of life, you know, that you were going to deal with that. You know, walking down the street, I would hear white power shouted at me multiple different times, you know, and I, at the time, I think I was 13 or 12, and that was just a faction of my life, you know. But the thing that the Community of Christ instilled in me, was that Unity in Diversity element once again, that, you know, we speak different tongues, we have different understandings, but that doesn't mean that we can't be a family, you know. I know some of our listeners might not have had the opportunity yet to attend a World Conference. To me, that's the most revolutionary experience I've ever had to hear, not only ministers of the Council of Twelve speak in their native languages, but hear other ministers who are not from those areas attempting to speak native languages, is a fantastic experience, one that I think that we sometimes forget how radical that is, because in others institutions like you've highlighted, that doesn't happen. The message that spoke the most to my grandfather, to my mother and to me from Latin America, was that the church especially, is and is with the people, that the people have the

power to make a change, you know, and that the people will be heard, that we will unite, and that we will make a positive change in our world, you know. Now, when it comes to, you know, being a welcoming and affirming church, I have to give all the kudos and props to Parker from Harmony and all the amazing work that they are doing. Right now, I'm leading our congregation here at Juan Tabo through the welcoming and affirming program, and one that has been just fantastic and amazing. You know, again, if any lay ministers who are listening who are just curious about what that looks like for their church and for their denomination, I would highly recommend, you know, just asking, just seeing what that program looks like, because not only is it intuitive, it is, you know, focused on our denomination and our church. It is ministers from our church who understand our background, and it gives us the room to have the conversation, even if some might be struggling with this change and with the way that the church is going, you know, and it welcomes that difference of opinion. And I think the other best part is that, as a leader, you're not in charge of facilitating it. You're in charge of getting people together to try to have the conversation, but they have a facilitator that will walk every step of the way with you, you know, and that will help you through that journey. So, yeah, I, again, Harmony is a fantastic resource, and I uplift them and the ministry that they're trying to bring not only to our church but also to the community. And, yeah, I would recommend it most definitely. It's very, very helpful.

Brittany Mangelson 40:41

Ah, I love that endorsement. And I think that Parker particularly is a prophetic voice that this denomination, really, really benefits from. So, I'm really glad that your community, your congregation has been engaged in that program. And I'm, again, really glad that you have been able to have conversations about race and recognize that we, as a denomination, especially as a global denomination, do have a lot of diversity, and yet, you know, recognizing that we still have our own biases. And yeah, there's a lot there. And I mean, I know that I threw a massive topic at you with two very, you know, very, like, hot topic issues right now, but you took that question like a champ, so, good job.

Humberto Tinsman 41:34

Well, thank you. It makes it easy, it makes it easy to talk to you, so, trust me. But listeners, it is all Brittany, it is not me. We always make sure it's not Humberto.

Brittany Mangelson 41:42

Oh, absolutely not. Well, and I mean, you know, being such a young pastor at such a pivotal point in the church, that was another question that I wanted to ask you. How has that been? I mean, sometimes I still feel like, oh, I'll let the adults in the room deal with that, but then I'm, like, wait, I'm an adult.

Humberto Tinsman 42:02

You're an adult. You're an adult. Yes, exactly, exactly, yeah.

Brittany Mangelson 42:04

How's that been?

Humberto Tinsman 42:06

Yeah, so, to be honest, you know, my position is a very brand new position. This position never existed before, which is fantastic for a couple of different reasons. You know, there's no quote/unquote, "set expectations" or set things that I, you know, am supposed to do, which is great. Sometimes it's terrifying, 'cause, you know, again, you look at your calendar, like, oh, I only have two things. But then, you know, I literally, this happened this winter. I only had two things, I had a little bit of seminary homework I had to get caught up on, and the day ended with me, literally taking care of two homeless women that came into the church, getting them connected with members of other areas that they were traveling to, and just ministering with them all day, you know. That, that's what that turns into, which is super exciting. I absolutely love it, you know. And when it comes to, you know, being 24, and being in ministry, you know, yeah, you're going through some of those life questions. You know, I'm getting married here very soon, actually, under a month, so that's my shout out to my wonderful fiancée, Emily. But, yeah, you know, to me the best part about it is that, because I am so young, I can fit lots of different roles. So, you know, one thing that I've told myself is that my employment and my faith, and my relationship with the Community of Christ are all three separate entities that might seem from the outside in like they all are wound, but they are very, very different, you know. And, you know, when it comes to my employment, you know, the way that I look at it is, if I ever think I'm too good to scrub out a toilet for a church, I need to pack it up, and I need to be done because I've lost the way, you know. My job, and the way that I see myself, is being the person that is willing to do anything because if it needs to get done, it needs to get done. You know, we don't need to have, you know, it is great to try to put people in positions that can do it and you know, have that element of Develop Disciples to Serve, but if I know it's something that I can do, nothing is above or below me, that I bring in other people, that we can work together. And yeah, I love it. You know, I honestly, kind of, chuckle and laugh because my very first time that I worked for the church was as a lifeguard at Ozark Camp and Retreat, and I never thought I was going to use those skills again, of knowing how to work on a tractor and knowing how to, you know, use those things. And I tell you what, work weekends have been great because I have that background knowledge. So, I'm really appreciative of that time that I got to learn and I got to experience, you know, all those different walks of life. So, yeah, being young, I like it, you know. It's, well, obviously I like being young, but I love being young in the church because, you know, I get to go out and I get to do all these amazing things. And, you know, there are certain days I feel like I quote/unquote, "run the gambit" because I get to touch so many different facets, but those are my favorite days, just being with the people and in so many ways that I never thought that it was going to be possible, either again, or in the future.

Brittany Mangelson 45:08

Ah, I love that. So, I have to say that I am a little bit older than, I mean more older than you than I thought I was. I didn't quite realize you were 24. I'm 34.

Humberto Tinsman 45:19

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. It's not that bad.

Brittany Mangelson 45:22

No, it's fine. I mean, 34 is not that old. But I was thinking you were, like, 27 or 28?

Humberto Tinsman 45:28

No, nope, no, no, no. Well, okay, this is where I'll tattle on Parker and this will be an inside joke for all of the listeners out there. When we had our Harmony meeting, we were asking about some dates and I held up my wonderful desk calendar that keeps me straight, 'cause this is how I plan for seminary, my wedding and church life. And Parker called me old because he said, "Really, who has a desk calendar anymore?" And I said, "I do, Parker. We got lots of pieces we're trying to fit together." So, a little joke on Parker. Yes, yes, yes. It takes a lot to try to keep it all together.

Brittany Mangelson 46:02

That was amazing. For our listeners, Humberto just held up this, I don't know, two foot, three foot calendar.

Humberto Tinsman 46:09

That is coffee stains. You know it's a Community of Christ Minister 'cause there's coffee stains.

Brittany Mangelson 46:13

It is coffee stained. That is impressive. Okay, so you definitely could pass for a 34 year-old.

Humberto Tinsman 46:19

Exactly, see, see. So, you know, age is just a number. Age, is just a number. But no, I, I've just been so incredibly thankful for the people here in the Rio Grande Mission Center of putting their faith and support in a 24 year-old. You know, I really only had one year of ministry experience at Graceland and they took a chance on me, and I thank God and I thank them every day. I tell them that there is a learning curve, that I'm going to do and try my best every single step of the way, but they, they're just so supportive, and they're so loving. And yeah, working for the church, the best, one of the best decisions I've ever made in my entire life.

Brittany Mangelson 46:59

That's awesome to hear. And I must say that I'm really impressed that you have identified that, you know, your relationship with the church, and working for the church, those are two separate things, 'cause I know that so many people that work for the church, it's so wrapped up in each other, and I have had multiple people give that to me as an advice, right? Like, no, like, make sure that you separate volunteer ministry, employed ministry, and then your own personal spiritual development. And it is tough. It is tough.

Humberto Tinsman 47:30

So, you know, for listeners who might be finding themselves in, you know, maybe taking on ordination for the first time or, you know, maybe a first time being a pastor, the biggest thing that I suggest is in the class of Introduction to Scripture, President-Prophet Steve Veazey gives an amazing video testimony of ministry to him, of, you know, ministry comes out of that joy and that overflow of life and when we don't give ourselves those arenas to, quote/unquote, "take off the ministerial collar" or, you know, just be with community, ministry then becomes arduous, and it becomes just a chug and fill, and that's not what we're trying to do. We're, again, we're trying to be with people. We're trying to be a missional church. So, we have to give ourselves, you know, that, again, we gotta give ourselves that grace of, okay, had a long week, I've had a long weekend. I just need to go and either go on a hike, which you can do in the

beautiful Albuquerque, New Mexico or, you know, just listen to some music and be with God and be with nature. So, yeah, I really love that video. And if anyone who needs a refresher on what ministry is all about, that Temple School course is really, really fantastic.

Brittany Mangelson 48:45

Awesome, nice plug. That was great.

Humberto Tinsman 48:47

That's what I'm all about, I'm about if I can go down in history, I'm the plug guy. So, there you go.

Brittany Mangelson 48:52

That's awesome. So, as you have been talking, I've just been really impressed at your optimistic outlook, right? And I'm assuming that that comes from a place of just really liking Community of Christ. You're a young adult. You're, a lot of the peers that we have, are leaving organized religion and yet not only are you choosing to stay in an organized religion, but, you know, dedicate your life to working for that, to helping build that, and to live out the church's mission. So, I guess, from your perspective, what makes Community of Christ stand out, especially in your context as a pastor? Of all the work that you're doing in New Mexico, why Community of Christ over other religions or being spiritual but not religious? I mean, what makes Community of Christ worth it?

Humberto Tinsman 49:48

It's the people. It just is. You know, I've had my hard days. I've had my dark nights of the soul where I have questioned every belief that I've been told and taught, you know, rebuked all the things that I grew up with and said, "Yeah, that religious stuff is just, you know, it's just garbage." But what brings me back is just the people. The beauty of the Community of Christ is that we have leadership as President-Prophet Veazey, of the Council of Twelve, of our field ministers, who are just awesome individuals, you know. And just, and more importantly to me, have a good humor about what they're doing, you know. We, anyone who is working in the church right now, and everyone who I've experienced, we constantly pinch ourselves because we can't believe what we get to do. It is awesome what we get to do. Are you kidding me? It is fantastic. So, yeah, people comment that I have lots of energy, and that I'm enthusiastic, and that's not because I'm young, that's just because seeing you gives me that energy, because I truly love who you are, and who you're becoming, you know. And I love that our organization especially gives us that freedom to, kind of, figure out where we're going. And especially when you're in a place of priesthood, or a place of membership, or just someone who might be brand new to the Community of Christ, you not only have the room to ask questions, but you're encouraged to do so, because that's how you get a richer understanding of who you are, and who you're going to be. So, yeah, it's easy waking up every day, even when on those long days, it's just fantastic to get to be here and to get to be with, honestly, in my opinion, some of the best people that our world has to offer.

Brittany Mangelson 51:36

I love that. I love that you're in it for the right reasons, right? You're in it for the people, which is exactly what makes this work sustainable and what makes it fun. So, keep on keepin' on. That's awesome.

Humberto Tinsman 51:51

Thank you. Thank you.

Brittany Mangelson 51:52

So, I, kind of, can't believe that we've already been talking for about an hour.

Humberto Tinsman 51:56

Oh, my gosh. I just realized.

Brittany Mangelson 51:58

I know. So, I mean, I don't necessarily, we can keep talking, but I usually ask, you know, is there anything else that I didn't ask you that you want to share? But I mean, I guess is there anything else going on that you wanted to highlight? Any plans for this fall? And then anything that you just didn't get out in the last hour?

Humberto Tinsman 52:20

Yeah, you know, the biggest thing that I offer to people, especially in this time, when we're, kind of, you know, focusing towards World Conference, is to remember to never lose sight of the joy of coming together. You know, some people ask, you know, why is camping, why is reunion, why is World Conference, such a big thing for the Community of Christ? It's because our family is coming together. We should be excited. This is not something, oh, great. We get to talk about business meetings. We get to see our family again. We survived through the pandemic. We answered those difficult questions of what is this thing called Zoom? What is a hybrid meeting? How many times do we need to tell our speaker that they're muted in the middle of a worship service? We survived. We did it. So, let's come together, back to Independence, not because we're, where the road is arduous, or all the business meetings and the lectures and the sermons, but because we can truly celebrate what it means to be the Community of Christ.

Brittany Mangelson 53:29

Yeah, I can't even imagine how it's going to be to be in that auditorium singing together for the first time. I mean, I'm, like, I low key already get emotional about it because I just think, you know, when we, when we left World Conference 2019, none of us had any idea what we were going to be in for just a few months later. And I was so proud of how our little denomination just flipped on a dime, and we figured it out. And we, you know, like, it was not easy and we did lose people and yet we're here together, intact as a body together. And I just think that, you know, we handled everything with grace and responsibly. And, man, it's gonna be really good to sing in that auditorium together.

Humberto Tinsman 54:24

Amen. Amen. I can't wait for it.

Brittany Mangelson 54:26

It's gonna be awesome.

Humberto Tinsman 54:28

Yes, exactly.

Brittany Mangelson 54:30

Ah, well, friend, this has been great. And yeah, anything else? This is, this has been a lot of fun.

Humberto Tinsman 54:36

Yeah. Just remember, focus on the journey. The journey is long, it has twists and turns, but you're not alone, that you have a people that stand behind you. So...

Brittany Mangelson 54:48

Awesome.

Humberto Tinsman 54:48

So, try something new. Might as well.

Brittany Mangelson 54:51

Awesome. And for our listeners, we'll be sure to put in Humberto's email address and any other, maybe the link to your mission center website or anything that we can find that could be helpful if you're local in the area and want to connect with him. And yeah, thanks so much. And we'll see you at World Conference.

Humberto Tinsman 55:09

Of course. Bye, bye everyone.

Josh Mangelson 55:19

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