

Josh Mangelson

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

Robin Linkhart

Hello and welcome to Project Zion Podcast. This is your host, Robin Linkhart and today our topic is Nonviolence as we explore Four Approaches to Violence and hear personal perspectives on nonviolence from three featured guests.

On April 12, 2019, Community of Christ World Conference delegates from across the globe passed World Conference Resolution (WCR) 1319. The first two resolves read as follows:

#1 Resolved, that, over the next three years Community of Christ members and leaders discuss the role nonviolence plays in the pursuit of "peace on and for the Earth" (Doctrine and Covenants 165:1d) and in the life and mission of the church; be it further

#2 Resolved, that, scriptural, theological, and historical discussion resources on the principles of nonviolence be produced and suggested for members and friends of Community of Christ as part of our continued commitment to peace education and advocacy; ...

In response to the second resolve, retired apostle Andrew Bolton, Seventy Elray Henricksen, and President of the High Priest Quorum David Anderson authored the study resource, "Four Approaches to Nonviolence," designed to inform Community of Christ's exploration and understanding of nonviolence.

In response to the first resolve Community of Christ across the globe is engaging in Nonviolence Conversations. The USA Team of Apostles sponsored Nonviolence Conversations in the US this past Spring. They were held online, five selected Thursday evenings, from March 31 thru May 5, 2022. Over 500 people registered to participate in these conversations.

All five sessions are archived online along with support resources. Other parts of the church across the globe are actively engaging in Nonviolence Conversations.

Contact your area mission center president for details. These organized Nonviolence Conversation gatherings are intended to be *just the beginning* of sharing information and planting seeds—as they inspire others to host conversations in all kinds of places and spaces with members, friends, neighbors, and more across the world, near and far.

Today's podcast shares information from Session Five of the USA Nonviolence Conversation, which featured key concepts from the whole series and explored next steps in our journey. You can find a link to all five USA Nonviolence Conversations, support docs and resources in the show notes to this podcast. (<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5ypc7ld6fj632eo/AABXRORdUw9tSJ5uOvvqeR91a?dl=0>)

Now let's hear from Chicago Mission Center President Blake Smith as he shares the principles and steps that help guide us in our conversations.

Blake Smith

I want to take just a few minutes to, uh, talk about our faithful disagreement, remind us of that and our meaningful dialogue steps. It's important as we participate in our non-violence conversations to uphold and remember the principles that guide us, especially when community members may hold very diverse opinions and perspectives.

Faithful disagreement, as many of us know, is defined as actions and or responses by a person holding a different view about a specific policy, belief, principle, or other position of Community of Christ. This disagreement with a Community of Christ position or direction is helpful, responsible, faithful, and bounded by loyalty and commitment to the identity, mission, message and beliefs of the Community of Christ.

A person who faithfully disagrees is welcome to share about the church position with which she or he disagrees. The intent of the sharing is to improve the overall faithful response of the church to God's intended direction without classifying others as unfaithful.

The principles of faithful disagreement uphold the following. First, our enduring principles, maintaining mutual love and respect, the importance of creating safe space for authentic dialogue and sharing diverse opinions, seeking always to

create community, deep listening, celebrating our unity as we learn from our diversity, do no harm to the body of the church, and, finally, strive to remain open to the Holy Spirit. A link to the full document is posted in the chats.

<https://www.heraldhouse.org/collections/church-life-let-peace-dwell-here/products/let-peace-dwell-here> see page 44

We also want to uphold the meaningful dialogue steps we are using to support our small group breakout tonight. First, we need to acknowledge the Holy Spirit's presence and movement through authentic sharing and holy listening. Honor all people and their perspectives.

Hold space for safe sharing. This would include allowing those who are not comfortable sharing to be okay with that. Practice active listening without prejudging or thinking of a response--perhaps one of the most difficult things for us to do. Practicing using "I" statements instead of "we" or "they" or choosing a side. Approach conversation with intention to learn something. Uphold unity in diversity, recognizing oneness in Christ does not mean sameness.

Robin Linkhart

Thank you, Blake. Listeners you can find links to that information in the Show Notes.

Now let's take a brief look at the **FOUR MAIN APPROACHES TO THE USE OF VIOLENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION** as presented in the "Four Approaches to Violence" resource I mentioned at the beginning of the podcast.

Again these are the Four Main approaches to the use of violence in the Christian Tradition. They are not all inclusive but do represent the primary approaches.

1. Holy War

Holy war is violence without restraint. There are no rules, except killing everybody and destroying everything on the other side. In this approach, violence is at the center of discipleship. It can be religious or ideological. Holy War supports empire and cheers the use of violence. There is no mercy.

A few examples of Holy War include the Christian Crusades which occurred on and off from the year 1096 to 1270, and Oliver Cromwell in Ireland in the 1650s.

2. Just War

Just War is violence *with restraint, according to rules*. An everyday kind of example could be what we see in boxing or football, where there are rules intended to keep things fair and protect participants from serious injury. The Just War tradition has rules for starting a war, conducting a war, and ending a war. The war has to have a just cause. It can only be started by a legitimate authority and after a declaration. Force has to be proportional. Civilians cannot be directly targeted. Soldiers that surrender cannot be killed. The Just War tradition can be used to evaluate the conduct of a war. This approach confronts nations and their leaders with ethical restraints on their use of violence, and the right of self-defense is advocated in UN Charter, Article 51.

A prime example of Just War would be World War II.

3. Just Peace

Just Peace is concerned about justice in all areas of life, honoring the equal worth of all persons in all circumstances, and the sacredness of creation. Proactively addressing **in**justice in society is considered a preventive of war, a way to avoid war. Just Peace recognizes two kinds of violence: The first category is the violence of poverty, racism, sexism, religious prejudice, violation of human rights, and violence against the earth (for example environmental degradation). The second category is the violence of war, violent revolt, and terrorism.

In the Just Peace approach to violence, methods of resistance to oppression should be nonviolent. However, there is a **responsibility to protect** (R2P) people who are in extreme peril, as in cases of genocide. Just Peace criticizes empire and holds empire responsible for its use of violence.

Examples of Just Peace include the position of United Church of Christ (UCC) since the 1980s, and the World Council of Churches (WCC) since 2011.

4. Pacifism

Adherents to Pacifism argue that pacifism is being obedient to Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. "Turn the other cheek; walk the second mile; love your enemies." Understood to mean one is to put away the sword. Those that live by the sword shall die by the sword. Any form of violence is incompatible with the

Christian faith. Jesus himself was a pacifist who taught and practiced pacifism, and his followers must do likewise. Pacifism contradicts empire and disengages from its use of violence. In addition to Jesus, other examples include the Monastic movement, and the Historic Peace Churches: Mennonites, Amish, Church of the Brethren, and Quakers, as well as leaders like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr

Now let's hear a bit more about the Just Peace approach to violence from Caleb Brian, from St. Paul Minnesota.

Caleb Brian

So, if you're like me, you've probably heard of some of those forms of violence, uh, but perhaps not all and perhaps you haven't necessarily heard of them in those contexts or with those lenses. And, so, really, tonight we'll dig in on this just peace part, but I certainly invite you to go back and look through other literature, uh, to understand the other ones if, uh, you are interested.

And, so, as we focus on just peace, where just war deals with kind of the reason for causing conflict, just peace looks to address those just, injustices that kind of underlie the cause of violence. And so just a couple of kind of quotes or scriptures to set this for us. So, from Psalms and Deuteronomy, we can tie those two together, For seek shalom, and pursue it. And also justice and only justice you shall pursue. Now, it's interesting when you translate the Hebrew word shalom, it not only means peace, but it actually also means wholeness. And, so, it's, it's very interesting that as we talk about the act of peace and use the word shalom to talk about peace, we are also calling for a sense of wholeness.

And I would argue that just peace and the focus of building up communities and addressing all sorts of injustices is looking to create wholeness. And perhaps a little more recent context, in the early 1900s, Frederick Lewis Donaldson, who would go on to become the canon of Westminster Abbey, uh, said this, That the real sin of the church is that, is not that she allows war, but that she tolerates the state of things that lead to war. And that really calls us out for our inaction as a, a religious community or as a community that is seeking, uh, to understand what Jesus called us to do, what God calls us to do in our daily lives.

And, so, I would actually throw in a, a much more modern context, and perhaps one that many are familiar with. Uh, but Steve Veazey, as well, when he posited

this question, and it's one that we've we've grappled with for the last couple of years. Are we moving towards Jesus, the peaceful one? Or wherever you want to put the comma in it? Uh, but I would say that (. . .) and are we moving towards the actions that Jesus reflected when he addressed injustices in the communities that he traveled to? (. . .) is necessary and just peace is focusing on addressing the justice issues like poverty and sexism or climate change, domestic violence, LGBTQ equality issues.

Just peace is seeking these kinds of four categories of peace, peace in community, peace with the earth, peace in the marketplace, and peace among the people. And so if we kind of quickly break these down into their four sets, when we looked at community, it's all about how do we live out, love your neighbor as yourself kind of golden rule to overcome that violence that creates poverty, racism, and sexism, to bring our communities back to wholeness.

When we look at peace with the Earth, it's about ending greed against the earth, using our resources wisely, addressing climate crisis, finding that wholeness between an of humanity and the earth and all of the ecosystems contained within it.

There's a story here in St. Paul, that they're about to do a road restoration in one of the more tight knit kind of first string communities near downtown. And as they've been talking about doing this project, they first announced maybe in 2020 or so that they were going to have to take out 50 to 60 trees that could be up to a century old. And I saw an article yesterday at as they've continued to advance their planning. They're now talking about taking out 160 Or more trees. Again, some of these are a century old because they I feel that they need to do this for all of the sewers, sewer mains, and that kind of thing. And the article was all about the community pushing back and being like, how in this time of climate crisis, can you take out 160 well developed trees, and not find creative ways to engineer around them and move water pipes without taking out this vital resource. That is really a way that we can route ourselves and peace with the earth.

Or like a peace in the marketplace, uh, we could essentially say like economic peace with this one. How are we addressing wealth disparities? How are we addressing accessibility disparities? How are we addressing military spending or

overconsumption. Uh, all of these kinds of monetary ones that can, again, separate our communities and create, uh, areas and avenues for us to feel the injustice growing that might push certain communities to, uh, act more violently.

And then finally, here in these four, peace among the people. Here it's really about imagining human security above national security; about, uh, turning swords into plows, which was one of the, the passages that was shared earlier. Or that that wonderful statue that we have outside of our world plaza that shows that inaction a couple of years ago, before COVID changed the world. We have a small group here in St. Paul. And we were able to go and hear from an author called named Shane Claiborne who wrote a book all about essentially turning guns into plows, I think you named it something differently, find it and put it in the chat. But that kind of fantastic action of taking these things that can create violence, and turning them into useful things that can bring us together into community.

So hopefully, what you hear in those four veins of peace is that it is about reconciliation. And our Christian lens, this is, uh, based on the understanding of our biblical teachings that we, we often refer to and in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus practiced reconciliation and restoring people to community. He told stories of how we are to love others, and he overcame boundaries between people to show that there was a new way to connect with what God is up to.

At the same time, just peace is critical of violence in Christendom heritage. Now Christendom heritage is a big word, but in, in essence, here we're talking about the fact that, you know, back in 300 AD, Constantine kind of took Christianity and he said, Okay, this is going to be the way of the world. I'm going to preempt it, or co-opt it and turn it into kind of an institution. And obviously, the church has had, or the Christian faith has had various ways of cozying up with politics, uh, ever since. But our early restoration really sought to restore a time before that kind of institutional takeover with our call to Zion, with our call to communities.

And obviously, I, I think we could say, all say that we've kind of ebbed and flowed between kind of our beliefs and hopes for Zion and perhaps sometimes tickling up a little too close to institutional Christianity. But it's important that we recognize those moments where perhaps we're getting a little too comfortable. And we

turn away from them and, again, call ourselves to consider, uh, if we are moving towards Jesus the peaceful one, or are we using Jesus to pursue our own peace.

And, so, while just peace seeks to avoid violence, those who follow this kind of also recognize that there may be a responsibility to protect vulnerable people. Now, I know police action on this slide might invoke some very strong reactions from different people in the group. But really here it's about correctly applying the right responses or the right actions that are well constrained to international law, to local law to protect people from things like genocide, when we can perhaps think of Bosnia. Respectfully, again, what, what kind of responsibility to protect could we imagine, uh, for the situation in Ukraine? That's kind of a difficult question.

And so what we see is that just peace is straddling this kind of inner balance being between just war and pacifism where just war is about, Yes, wars going to happen. And, and it's a, a result of irresponsible human choices. Pacifism is saying, Let's avoid it at all possible costs. And we're not going to participate it. And just peace says, Let us approach nonviolence as our preferred method, but recognize that perhaps there may be moments for very constrained action, uh, that will protect certain communities.

And, so, really, then, I wonder if we could also draw inspiration from this, this, uh, passage from Doctrine and Covenants that says this, "And the Lord called his people Zion because they were of one heart and one mind and dwelt in righteousness, and there was no poor among them." Again, our early church has had these aspirations for wholeness, kind of realized in our vision of Zion, about addressing the poverty and, and it's always been one of the kind of jokes amongst my wife and her friend community. Or perhaps you've experienced it in your own camp community, that there is something interesting when we almost form like a, a convent, uh, in our camping communities in this communal dwelling. And it, it really begins to feel like this, this special, uh, place where there are no poor among us. We're all getting to eat. We're all going to spend time together. And what a wonderful vision that is. In the last 20 years, probably longer than that, the journey has been for us to outline our mission initiatives and our enduring principles as we still seek to understand, uh, what Zion can look like and what, uh, Zion can look like from a, a nonviolence, or perhaps a just peace, uh, perspective.

Robin Linkhart

As we think about all five of the USA nonviolence learning sessions and conversations, let's do some recap and connect some dots.

As we consider next steps, three key concepts emerge:

1. The Importance of Honest and Rigorous History
2. Learning from the history of nonviolence in the 20th century
3. Distinguishing Between Pragmatic and Principled Nonviolence

Community of Christ Church History Principle #3 says, “The church encourages honest, responsible historical scholarship.”¹

At times, this has been a difficult painful journey—as we faced dark truths from our own Restoration history. It has been important for us to recognize our collective responsibility, and to acknowledge and repent of certain past actions. For example—under the leadership of Joseph Smith III—we repented for violent actions in the early years of the church.

We also recognize the importance of knowing and sharing the honest history of our nation—wherever it is we call home. Over the course of human history, nations have done horrific things to one another. At times we gloss over, cover up, or erase certain events from history.

Henning Müller, Community of Christ member in Munich Germany, talks about how that can be seen in Germany's history. Henning writes:

[Germany] was at its **best** when it embraced a tolerance for the cultures in its midst, and when it let Jewish writers, scientists and entrepreneurs, flourish. And it was at its **worst** when nationalism and cultural exclusion happened—as in the NAZI era, 1933-1945.

Henning goes on to say:

The history of World War I and World War II—that we teach our children in schools—has to be an **honest history** written with the help of Polish,

¹ Church History Principles #3 in Sharing in Community of Christ – Exploring Identity, Mission, Message, and Beliefs (Independence, MO: Herald House, 2018) 79

French, and other historians. For a better future we must face our past with courage and with eyes not blinded by patriotism.

This was not an easy thing to do, but as Henning shares:

The experience of...cataclysmic...wars in our lands...has scarred our psyche. We are called to embrace our identity...not to despise it or disregard it. We must learn to accept our shame as a part of us as much as the virtues we hold sacred; both the light and the dark episodes in our rich history...form our identity and who we are. **This could be our new humble strength.**

Listeners, let's pause for a moment and ask ourselves this question:

**How do Henning's reflections awaken our own awareness
of the role of honest history in nonviolence?**

<brief pause>

As we reflect on that question some things come to mind.

Nonviolent protests and campaigns of the 20th Century teach us a lot about strategic nonviolent actions. Our preparation for, and participation in our Community of Christ nonviolence conversations reminds us of the power resident in nonviolent action as seen in the **lifework** of Gandhi, Rosa Parks, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.— **and it also calls to mind** the lasting legacy of their efforts.

In his groundbreaking study ***From Dictatorship to Democracy***, Gene Sharp writes:
“It is our contention [...] that political defiance, or nonviolent struggle, is the most powerful means available to those struggling for freedom...”

This is a form of pragmatic nonviolence which Sharp refers to as
“...a war by other means”.²

The research of Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan reveals that from 1900-2006 nonviolent resistance was twice as effective as violent resistance, and nonviolent campaigns were more likely to result in democratic and peaceful societies after a conflict.

² Curle, Adam 1971. *Making Peace*. London: Tavistock. 184

In our Nonviolence conversations we've learned there are two kinds of nonviolence.

1. **Principled** nonviolence is the nonviolence of pacifism. Christian pacifism is based on an understanding that the life and teachings of Jesus mean his disciples must always be nonviolent.
2. **Pragmatic** nonviolence **is** an approach used by pacifists, **but** many engaging this way are **not** pacifists. They use nonviolent methods for social change because they are effective, and lead to better outcomes.

As Community of Christ explores nonviolent methods to champion the cause of peace **with** justice, we recognize that pragmatic nonviolence can be a partnering opportunity for Pacifist, Just War, and Just Peace approaches to violence. Creating potential allies in the practical application of nonviolence.

Now a few brief words as we explore the prevention of genocide.

According to Dr Gregory Stanton, **President of Genocide Watch**, genocide is a **Ten Step** process. Preventing just one of the ten steps, prevents genocide from happening. So, let's take a quick look at each step that moves a situation **towards** Genocide and the **action steps** we can take to help prevent it.

So, I'm going to list each step sequentially naming a progression of behaviors that if left unchecked, historically escalate and lead to genocide. After each one I will state Prevention behaviors, or responses that can mitigate that particular step toward genocide.

1. **Classification** – Categorizing us and them, like Christians and Jews.
Prevention – Do not stereotype, see the worth of all persons in each person.
2. **Symbolization** – Like making Jews wear a yellow star of David
Prevention – Refuse to participate
3. **Discrimination** – Actively discriminating against vulnerable groups
Prevention – Civil disobedience, Advocating for sanctions and human rights
4. **Dehumanization** – Denying humanity thru hate speech, propaganda, and other actions
Prevention – Shut it down, regulate, and hold people and groups accountable

5. **Organization** – Creating militias, mobs, secret police actions, and more
Prevention – Take legislative action to outlaw, investigate, and prosecute
6. **Polarization** – perpetuating propaganda, and unjust laws that divide people
Prevention – Legally regulate, protect, and hold accountable
7. **Preparation** – Training up armies to enact mass killing
Prevention – Establish arms embargoes, monitor, and enforce
8. **Persecution** – Active violence, torture, starving, and herding of people
Prevention – Do something, provide humanitarian aid, advocate, and get help
9. **Extermination** – Mass killing, and horrific forms of retaliation
Prevention - Create safe passage routes, safe harbor, this genocide behavior will require an armed response of intervention.
10. **Denial** – Hiding the evidence, intimidating witnesses, blocking investigation
Prevention - Legal justice, public evidence, education, restoration, and healing.

One final point on genocide:

Organized, partnered, nonviolent efforts—especially in the early stages—can prevent genocide. If it goes unchecked only heavily armed intervention can stop it.

Now let's hear perspectives on nonviolence from our special guests.

First up is Monica English, from Orem Utah. Next we will hear from Marketer Ash in Chicago Illinois, the pastor of Brainard Community of Christ. Last is Kuzma Brudsky born and raised in Ukraine, now residing in Eagle Mountain, Utah.

Monica English

Thank you for the opportunity to, um, talk in five minutes is, uh, I could talk for days, um, but I won't. Uh, in, uh, in 2017, I was, um, in school studying peace and justice studies, religious studies and gender studies, um, and had the opportunity to go on a study abroad to Northern Ireland to, uh, study post-conflict societies. And that post-conflict word is mushy. Um, and I, uh, I actually fell in love with the place and the stories and the peace efforts amongst war and, uh, applied for and received a grant and went back and did research on a women's peace group, um, that was pivotal in, uh, in the peace talks. Um, so, with just a short period of time,

I thought I would talk, um, Northern Ireland at this point is considered a, an, a great success when it comes to the, the effects of, of the peace talks that happened in 1996. But even Northern Ireland that has had this huge success is a peace right now of walls. It is not a peace of reconciliation. Um, there, there are attempts and there have been movements towards reconciliation. But the, the Irish Catholic and the British Protestant peoples are so divided within their communities, even within the same city, that they have different accents. Um, I, I met a number of people where the very first time they met someone across those community lines was as an adult in university. Uh, they go to school in different schools. They, if, if there's a rec center built in this community, then there's a rec center built in the other community so they don't have to interact. And in the places where these, uh, these communities butt up against each other, and there is, of course, long history of bombings and violence and kidnappings, and, um, just terrible. One of, one of the things that happened is they built walls, um, between the Protestant and the Irish populations. And when they build a wall, well, you could, you could toss something over that and, so, they'd build the wall higher, and they could make petrol bomb, or petrol Molotov cocktails, uh, and toss those over. So, the walls got bigger and bigger. Um, and they are hefty with, um, with gates that close, um, at, at different times depending on this interface. Um, so six o'clock is typical. And when I say they close the gates, you cannot cross back and forth. You can't go to work or get back if you don't get through. Um, there, there was an organization, um, called the Belfast, Belfast Interface Project, uh, where this organization, um, received grants to help work across these communities to bring down these, these walls of division. Um, and they tried a number of different approaches that were, um, very unsuccessful. There's just such a suspicion, um, of the other, uh, that there, that there couldn't be, they couldn't bring them into a room and have conversations. They couldn't say, well, maybe we'll keep it up, um, a little bit longer. Until, until they, they came up with a really ingenious idea which is, um, and they had other actions, but the one I'm talking about it, they, they took cell phones, and they identified people on the Catholic side of the wall and the Protestant side of the wall who they thought could, um, could have a more open mind. And they gave, they gave these cell phones to these people and there were no names in it. There was just one phone number. And if they saw something going on that started to make their anxiety about violence rise, they could pick up this phone and dial this number to this, this anonymous person and say, Hey, I, there, there, there, this was an actual example, there are like eight, um, there are eight men in the street. What are

they doing? In, in the past before the ability to call, that would have been a sign for everybody to get arms and just make sure you're ready to protect yourself and your people. Um, but with the ability to make this phone call, they would call and say, What's going on? Oh, well, a car just broke down, um, and they're just getting it out of the road. And it lowered that, that anxiety and that threat of violence. Well, these people had never met in person didn't know their names. And it was about two years after this project started when they finally were able to meet. And by that point, they had gotten to know someone on the other side without that scary identity that made them feel so threatened. And were able to, um, build, build an actual real relationship. And it, it, it meant in places that instead of closing the gates at six, they closed the gates at eight. Um, so, it wasn't, it's, it's slow. If you think about, uh, Ireland has had, uh, had conflict for, uh, hundreds of years, hundreds and hundreds of years with, with the UK. So, we can't expect an overnight movement, but part of that movement is figuring out tricky, creative ways to see across the boundaries. Um, so, I, the, the big takeaway for me, is that it takes creative thought within culture. So, there is nobody who can come from the outside and say, Here's what you should do to have peace. It has to be embedded in the culture and the understanding and the lived experience of the people within the conflict. And those Western people who used to go in and say, we know how to make peace. Here's how you do it. They failed, because they were not, they were not in partnership with the communities. So, thank you.

Marketer Ash

Okay, yeah, yeah, I, I guess I'm next time, huh? Monica--is that right? I, I liked your closing piece. I really did. Um, thank you for that. My name is Marketer. And, um, I am, um, the pastor of Brainerd, uh, Community of Christ on, in Chicago, Illinois, South Side. Um, you know, in high poverty and, um, high crime area which used to be a beautiful neighborhood, but things evolve, right? And, so, you know, I have to say this, and, and as I was talking to Robin, you know, while I am the pastor there, I grew up in the community, but I no longer live in the community. So, my experience of violence, it, it, it's been more of working with, uh, the members and the community that we serve, watching them go through different layers and levels of violence. I have to say, for Brainerd, though, however, we've not lost anyone to violence. I'm thanking God for that. We've not lost a youth. We've not lost a member. We've not lost anyone. And they live, I'd say all of the members live within the city. So, violence from that perspective, has not touched us. But where it has touched us is when we watch just people of our race and our

culture go through certain things. And, so, it, it, you know, you cannot walk around with blinders on because, you know, just because of that. Um, so, that's why I like Monica's statement about you have to be a part of the environment to really understand what the real needs are and, and what the real responses should be. Uh, so that's one thing. Uh, I also want to share with you that as far as the congregation how we have, uh, looked at nonviolence from a pragmatic approach. I want to say that is, you know, I don't know if everyone is aware, for the summer of last year, we had the Boys and Girls Club, um, house the summer camp within, uh, at Brainerd at the heart of the pan, at the heart, during the heart of the pandemic and we were able to give youth a safe space for the summer where they wouldn't have had that, um, had been exposed to certain levels of violence. Before, pre COVID, we partnered with the police district and, uh, the schools and the politicians and the faith communities. We went out and we did peace walks, you know, um, nonviolent peace walks. We, at the last time we had the riots on the South Side when they, you know, looting and things like that, um, I don't know if you guys are familiar with 87th, if you live in Chicago, all the stores like the Walmart, the Jewels, uh, Walgreens, they would just, you know, destroy. And we did a prayer vigil, uh, as all the pastors within that district. And we began to have conversations with the local vendors. And, so, our Walmart now, um, has, uh, a training program. They're offering training programs for the community. It was decided that we would no longer allow people to come into our community and not give us something for it. You know, uh, we were the consumers and we needed to have something that was going to be invested back into the community. So, also there's people can have, uh, health care visits. Uh, I think there's like a doctor's or clinic in, right next to the Jewels now, so, where people can go and receive some kind of health care, blood pressure checks, um, you know, dia, uh, testing for diabe, diabetes, um, things like that. So, that's one aspect where we're dealing with it from a church, from the church's perspective and we partner with the local school, Brainerd has, called Mahalia Jackson, um, and it's predominantly A, well it's African American. And last summer, we, last fall we bought school supplies for all the children in the school, um, so the kids could have adequate school supplies so that they can be educated. Uh, so, but that's from the church's perspective. Now, in my career, um, I work for a, a nonprofit and it's been doing this for 50 plus years. We help, uh, people with, who have criminally, who have been criminally justice involved, you know, get back into society. And we do that by offering wraparound services. So, right now we're partnering with Human, um, Department of Health, to offer programs to, uh,

young adults where they will be able to get everything met, um, uh, you know, uh, well, this is, no, this is for adult programs where they are able to do things like, uh, get training, they're able to, uh, get, uh, visit doctors, have a doctor's visit, have a mental health assessment. Um, they're able to have housing, we're, we're, we're partnering with them to acquire buildings so that we can have affordable housing and things like that because it has just been proven that, um, uh, one way to address nonviolence is to deal with the social determinants of health and injustice and, and inequities in, in certain communities. And, so, uh, for me, I think that is the way you deal with nonviolence because until people feel empowered or valued and feel worth, their self worth, um, and have, uh, ways to survive, we will always experience some level of it because people, you know, it's self preservation. At some point, people want to preserve themselves. And, so, for me, that's, I believe, that's the best way to peace. And it's not also to have the answers for people because you can't have the answers for people. People have to come into their own understanding of what their answers should be for themselves. That's it.

Robin Linkhart

Thank you, Marketer. Now we'll hear from Kuzma.

Kuzma Brudsky

I fully believe that violence as a solution to problems should be eradicated in the society of the future. And we, as a community that promotes peace, should be one of the forerunners of this change. As a member of the World Church's Peace and Justice Team, I have pondered on the questions of nonviolence and peace and their applications for the church. As a Ukrainian national, the recent events made me not only think about it, but also feel what war brings as I was concerned about the safety of my family and friends. The images of human pain, violence, destruction and despair will forever stay with me as I think about war, and the importance of being able to protect oneself. The issue of nonviolence is complex and there is no approach that could fully navigate the problem. However, I find that World Conference Resolution 1177 which contains our core statement on peace, provides relevant and ever important insights on this complex issue. In it, we proclaim as a church that we oppose all forms of destructive violence. We believe that such violence will exist as long as selfish interests, materialistic desire, or, or other forms of special privilege are valued above human needs, rights and dignity. We also admit that there are instances where resorting to force

is deemed unavoidable. We deplore the situation and recognize this as a dilemma that intensifies our pursuit of peace. As a church, we emphasize that peace is not attained by mere non-participation in violence. We try to remove the cause of aggression by the application of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the lives of individuals and the community. We continue to declare that we in no way condemn those who choose to work from within the military establishment to bring the love of God so that the cause of world peace is promoted. The understanding that violence is a dilemma that should intensify our pursuit of peace gives direction and meaning to our work in the world to bring forth the nonviolent future. We are to continue to find the relevant ways to embody God's Shalom in the world and remove the cause of violence. It pains me to realize that the safety of my family and friends, our dear church members in Ukraine, is only possible because of the violent actions by the Ukrainian army to defend the country. It is, it also pains me that the peaceful protest in Russia is unable to change the dictatorship regime that seems can be taken only by power. Violence is a dilemma that can be solved only by nonviolent action. We are called to promote God's Shalom through constructive and peaceful activities, addressing the root cause of war and violence and working toward the elimination of these evils.

Robin Linkhart

Thank you to Monica, Marketer, and Kuzma for your powerful stories and the challenge to identify nonviolent responses to violence.

As we come to the end of our podcast, I invite you to take a moment wherever you are to simply pause. Take a deep cleansing breath and feel your body settle into the safe space of this online community <pause> breathe in and out <pause>

Now we have Steve Bolie, Judy Luffman, Roger Hintsche, Chris Davidson, Dan Gregory, Tami Perryman, and David Ettinger as they share together as a speaking choir, giving voice to Doctrine and Covenants 156, which was adapted to send us forth with purpose and mission, as a people of the Temple. We will then be blessed with prayer offered by Evangelist Kris Judd.

- Reader 1: We shall be dedicated to the pursuit of peace.
- Reader 2: We shall be for reconciliation and for healing of the spirit.
- Reader 3: We shall strengthen our faith and prepare for witness.
- Reader 4: So that we can be conduits of the Holy Spirit bringing wholeness of body, mind, and spirit to the broken, the sick, and the troubled.
- Reader 5: We shall diligently and gladly commit to education for priesthood and discipleship responsibilities.
- Reader 6: Together we shall find the essential meaning of the Restoration as a healing and redeeming agent.
- Reader 7: Together we shall find new life and understanding of Christ's peace, inspired, by the life and witness of the Redeemer of the world.

(Adapted from Doctrine and Covenants
156:5a-e)

Closing Prayer of Blessing (Evangelist Kris Judd)

Let us pray.

Peaceful One, thank you for the wisdom, the intelligence, the creativity, the commitment that has been shown in offering these conversations. And for those that have joined and have opened up their hearts and their minds to, to tap into what is happening in them, and to hear what is happening in the hearts and spirits of others as we wrestle with this complex issue of what it means to live as non-violent followers of the Peaceful One.

God help us as we move from these conversations to a posture of listening. May we listen within ourselves, oh, God, to hear the rumblings of violence that exists deep within us sometimes in ways that catch us off guard and surprise us and shock us and embarrass us. And when we encounter those places, oh, God that are inevitable for we have lived in a violent world. May we turn to you, and offer those broken places for your healing. May we listen to one another, to the stories in particular, of those who have, who have had to wrestle with what it means to face violence in their homes, in their countries, in their workplaces, in their schools? Not that there's an easy answer, but to listen to them our God and wrestle within ourselves. What your way evokes within us, we we listen with compassion.

May we listen with an open heart, and open ears, with wonder, with curiosity, with patience, and with grace. May we listen God to the voices that are violent to us that offend us that we don't want to listen to? Whether it be in person, or in writing, or on television or podcast? May we not be afraid to encounter them so that we may understand them? And may we listen for the woundedness that underlies all of that, that we may help you find ways to bring healing?

And finally, oh, God, may we continue to listen to your Spirit, through words of Scripture, and hymn and message and through conversations and through creation, and through the Spirit that works in mysterious ways in us that touches us and breaks us open with love and compassion, and gives us creative ways to see across those walls that we've constructed.

And so God we take from this place, a way that has changed us; we are not the same as we were when we entered the conversation, where we continue to be open and evolving. That we may return to that source of love that created us in the first place. That we may return to oneness that we may be restored, that all of your creation is restored with you. So, God we thank you. And we commit to the things that we have said we will do. May we find the courage and the strength and the com, the companions to take this journey towards Jesus the peaceful one, in whose name I pray, amen.

Robin Linkhart

May it be so. Thanks to all the people who participated in making this podcast possible today. And a very special thanks to all of you, our listeners. This is your host, Robin Linkhart, and you are listening to Project Zion Podcast. Go out and make the world a better place. Take good care, bye bye. See you next time.

Josh Mangelson

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