

Retired WCLC: Where are They Now?

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SPEAKERS

Susan Oxley, Carla Long, Rick Maupin, Ken McLaughlin

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.

Carla Long 00:34

Hello, and welcome to the *Project Zion Podcast*. I'm your host, Carla Long, and today you're listening to "What's Brewing" which talks about all kinds of missional activities that happen all over the church. And boy, are you in for a treat today because I am here with Susan Oxley, Rick Maupin, and Ken McLaughlin, and they're going to talk about what their life is like now, after being members of the World Church Leadership Council and retiring. So, hello, Susan. Hello, Rick. Hello, Ken. I'm gonna let them introduce themselves to you, so Susan, why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself and what keeps you busy?

Susan Oxley 01:09

Okay, I'm Susan Oxley. I'm a grandmother of four delightful grandkids. I'm an evangelist in Community of Christ. I live in a condo in west Seattle, having sold my big old house in Renton a few years ago and downsized. I live about 10 minutes from my daughters and their families so I get to see my grandkids a lot, which is wonderful. And my grandkids are 19, 13 and twins, 11.

Carla Long 01:37

So, you definitely stay busy.

Susan Oxley 01:39

I stay busy, plus all the church work.

Carla Long 01:42

Oh, yes, which we're gonna hear about. Rick, what about you?

Rick Maupin 01:46

Yeah, it's good to be with you all. I'm Rick Maupin, as Carla's indicated. I currently live in the middle of the United States, or somewhat the middle, Lee's Summit, Missouri, USA, and I'm happily married for a little over 50 years now. My wife and I have three adult children and they have produced six beautiful grandchildren for us, wonderful grandchildren, particularly that three-year old granddaughter who lives in British Columbia, Canada that we don't get to see as often as we would like. But we actually live within literally 14 feet of one of our daughters. We built at the same time when we retired, and they decided to build, so it's good to be that close to some of the grandkids. And, you know, they drag their parents along at times, but we put up with that. I stay busy, and maybe a little later talk a little bit about some of the church work that I have the opportunity to participate in, but I do a little building. I know enough about building to be dangerous, but I enjoy that. My son-in-law, the one that lives next door who's a family doc here in Lee's Summit, we have a pretty good-sized woodshop in our basement. That was the intent when we built our house, and so Mike and I do quite a bit of woodworking. Matter of fact, he's down there right now building a 16-foot canoe, so you may hear a little background noise. Love to travel. That was not the case right after retirement. I was ready to stay at home and not get on another airplane for a long time, and love gardening, have a vegetable garden. So that pretty well sums up what keeps me busy.

Carla Long 03:15

Well, all that sounds super fun, super fun. And I think your daughter is brilliant for living right next door to you because, man, that makes date nights for her a lot easier.

Rick Maupin 03:25

It does and her brilliance, she dipped deeply into her mother's gene pool.

Carla Long 03:32

Thanks, Rick. Ken, what about you?

Ken McLaughlin 03:34

My name is Ken McLaughlin. I'm happy to be with you. And, right now, with Carla, and Susan and Rick on the line, three people who I greatly admire. So, it's just such a pleasure to do this. I've been retired, I think, the longest of all of you, and I've done a variety of things in retirement, including I was the Regional Director of Philanthropy for the Salvation Army, and then became the Chief Operating Officer of the Polycystic Kidney Disease Foundation. After that, I realized it was time to start doing part time things and I chose something that I truly wanted to do, rather than something that would earn me anything other than pocket change, although some people do live on this salary. I'm a substitute teacher in two school districts: Blue Springs School District, and the Kansas City Public School District. Most of that, virtually all of it, is with kindergarten, first, second and third graders and I spend most of my time subbing in one specific school in Kansas City, which is a dual language elementary school academy, and I speak bilingually, although my Spanish is only enough to get me through in the classroom. I had one young Hispanic kid look up at me one day, in Spanish he said, "You do pretty well for an old white man from America." And I love that. It was a great compliment. My wife, Sue, has also worked for the church and is retired, and in retirement she is employed by a local family law and elder law, law firm. My kids, Katie and Matt, Matt's a local attorney, also does family law but they don't work for the same law firm. And my daughter Katie is the Director of Communications for a school district in

Iowa. Our four grandkids, they all live in Iowa, six hours away. Fortunately, the other grandparents are five minutes away. We're the special occasion grandparents. And three of them, all the boys, are driving now, which freaks me out. Carla, it will happen with you and your kids way sooner than you think. And then our 10-year old granddaughter, Peyton, still adores us in a way that the boys have forgotten about already. So that's what keeps us busy. And, like Rick, travel as well. This year, in addition to an annual trip to Florida to do nothing for a week with Danny and Penelope Belrose, Danny, retired member of the Council of Twelve, we also are doing a Greece, Israel and Italy this year.

Carla Long 06:05

Oh, that sounds awesome. My family went to Israel about five years ago, and it was just so mind-blowingly cool. I'm very excited for you. That's really cool. So, Ken, I'm going to jump back to you. Let's go Ken, and then Rick, and then Susan, and I want you to tell me what role did you serve in the World Church Leadership Council? And when did you serve in that role?

Ken McLaughlin 06:25

From 1994 until 2005, I was a member of the Council of Twelve. I had two field assignments during that time, in addition to a lot of different short-term, headquarters, I'd call them projects more than assignments. My first one was in the Pacific Island nations where the Church is established. I know Susan's also had all or part of that field. What an unexpected, virtually shocking, reality of my life. I never thought frankly, I would leave my home state of Ohio, to be candid with you, and was able to serve there in the larger jurisdictions, such as French Polynesia, also some of the smaller ones, such as New Caledonia, or Fiji. And then my second assignment was the West Coast of the United States, parts of Canada, all of the West Coast of the United States, and the very, very northern most part of Mexico.

Carla Long 07:23

Rick?

Rick Maupin 07:25

I served in the Council of Twelve from 2005 to 2019. My assignments were somewhat varied. I started out by serving South America, Central America, and several Caribbean Islands, at that time was Jamaica, Cayman, Aruba and Dominican Republic. Lest someone begins to think, ah, Aruba, Jamaica, in the old song, we were somewhat, if I might say, on the other side of the tracks, typically, in those places. Then at one point, I actually had a, what we would call a split assignment. I served some mission centers and fields in United States as well as nations outside the U.S. When I retired, I was serving the island nations of the Dominican Republic, Grand Cayman, and Jamaica, and then on the other side of the world, was serving Southeast Asia, the Nations of India, Nepal, and the Philippines. And like Ken, had some other assignments within the Council of Twelve that were quite interesting regarding trying to help alleviate poverty and some other projects in that area, so. And also, like Ken, I came from a very small Midwestern town and to ever have dreamed that I would be traveling in some of those places was more than eye opening and a tremendous opportunity that many people who are listening right now provided that opportunity. And hopefully, I used your tithing dollars and your prayers wisely in those places. So, a big thank you to those who are listening to allow me to have that opportunity to share the message that hopefully brought some hope and peace in the lives of others.

Carla Long 09:03

Thanks, Rick. Ken?

Ken McLaughlin 09:04

Well, I just want to interject for your listeners, Rick said something that's really important to know, and that is, those of us who received assignments that may sound, on its surface exotic because they did take us to places like Honolulu, and Papeete, Tahiti and some of the outer islands, these were not glamorous assignments. People issues, within and without the church, are people issues, no matter where you are in the world, and when you add on to that abject poverty, as was found among many of the church people, let's say in Fiji, rather than in the resorts of Fiji, which are beautiful of course, it did not constitute a pleasure assignment or an easier assignment.

Carla Long 09:52

That's very true, Ken. Thank you for saying that. I appreciate that. Susan.

Susan Oxley 09:57

So, I served on the Council of Twelve from 2005 to 2015. I began as the apostle for the western field, which is basically the western two thirds of the United States, and kind of got my feet wet with my own culture and people, and then was assigned to the Pacific Field, which was Australia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Hawaii, New Caledonia, New Zealand, and got to travel in those. And like Ken and Rick have said, that was not going to resorts. I stayed in the homes of the saints. I was part of the daily routine of their lives, going to their local congregations. And rather than spending my time going to tourist traps, and fancy sightseeing places, I spent my time with the people, preaching, teaching, sharing new information with them, learning their cultures, and trying to relate the gospel and the mission to their cultures. And it was an incredible experience that I thoroughly enjoyed, loved the people, would not give up those years for anything. But also, of course, we were dealing with all kinds of the administrative problems and difficulties that sometimes were quite stressful. Eventually then, they added Canada to my field, and took out some of the Pacific Island nations, and so, then a lot of my time was spent in Australia and Canada, helping those, with those difficulties and the national conferences, things like that. I just want to say that it was really a privilege to serve and unexpected, something I never thought I would ever be doing. And I learned a great deal.

Carla Long 11:50

Thank you, Susan. And I just realized that I have actually served in many of those fields you're talking about. I lived for six months in the Philippines, and I lived for a year in Australia, and I know what you're talking about. I totally understand what you're talking about. I was very lucky to do that as well. So, let's jump to Rick. Rick, how are you serving Community of Christ now? You're retired, you have woodworking, you have grandkids, but I have a feeling that you're doing something with Community of Christ too. So, we'll go Rick, Susan, and then Ken.

Rick Maupin 12:16

Yeah, well, you're feeling, I think, is somewhat accurate, Carla. Right after retirement, or even before retirement, I was asked to do some limited volunteer work in a previous field, in Southeast Asia, in the

Philippines and India. While serving India, some background here, and in India, while I was serving there, we were able to get the church registered, which is a major step as Ken and Susan would know. In many places, to get the church registered can be a multi-year, even a decadal project. And we were able to get the church registered there, which is a good thing. But to be registered in India, like other countries, you have to have a board and I was on the board of directors, of course. After retirement, it was simply easier if I would be willing to stay on that board. So, I continue to serve on the board of directors, if you will, for India. So, that, it's not a major project, but certainly glad to help out there. And then in the Philippines, when I retired, we were in the midst of a major building project that is nearly completed, which is one of the finest facilities in that area of India, let alone a church facility, church offices, large meeting venue, dormitories, kitchens, and is working very well right now. So, I was asked, because I was in the middle of that, and I know enough about building to be dangerous. I can talk the lingo. But anyway, I was asked to help kind of coordinate the completion of that project, so have been doing that, so that's been part of it. But probably the primary thing, just only weeks after I retired, I was asked if I would serve on the pastoral team as a member of the team at Woods Chapel Congregation in Lee's Summit, Missouri. And so, since then, I've been serving with three other fine people on the pastor team at Woods Chapel and that has kept me pretty busy. So that's kind of the ways that I've been attempting to serve Community of Christ since retirement.

Carla Long 14:08

Thank you, Rick. Susan?

Susan Oxley 14:11

Well, I have been doing a lot with my evangelist call, preaching, teaching, doing some guest ministry here in the United States. I've also been doing some writing for the World Church. I write about half of the sermon helps each year, have been doing that for about six years. I help edit *The Daily Bread*, and do a little writing for myself. I've been very busy with my local congregation as well, providing some personal ministry and helping with worship planning and activities, pastoral care. A lot of my time is spent with the North American Climate Justice Team, which is sponsored by the Greater Pacific Northwest Mission Field, creating educational webinars, interactive Zoom conversations, and basically helping to raise the awareness of climate issues, and that takes a lot of time, a lot of effort, a lot of coordinating. And so, I'm really happy to be serving on that team. One of the other things that is rather unusual is that I serve as the camp pastor for a unique camp that we have here in the greater Pacific Northwest called Camp Minecraft. We have purchased the platform of the Java edition of Minecraft, and we have kids and adults that come in and play together, and Camp Minecraft, according to specific guidelines that we set up so that it's not quite as violent and difficult as the standard Minecraft is. And I got roped into that with my grandkids, and now serve as the pastor for Camp Minecraft. I'm called Fast Wing 70, but I'm probably the slowest one in camp and the least capable. But I'm busy killing skeletons and building houses and mining for gold and diamonds and, but in the process, also supporting the kids, being a listening ear, assisting them in any way I can. And then they take care of me. They protect me when I get in there, and help me fight the mobs off and keep me safe. So that's a lot of fun. I have been occasionally doing some special activities for the World Church or the local mission center. I serve as a congregational leadership support minister for a couple of congregations and I keep very busy. I have a very active life and I love it.

Carla Long 16:43

That's awesome. And I love that you're the pastor of Camp Minecraft. That is the most adorable thing I've heard all day. Ken, what about you?

Ken McLaughlin 16:51

Well, let me start by saying I recognize that there's a lot of my colleagues, past and present, who have had major church roles, who from time to time, especially at the end of a major leadership role, like serving the World Church in the Council of Twelve, they've needed time off. They've needed to back off. They've just needed to be away from the day-to-day life of Community of Christ, and I honor and respect that. I've not ever been in that boat. I'll be 72 this year, and I have to say that I have been an active, active participant of a congregation for all 72 years. I've just not needed that break. That would have been far more to do with my personality than something that I should get a medal for doing. I am the lead pastor for the fourth time in my life of a congregation. Right now, this is my third year to do that, and it's my second time to be the pastor at the Walnut Gardens Congregation, which is on the far east side of Independence. The first time I was pastor, I started when I was 35, and this time I started when I was 70. So, there's been a 35-year gap in that with two other congregations as well. I love doing that. But as I have said, for many years in my adult life, I believe that being a local congregational pastor is the most important and the most difficult job in the church. It is far more difficult than the job that I had in the Council of Twelve, mostly because I had support folks around me and colleagues nearby doing the same kinds of things. Being a COVID pastor, and that's what I call those of us that have had to do that, has been incredibly more difficult and complex, and things going on behind the scenes, that those who simply were on the Zoom meetings that we had on Sunday morning, didn't know about. Revving up our pastoral care, for example, to make sure that nobody was left out of being cared for during COVID, dealing with COVID deaths in the congregation, one very early on, before we even knew what a COVID death was. And so, I thoroughly enjoy that. I will be honest with you and your listeners, I am focused only on congregational ministries. I'm certainly in touch and in good friendship with my mission center president, and Janné Grover, the field apostle for this area, and for various members of the World Church Leadership Team, but my interest is solely local. And that's what I feel called to do and I expect that I will give my energies to. And also though, after retirement, I was very happy to serve for quite a few years on the development staff of Outreach International, and then I served as the Chief Operating Officer and a, the Director of Philanthropy for two other local charities, one a major international charity and one, much smaller, national charity.

Carla Long 20:03

So, all of you keep really, really busy. Susan?

Susan Oxley 20:07

I would like to just pick up on something that Ken said about the need for some of those that serve in appointee positions to take a break after retirement. I did not know, until I retired, how close I was to burnout. I didn't recognize that. I knew I was stressed. I knew I wasn't sleeping well. I had a lot of things going on in my head and in my heart. And of course, I also had a husband who was dying of cancer. And when I retired from the World Church Leadership Council, the Council of Twelve, my world focused down from the world down to one individual, and I cared for him until he died. But in the process, I went through a lot in terms of healing from the burnout that I had on the Council of Twelve. And I did not

realize that. And I did mention that to Steve Veazey and to Scott Murphy at the time, that I didn't realize how close I was. And I just gave them a heads up that probably many of the people do not understand that. And I did back off from congregational life, from the mission center. I was one of those that took a break. I did go to the congregation and they were very good to me. They did not ask me to preach. They didn't ask me to teach or do things. And it was probably a couple of years before I, on my own initiative, felt like I could begin getting back into the congregational life, and the World Church life. And of course, part of that, too, was Ron's death and my grieving process. So, all of that came together with that burnout that I experienced. So, I understand why that happens, and how that happens, and the need to take a step back and simply be fed for a period of time before you can offer your gifts again. And I just thought I would share that with you as part of my journey of retirement. The other thing is that when you retire, you have to establish your own identity again. My identity was very caught up with being an apostle serving the World Church, and I had to re-establish a new identity for myself.

Carla Long 22:21

Yeah, that's kind of part of my next question, Susan. So maybe you just take this next question, and then we'll go Rick, and then Ken. How did your involvement with leadership of the Church change what you do now? I think it's kind of related.

Susan Oxley 22:33

Well, it is related. I began getting back into some writing for the World Church and then congregational life, and as I did, so, I discovered that my appreciation for cultures, my awareness of the hubris of the white, developed nations, was extremely high. I reacted often to comments and prideful things that people would say about the United States, or ways they would speak of other cultures, and they were not aware of how denigrating they were. So, my experiences with other cultures really sensitized me to a lot of that cultural pride that goes along with being white, privileged, and American, and is actually part of several of the white developed countries. I was also able to express that, I think, in ways that began to help other people understand that, not just confront them with, you know, because you learn a lot of diplomacy when you're in the Council of Twelve. You learn some ways to speak to people that helped bring them along, to connect with their commonalities, and then expand those commonalities into new areas of understanding. I had a great deal more understanding of myself, my own ignorance, my own tendency to be in control, and to want to be in control, my own pride, and as a result, I tended sometimes to be so aware of my desire to control and fix things, and dominate things, that I would, I would step back and reserve my comments, my thoughts, in order to avoid seeming to be in control, seeming to want to take control. So, my discussions, my preaching, my ministry, even my perspective on mission, the awareness of climate crisis, all of that was informed by my travel, by my experiences. And, in addition, the processes that go on at World Church, oh my gosh, most people have no clue what goes on at World Church. What, what happens as things move from an idea into a procedure or a policy that is distributed around the world, they have no idea about the complexities of translations. I led the translation team for about half of my time, little over half of my time on the Council of Twelve, and the complexity of translations and distribution of resources, writing of resources, the international languages, and the International English that is needed to translate from English into International English into international languages, it's, it's an amazing, complex process and all of that I brought, then, to my understanding of people, of issues, of policies, of legislation, that go on at World Church. I found a lot of carry over in terms of my understanding.

Carla Long 25:46

Absolutely. Thank you, Susan. Rick, what about you? How does your involvement in the leadership of the Church change what you do now?

Rick Maupin 25:52

Yeah, that's a great question, Carla, and I've given quite a bit of thought to that. My answer probably will not indicate that I've given a lot of thought to that, because I've really kind of wandered around, but it will probably sound similar to what Susan shared. Just very quickly, I come from a Midwestern small town. I give a shout out to all my friends in Holden, Missouri. That's where I was raised and went to school, and don't want these comments, in any way, to be negative or denigrating, but many of us that lived in Holden and the Holden area, kind of saw the rest of our lives, kind of, in that area, not only geographically, but in other ways. And that's kind of where I had come from. And so, certainly my opportunity to share in other cultures around the world, broadening would not even come close to saying what that has done for me and how that has, I think, helped form me. I can tell you right now that serving in other cultures, there was a lot more forming of Rick Maupin than Rick Maupin helping form people in those cultures. And at times I didn't fully recognize it. You know, even though it may have been subconscious, I think I went into other places with this idea that my culture was the pinnacle of cultures. And as I served with other leaders in those cultures, they certainly, patiently helped me understand that there are other ways, but "ways" in air quotes. There, there are other ways there are different ways that are ever bit as good, and sometimes much better, than the perception that had been formed in my mind and heart, by my own culture. One of my first trips in India to a very remote location, and both Ken and Susan will probably relate to this in some ways, we had traveled for many hours and we were in a very remote village. Abject poverty does not describe the scene that I saw when we drove into that village. But once we were in the village, and we're going to be there for two or three days for a variety of activities, some elderly ladies in the village, and just to kind of give people an idea of the scene, not only the poverty, but oftentimes in the more remote rural areas, areas that we would probably consider less educated, it was interesting that many of the older women would wear quite a bit of jewelry that had some cultural things. But these, I remember these two elderly sisters very well. A couple of nose rings, rings in their ears, and they looked like they were probably in their 80s. They may have been in their 50s. But I'll never forget that scene and they asked me to sit down on the porch of this little school building. Didn't know what was going on. I hadn't been told ahead of time by our leaders. They sat me down, and they started taking off my shoes, and I was a bit apprehensive. And then I recognized what was happening as they brought over a pan of water. They took off my shoes and they took off my socks. And these older sisters, very wrinkled skin, skin on their hands that was hard, that had come from decades of hard work, of just trying to survive, wiping my feet. There's probably no other image that stands out more to me, that has helped impact, I hope, my ministry and my leadership. In that culture, where a woman will rarely touch another man who she was not married to, for them to hold my feet and wash my feet, what that said to me was, you are accepted in love. We don't know you. We have no idea really who you are, other than a title that other leaders have shared with us about you, but we want you to know that you're loved and cared for. And I think for me that has hopefully helped shape my ministry, and my leadership, of what it means to truly accept and love another person. I don't think I'll ever be at that level of love and acceptance that those two sisters were at, at that moment. But when I think about those times when I get frustrated, sometimes frustrated with

myself more than others, but frustrated with other members, members of the congregation I serve, I have to reflect back on those moments and say, "Wait a minute. Am I reflecting what those two sisters shared with me in those moments?" So, I think for me, there are other things, but that probably has, probably changed my ministry, and helped shape my ministry, and hopefully in some significant ways. And I think in those moments, also, that subconscious or even conscious, hierarchical ladder regarding culture, that I had in my mind, it really began to shrink some. There are many other stories I could share, but that sums up how my ministry, I think, hopefully, has been shaped and formed in ways that is hopefully more effective today.

Carla Long 30:57

Thanks, Rick, that was beautiful. Thank you so much for sharing that. Ken, what about you? How does your involvement in the world leadership of the Church change what you do now?

Ken McLaughlin 31:06

Carla, this is the most difficult question that you indicated you might be asking us today. I'm gonna go a different direction, I think, from Susan and Rick, though I understand, through experience, exactly the kinds of things they were talking to me. Rick, instead of it being my feet that were washed, it was a woman who went out of her way to find a China tea cup that she could serve me tea that day, from that cup, though the family did not use anything of near that value. But I understand those kinds of moments and what they do. I'm the leader of a congregation, the lead pastor of a congregation, where being a member of the Council Twelve, no slack is cut for you because of that, because it's a congregation that has, for decades, had among its membership, members of the World Church Leadership Council. We're still honored to have retired President Grant McMurray with us, though he's not in good health, but we do see him probably half the time, in spite of the advanced stages of the disease that is crippling him. And so, there was very little adjustment needed for me to be just going back to who I was before being a World Church leader. We probably have a third of our active members, at any given time, that are retired leaders of the Church. And there is a high understanding of cultural nuance and cultural difficulty, and that has been true in that congregation for a long time. I didn't have to add to that as well. Nor is there a wide-eyed, naïve, and sometimes ignorant, view of what it means that we are a global church, and how tiny we are as a global church, in the midst of a very, very large planet. And so that's not been any of my job as well. What it has been, is to help a congregation understand the importance of a denomination giving us common sense, clear understanding, such as the nine Enduring Principles. That's what's been helpful, for us to understand that what we do must be in harmony, or ought to be in harmony, with that, 'cause those are core principles of a frankly, any good religious movement. But in our case, we call it Enduring Principles, and that there are 9 of them. The other thing, and I don't know if we're going to get into this, Carla, or not, really, is for the congregation to understand that there are, in the leadership statement that we have put together locally, that there's really 4 things were called to do as a congregation. They are Christian education, community engagement, pastoral care, and worship. Those are in alphabetical order, 'cause our statement has them in alphabetical order. And that we need to, as difficult as this is to do, even in a congregation, we need to keep those in some kind of balance, because they all depend on one another to happen, to have the understanding of where you are your weakest. And for our particular congregation, it was in community engagement. And to, I'll use the word rev-up what we do in those ministries. They were not in sync, or in good balance with the other three. That's not to say any of them are more important than the other. And so, knowing the World Church

has helped me as a leader understand how that community engagement needs to look, particularly beyond just the greater Kansas City area, and what it means to have interfaith dialogue, and respect for one another. Right now, we're planning to have, as one of our speakers, a local Muslim community activist, who also happens to be a gregarious, wonderful man, who has hilarious, humorous insights into America, he's Turkish by his own background, but for those kinds of things to be a part of the fabric of a congregation, to invite our mayor to speak to us, not as an afterthought, but on Sunday morning, at the main time. Those are the kinds of things that the World Church has helped me, as a leader, understand need to happen routinely, not necessarily constantly, but continuously. Otherwise, we're just not succeeding at mission locally.

Carla Long 35:43

Oh, no, that's okay. I appreciate what all of you had to say. And I also appreciated that they, all three of you, came from a different place. And I think that that's really cool. And I think that that's very Community of Christ of us, actually, to all serve in a certain position, and then come out of it and have learned different things, and are completely different people, and serve in different ways, and see the Church in different ways. I think it's very, very cool. I have so appreciated this podcast. Thank you so much. I only have one question left for you. It is, how do people relate to you now, in your non-apostolic roles of ministries? Are you haunted by ghosts of responsibilities past? So, how do people relate to you? Is it different than you see other pastors, or whomever being related to? So, Rick, do you have an answer to that? Let's go Rick, and then Ken, and then Susan.

Rick Maupin 36:34

Well, I guess we would question whether I have an answer to that. I've got some words I'll throw out there, Carla, that may or may not answer this question. And as Ken indicated with the previous question, I think in some ways, this is a tough question. You know, I first read that question, Carla, I think the first thing that came to my mind was my close working relationship with the other three members of the pastor team at Woods Chapel. Well, we work very closely. We meet multiple hours a week, literally in meetings, and one of the members of that pastor team, other than myself, is my wife. So, she relates to me, just like she always did, "Oh, it's just Rick." Well, maybe not that way, but you know, she knows me better than anyone. She knows me better than I know myself at times. But I try to share with people that even though I've had some opportunities that maybe they have not had, nor maybe never will have, that doesn't mean that I have more knowledge or wisdom. That just simply means I've had some other experiences, and they've had experiences I haven't had. So, there are times when I try to caution them that, hey, these are my thoughts, but that doesn't mean that there are not some other whole lot better thoughts than these ways to go. And so, at times, there's kind of that relationship that, oh, gosh, he's served on the Council of Twelve. And I tried to share with them that, yeah, I did, but that doesn't make me any smarter or more spiritual than anyone else. I do try to share my experiences with them to maybe help pick the conversation along or we're headed. As far as haunted by ghosts of responsibilities of past, that can be a scary question. And, you know, I guess if I were really honest, I would dig into some things that maybe, I think, oh, gosh, did I really say those things? Did I do those things? Did I really treat a person in that way? And hopefully it wasn't too unChristian-like. But as I thought about that, just a couple of things, Carla, because I know that we do have some limited time here. But I think one of the things, as I reflect back on this, no regrets. But I think I really tried to listen when I served in the various fields I served in, but I think that it's not really

something haunting, but as I think back on it, I wish I would have listened more. I think I went into those areas, I really every time I got on that plane and traveled somewhere, I thought, what can I learn this time? But there were times when I think that my agenda overshadow the opportunities I would have had to learn more about the culture, and in particularly how the culture is enriching our faith community, Community of Christ. And so, again, it's not a regret, or haunted by some ghosts, but I know I've shared with others who have moved into roles that Ken and Susan and I have served in on the Council of Twelve. And that's one of the things I've shared with them. I said, "When you get out there in the field, listen as much as possible to the people and try to learn from them." And, you know, I oftentimes would go into those areas and, like others, you know, you may be there 2, 3, 4, sometimes up to 7 weeks at times, a couple of months, and always went in with an agenda, and that's necessary. But there are times when I think my agenda, probably in some ways, impacted the ability for me to really listen and to learn more. If I knew what I know now, back several years ago, I probably would have gotten off of that plane and said, "Okay, let's set the agenda aside for a little bit and listen a little bit more." And so again, I don't want to say that's a regret. I don't think it's something that really haunts me, but as I reflect back that, that's certainly something I would say, "Yeah, listening, listening, listening." And I have learned from that, and I try, in my current leadership roles with the congregation, I try to listen more. It's still hard for me to put my agenda side, but I try to listen, and I think that's one of the things that I've learned from my apostolic role.

Carla Long 40:43

Thanks, Rick. And, as someone who is moving into a World Church Leadership Council role, not in the Council of Twelve, that's really good advice for me. Thank you, I appreciate it. Ken, what about you?

Ken McLaughlin 40:54

I do not have major regrets. I don't, because I think if I permitted myself to have them, I could be haunted by a lot of regret. That doesn't mean that I haven't gone back and thought about some of the errors that I made in that 10-year time as a World Church leader. I have. The one thing that I learned early in my time in the Council of Twelve, was that because I was so overwhelmed at suddenly having, at first, an all international assignment, and in many ways, the Hawaiian Islands are an international assignment, my prayer was often, "God, please do not let me do any damage to the wonderful people that I'm going to work with, and minister to, and be ministered by. Please don't let me do any damage." And I found that especially true in the nations that were English speaking, where I found myself more comfortable, and thinking that I understood what was going on necessarily. So, I would say that. I regret that the World Church, as an institution, is, at least by my dated information, spends a great deal of time on unproductive meetings, and that it has not become a more efficient institution in that regard. I regret that we didn't spend enough time letting folks understand the precarious nature of the Church in the developed world with very difficult demographics, an aging population, with the financial precariousness of the church. I regret that in our official publications, we painted too rosy of a picture, and I believe still do paint too rosy of a picture. I regret that we did not somehow help people understand their call to do the work of being a Christian disciple in their area, but with understanding of what's going on and knowledge of what's going on elsewhere, but not to let them become a rose colored, glass wearing people about how everything's just okay with the denomination, 'cause it's not. And it's not better than it was when I served. So, all of those things. Yeah, no regrets, particularly,

mostly just this incredible sense of gratitude, and wanting to continue being a local member and leader, trying to do their best for the Christian call in this area.

Carla Long 43:36

Thank you so much, Ken. I appreciate your honesty. Susan, what about you?

Susan Oxley 43:42

Yeah, so, most of the people that know me well, family and friends and my close associates, they just know me as Susan, Oma, Nana, Mom, and, I think, don't even consider the fact that I used to be an apostle. But others, even friends that I didn't expect it from, seem to keep having in their minds this title that I used to have as apostle, and bring it up in conversations, sometimes introduce me as a former apostle, and it always seems to kind of be a stopping point in the conversation, something that is inserted that I don't necessarily want to be there. And it puts a strain on conversations at times, especially if we happen to be talking theology or about the World Church. Those are the times I tend to hold back on my own comments, because otherwise I come across as too authoritative and I have no authority anymore, if I ever did. Past responsibilities haunt me sometimes. There are things I wish I could have done better, that I wish I could have handled differently. I sometimes think about how much time I spent on administrative ideas, and tasks, and all of those paperwork kinds of things, instead of people work, and wish it had been different. But I really don't have any major regrets, just some things I would have done differently if I could have. But I also find I'm haunted by those responsibilities when people ask me questions about current policies and procedures, or current legislation and expect me to have the answers. And I have to keep reminding them, you know, I, I resigned from the Council 7 years ago, and things have changed since then. And they've developed, they've matured, they've moved on. And so, whatever I say is an answer that is 7 years old, and you have to remember, when you ask me a question, that that's what I'm telling you, is how things were 7 years ago. And whatever I knew then, I may have even forgotten or am remembering wrong. So, I just have to always preface my comments with that. People expect me to know inside information, or be buddy, buddy with somebody in the World Church that I may hardly know because they came after me. And so, there's also this little bit of name dropping that people do, and then nudge, nudge, you know, "Oh, you know, that person. You know what they think?" And I'm going, "No, not necessarily." So, there's some of that that goes on. And I just try to laugh it off and keep being who I am. And gradually, over the years, that's gotten a little bit better. But as I work in new areas, and new ministry, I am so grateful for the time I spent, the enrichment that it gave me, the doors that were opened for new opportunities. I have been so blessed. And I am grateful for every single experience I had.

Carla Long 47:00

Well, I am grateful for all three of you. Thank you so much for loaning us your wisdom and just talking about all the things that people might not understand. So, I really am grateful for that. And thank you so much for being here, Susan, Rick and Ken. It's been an honor to speak to you today, and I'm just, feels really grateful that I get to call you friends.

Susan Oxley 47:22

Thank you for the opportunity, Carla. This was fun.

Josh Mangelson 47:33

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