

Coffee Connect | Questions ... Questions ... Questions

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SPEAKERS

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Hello, and welcome to Coffee Connect, a Project Zion Podcast series where we share inspiring stories and thought-provoking reflections of life and ministry that remind us of God's loving presence in the world. I'm your host, Blake Smith. And today I want to share a reflection called "Questions, questions, questions," that first appeared in my "From the Desk of ..." blog in January 2018, but still rings true today.

As another week goes by with mass shootings, domestic abuse, partisan bickering, inner city violence, human trafficking, and wars between nations, I am confronted by so many questions. How do I uphold a visionary and prophetic voice in the midst of a faithful and loving people who see things from vastly different perspectives? I'll admit, I don't have answers, just questions, but it seems I'm not alone.

In the February 2018 edition of *Sojourners* magazine, Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, in his article entitled, "Who is Jesus for us Today?," raises an important series of questions that must be answered by individual disciples, as well as the gathered community of those who claim to be followers of Christ, not to mention a community belonging to a worldwide church that believes in the worth of all persons and the sacredness of creation, just to name a few.

Here is an excerpt from his article:

"Are we confronted today simply by another set of vexing economic and social developments that require our attention, or is something deeper at stake? When rising forces of nationalistic exclusivism are fueled by racial bigotry, when naked global struggle for money and power shreds bonds of human solidarity, and when unbridled greed threatens planetary survival, is the truth and integrity of our faith at stake? Is the only response capable of addressing the roots of this crisis, one of spiritual resistance and renewal rooted in what it means to confess Jesus Christ as Lord? In other words, is this a Kairos moment, calling us to a clear discernment of what it means in this present context, to confess our faith? And must such a confession then shape the communities of those who believe the gospel?"

Drawing from the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the underground seminary he started and Finkenwalde, Germany in 1935, Granberg-Michaelson points to a key question asked of that community on a daily basis. "Who is Jesus for us today?" He goes on to say,

"It is also our question at this Kairos moment, as we discern the shape of God's unfolding mission in today's world, and our participation in this work of the Spirit. Asking this question drives us to seek those practices and form those sacred communities whose life and work embody a faith with the power to confront and overturn the idolatries of this era.

The church today faces the challenge of embarking on a pilgrimage, a journey from the necessity of words to the formation of lives, from the announcement of our declarations, to the pronouncement of our discipleship, and from the frenzy of our activity to the building of Christian community.

Can we nurture the formation of Christian faith in communities of missional discipleship that can stand the test of time? And can this compel us to participate courageously and joyfully in God's reconciling and redeeming mission in the world?

Questions, questions, questions... None of them easy... All of them necessary if we truly want to build the peaceable kingdom.

May God bless you as you seek answers to these questions for yourself. Have a blessed day!