

# Coffee in the Swarm | Christian Biwott

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Graceland, church, campus ministries, Christ, Lamoni, Cheville, Afterglow

## SPEAKERS

Christian Biwott, Aliyah Farrell, Levi Triplett, Mike Hoffman

### **Aliyah Farrell** 00:27

Welcome back to Coffee in the Swarm, a Project Zion Podcast production coming to you from Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa. The Swarm is our on-campus snack bar in the Newcom Student Union. This year our podcast is co-hosted by campus chaplains Aliyah Ferrell and Levi Triplett and is hosted by campus minister, Mike Hoffman. Coffee in the Swarm is where we interview students at Graceland who are connected to the Community of Christ. Today we are with our guest speaker, freshman Christian Biwott.

### **Levi Triplett** 00:53

So Christian, tell us about yourself. Tell us your story.

### **Christian Biwott** 00:57

Well, my name is Christian. I am originally from the Northwest congregation in Des Moines, Iowa, where I grew up until sophomore year of high school where I then moved down to Lamoni, Iowa and was part of the Bloomington congregation.

### **Levi Triplett** 01:17

Okay.

### **Aliyah Farrell** 01:18

Allright. So tell us about your year here at Graceland, your major your house, anything other that you'd like to smell.

### **Christian Biwott** 01:25

So, my year had Graceland has been phenomenal. I've had so much fun. My house, big Cheville... we won Homecoming this year. (Not air band though), big Cheville

### **Mike Hoffman** 01:37

Who won air band Levi?

### **Levi Triplett** 01:41

Agape and Amici.

**Christian Biwott** 01:45

And who won homecoming Levi?

**Aliyah Farrell** 01:47

Nobody cares.

**Levi Triplett** 01:48

Yeah, Nobody really cares.

**Aliyah Farrell** 01:49

Everybody's there for air band.

**Christian Biwott** 01:52

Yeah, and so my year here has been awesome. My major is Business sociology currently.

**Mike Hoffman** 01:59

Business administration are a different....

**Christian Biwott** 02:03

No, well, business marketing.

**Mike Hoffman** 02:05

Okay. Okay, so marketing. Very good. Yeah. And how are you liking it? How's it going?

**Christian Biwott** 02:09

Um, it's definitely a different experience than high school has been really enjoying learning the ins and outs of business.

**Mike Hoffman** 02:17

Okay. Cool. I was a marketing major not here at Graceland. But I love marketing.

**Aliyah Farrell** 02:22

So you cheated on us!

**Mike Hoffman** 02:24

I cheated on you?

**Aliyah Farrell** 02:25

On Graceland.

**Mike Hoffman** 02:26

No, I didn't even know Graceland existed when I was in college. (Oh) it's sort of weird. (Oh, really?) Well, I wasn't... when I started college, I wasn't a member of Community of Christ. So.

**Levi Triplett** 02:38

Okay, so you said that you're a member of Bloomington. So and how are you like, how are you liking that?

**Christian Biwott** 02:43

Bloomington is awesome, man. One of the people that attend there is Max Pitt. And for those who don't know Max Pitt is just an amazing person and (a professor here at Graceland). He's a professor here at Graceland. And he's definitely helped me form a spiritual path with where I'm going and what I am doing.

**Mike Hoffman** 03:11

Is he one of your business professors?

**Christian Biwott** 03:13

No, I don't have him for any classes. (Okay.) I've actually, I lived here for, up until this semester started, for like three years and I didn't even know he taught at Graceland.

**Mike Hoffman** 03:24

You just knew him from Bloomington.

**Christian Biwott** 03:25

I just knew him from Bloomington.

**Levi Triplett** 03:27

So what is he a professor of like, what is what is he doing?

**Christian Biwott** 03:29

He does Ag Business.

**Mike Hoffman** 03:30

Ag Business. Okay, so he is connected to the business school. So but yeah.

**Aliyah Farrell** 03:37

Okay, so what brought you to Graceland?

**Christian Biwott** 03:40

So ever since I was a kid, everybody in my church at Northwest that felt like went to Bloomington or went to Graceland. Everybody when you went to Mission Center conference, everybody went to Graceland camps. They always have Graceland. Oh, what do they call Oh shoot. I just lost it. (Pamphlets.) No, the people that come (alumni) no reps Oh Graceland Reps. Whenever I went to camps they always had Graceland reps and so ever since a young age I knew about Graceland. I knew that it was a church-sponsored school. And I've always wanted to be there. The first thing I remember wanting to come here for it was because my grandma told me ... I shouldn't say that... (no, you should say that). yeah, I mean I can say that but I the first thing that I remember like wanting to come here is

because that's where I thought people went to go get married and to find oh no find their partners. And so I was like, I'm gonna go I'm gonna go to Graceland and I'm gonna get married and ....

**Aliyah Farrell** 04:44

How's that working out for you?

**Christian Biwott** 04:46

Well... so...

**Levi Triplett** 04:53

So okay, this is just like a personal question, but did Spectacular like influence your decision to come here?

**Christian Biwott** 04:59

Oh, Of course so, I mean, I had already wanted to come here. I actually moved. The reason I moved sophomore year is so that way I could use the Decatur County Promise which is if you live in if you live in Decatur County and you attend a Decatur County high school for two years, you get to come to Graceland tuition free.

**Levi Triplett** 05:23

Whoa, that's a great deal.

**Christian Biwott** 05:25

It really is. And so, when I was when I first heard about that, we were like, well, the best way to afford Graceland would be to move down to Lamoni. So that's why I originally moved to Lamoni. And, but I, so I always wanted to go to Graceland, but then go to SPEC really showed me the campus, really showed me how campus ministries can be involved. And I would say that's why I met both of you guys. You guys will forever be lifelong friends. And so not just wanting to go to Graceland to find a wife, but to find friends as well. And study with.

**Mike Hoffman** 06:06

Good that you clarified that.

**Christian Biwott** 06:09

And study with other people from Community of Christ. Going to SPEC really positively influenced my decision.

**Aliyah Farrell** 06:18

Alright, so we know that you went to the Bloomington church here in Lamoni, but how is that different from your experience for like church life as like a student with the other Community of Christ, because I know you were really active as a high schooler, you are on campus a lot. So how's that different now as a college student?

**Christian Biwott** 06:35

So I've been so last year, I went to Afterglow, which is our campus ministries', Wednesday night program, and it's student-led and student-organized

**Mike Hoffman 06:47**

And you did that as a senior in high school...

**Christian Biwott 06:50**

I did that as a senior in high school and for that, and that was the first time really being introduced to a non like full adult, or ordained person leading the worship. And so I thought that that was just amazing coming to Graceland and seeing that. And so, I've been, pretty much I've tried to stay as involved with campus ministries ever since then. And I'm being a campus Chaplain now, and It forgot the question.

**Aliyah Farrell 07:24**

Your church experience at Graceland?

**Christian Biwott 07:29**

Oh, my church experience at Graceland has been really good with going to Afterglow and seeing the different types of opportunities that Campus Ministries has provided for not just me before everyone who wants to be involved. Campus Ministries isn't just a place for that. You have to be a part of the Community of Christ Church, or Campus Ministries has to find you out to be a part. Campus Ministry is open for anyone and everyone who just wants to come on in.

**Levi Triplett 08:04**

Nice. So you have any big plans in the near future? Or especially after graduation?

**Christian Biwott 08:12**

Well, hopefully to get married. And...

**Mike Hoffman 08:16**

Glad we've clarified that. So, are you dating anybody now? (No.) Okay.

**Aliyah Farrell 08:21**

That's why I asked... How's it working out?

**Christian Biwott 08:23**

I got three more years. (Yeah. Okay.) But big plans, man, really just live my life to the fullest and how I can keep the church and keep God was one. And I don't. I don't really have big plans. I mean, I know I'm going to do big things. I know, I'm definitely going to be involved with the church and a lot of ways and so really just do whatever I can to work for the church and work for God and Jesus.

**Mike Hoffman 08:59**

So do you want to do when you see work for the church? Do you want to, like a job with the church? Is that what you're looking at?

**Christian Biwott** 09:05

Yeah, that's, that's, that's the goal. And so whether that is a paying job, whether that's a non-paying job, whether it's just volunteering, whether it's pastor, or (so you're keeping your options) minister, I'm keeping my options complete, whether it's president of the church one day. Yeah, I keep my options open and really, really just work for the church, for God in whichever way I can. Yeah. (Cool.)

**Aliyah Farrell** 09:08

All right, this just kind of a loaded last question, which is probably gonna get you talking because you have a lot of ideas about this. So this one is what are your hopes for Community of Christ in the future? And what is one thing you would want the leaders of Community of Christ to know going forward?

**Christian Biwott** 09:57

Oh man, I love that question. Can you repeat the first part?

**Aliyah Farrell** 10:02

What are your hopes for Community of Christ in the future?

**Christian Biwott** 10:05

My hopes for Community of Christ in the future is just, oh, shoot, I don't even know how to how to answer that I have so many hopes and so many dreams for Community of Christ. I think that we are doing an amazing job of carrying out missions and carrying out our goals. I love the Enduring Principles. One thing I hope to see is just our invitational skills to lead outside of our communities. So when I say that, I mean, not just in different countries or continents, or in different outside communities and other cities or states, but I mean, inside of our own community, in ways that people may not realize or may not see, and that we may not think about inviting them, I love just keeping the invitation open. And I hope that Community of Christ always stays that way where anybody can just walk into our doors, and they can worship with us, and that we may be able to keep it keep the way that we have. Another thing I want to see in the church is, I don't know, I lost it. I forgot what else I wanted to see.

**Aliyah Farrell** 11:30

The other question is, what is one thing you would want the leaders of Community of Christ to know like,

**Christian Biwott** 11:33

What would oh, what I want them to know, the leaders is that were out there ... is that there is a lot of youth that are looking for leadership positions. Whether that's me Aliyah, Levi, or ... there's so many people out there that love the church so much, and that want to be a part of it. And that ... I don't know how to say this. Like, we like I can just say, we're out there, we're ready. And we love. I personally love to learn. And I know that we're all looking for ways to be leaders within our own little parts, not necessarily of the big World Church, but we're ready to know I lost it again. We're out there. That's all I can say, though.

**Mike Hoffman** 12:40

That's good. I mean, Christian, you're so you're involved in Campus Connections, which is our Tuesday, (...). Yeah. Like, local time here at two o'clock. And then you're also on Thursday, usually, at nine o'clock. When I say those times, of course, they're like, central time, central USA time. And then you're also involved in Inspire which all three of you are so yeah. So does that lead to any more thoughts about being involved with the church, Or...? Oh, it's totally fine.

**Christian Biwott 13:16**

I'm also involved with Bloomington still? (Oh, yeah), Sundays and we have, something that I'd love to see is a college-aged perspective, because I find it so interesting that that aspect of not being not being in senior high, but not being with all the adults, but being in that middle, middle section of young adults that have a yearning to learn about other things that are from different perspectives. Like we're still in, we're not in high school, but we're not out there paying all of our bills for everything. And we're not owning our own houses yet. That college perspective of, we're in the in between stage, and that's kind of something that I've just loved to see. I don't know if that's what you were asking.

**Levi Triplett 13:23**

Well, I think that's, that's about it, but do you have any other closing thoughts or anything else that you wish to share?

**Christian Biwott 14:29**

Man, I would just like to say thank you guys, you three for doing this podcast. And thank you, Mike for doing this the last... I don't know how long I remember. I remember this summer, I would go with my friend on a jog every morning. And for like the first week, he'd always asked me what I'm listening to, and I looked up the Coffee in the Swarm ones for the previous year, and I would listen to those while ... John was like, why are you running and listening to this church podcast, but I appreciate you guys so much for doing this and putting this on for the weeks and yeah, thank you guys. Thank you.

**Aliyah Farrell 15:13**

Okay, well that wraps up things for today's episode of Coffee in the Swarm. Thank you guys for listening this is Aliyah

**Levi Triplett 15:19**

and Levi

**Mike Hoffman 15:20**

and Mike

**Aliyah Farrell 15:21**

signing off until next time.