

Cuppa Joe | Historic Sites Foundation Fall Lecture Series | Become More AWARE: RLDS Feminism in the 70s

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

church, women, ordination, feminism, Christ, grassroots movements, AWARE, advocacy, priesthood

SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, David Howlett, Nancy Ross

Karin Peter 00:30

Welcome to Cup of Joe, where we explore Restoration history. I'm your host, Karin Peter. Here at Cuppa Joe, we partner with the Historic Sites Foundation to interview the presenters from their lecture series. And today our guests are Nancy Ross and David Howlett from I think it's the 2023 Fall Winter Lecture Series if my memory serves. Nancy is a department chair and associate professor in the Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Department at Utah Tech University, where she has been teaching for 16 years. Her PhD is in art history, but her current research focus is on the history and sociology of religion. David Howlett is the Mellon visiting assistant professor of religion, that's a mouthful David, at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, Dr. Howlett earned his BSC from the University of Central Missouri, and MA from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and a PhD from the University of Iowa. He is a specialist in American religions and has published works, including the Kirtland Temple: the Biography of Shared Mormon Sacred Space, and co-authored Mormonism: the Basics. David is one of three official historians for Community of Christ and you all serve on the Community of Christ Sacred Story Team is that. (That's correct). Okay. So welcome Nancy and David. You're not newbies to project Zion, or are you newbies to Cuppa Joe, but we're glad to have you. So let's dig into our discussion of your contribution to the Historic Sites Foundation Fall Lecture Series, the title is, "Become More AWARE: RLDS Feminist Activism in the 1970s." And I have to tell you, when I first read that, I got all the happy, little prickles because I lived through the 1970s as a teenager and participated in my own way in feminist activism. We didn't know that's what it was at the time. The description of your lecture reads, "David and Nancy will narrate the development of RLDS feminist activism in the 1970s, and will trace the evolution of RLDS feminism from a small consciousness raising group in the late 1960s, to a more formal advocacy and educational organizational organizations in the 1970s." And you will pay particular attention to the grassroots group known as AWARE, and its advocacy for egalitarian relationships in the church and society. Whoosh. Okay, so my first question just to get us started, and then you can go where you will is, Why did you choose this topic? And how did the two of you decide to team up and make this presentation? How'd that come about?

David Howlett 03:30

David, you want to start? Um, yeah. Okay. (Surprise David) Well, just trying to say about why I think it's important that so the big kind of, one big intellectual question is first, to frame it in these terms. Oftentimes, historians have looked at what they're calling the new left for the 1960s. That's kind of falling apart by the early 1970s. Students for Democratic Society implodes, so does all kinds of other things, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, all those things implode in 72, basically, and they say it's over. And I think it's good to push back on that and say that some of the egalitarian ideas and hopes the groups in the 60s had lived on in the 1970s in various ways. And some of those places end up being churches, as churches begin changing things, especially around feminism, but not just around feminism in the 1970s. I think feminism is a really, really good way that that to think about all these different kinds of like new left things to because feminists in the 1970s religious not religious, but especially religious feminists are really aware of what we would today call intersectionality. But they're thinking about it. Like it's not just about feminism, it's about all kinds of other forms of difference. And they're developing language and thoughts and strategies for trying to address this. And in part what they're doing too, as we're looking at is they're doing it through all kinds of new ways of organizing themselves new kinds of groups, new forms of advocacy, including consciousness raising groups. So that's why that's one of the reasons why we the big, big kind of like, setting for saying, why this is important to historians of thinking about the 1970s. And religious groups, like the Community of Christ, like the Episcopal Church, others have these kinds of feminist activist groups within them that are trying to create new, egalitarian relationships within the church, which they recognize is not just about the church, but it's about people in society as well. Nancy?

Nancy Ross 05:41

Yeah, no. So I, and of course, David, so much of David's research is on like, what happens in the church and a few other areas in the 1970s, too. And so I come at it from a slightly different point of view, where I have been a participant in the Mormon feminist movement for a long while now. And I'm a second-generation Mormon feminist, which, most mostly, the children of Mormon feminists just leave the LDS church and so, so there aren't necessarily many, many second generation, folks. And so I've been studying the History and Sociology of Mormon feminism for about a decade now. And when David approached me, and I'm very much interested in things like the development of the exponent, and other Mormon, LDS women who were advocating for change in their church and in society in the middle and late 20th century. And so when David approached me and was like, oh, you know, why don't why don't we study take a look at RLDS and Community of Christ feminism, I was like, Well, you know, this is a really interesting comparison point for me, because I know how LDS women used the resources of their tradition to advocate for gender equality in their own church. And I know what they did, and I have a strong sense of like the trajectory of that particular path. But I don't really know much about this other this other story. A few years prior to Dave and I working together I had met Marge Troeh, I think at John Whitmer conference, I think it was 2007 to 2017, or 2018. And I didn't really know who she was, and she, she just kind of, and so all of a sudden, I find myself talking to someone who has like many interesting things to say, and I realized that there are many very interesting stories, but I didn't necessarily have a way in and so I think it was in the summer of 2020. David, you reached out to me, and you asked if I would be interested in the two of us working together on some of this. And, and I was very excited. I was very excited by this because it seemed like for me, I would get to put another Latter-day Saint tradition into, like I would get to understand like, the more the Mormon stuff, also through the lens of some of this other stuff, and this other tradition, and that seemed really interesting, and an

extension of the interests I already had. So yeah, but that's a little bit about my interest, and we started working together and many exciting things kind of immediately began to emerge. We started doing some oral history work and started, realized that there was a lot to work with, I think.

Karin Peter 08:30

So as you as you began to do this and had your conversations about what this might look like, what were some of the most important points or maybe important aspects, you you decided you wanted to make sure you included, you mentioned Marge Troeh, and then one, we could just put her as like her own category. Okay, that's an important person we want to highlight but what were some of the most important aspects you wanted to be sure your listeners heard.

Nancy Ross 08:55

I wanted to be sure that we weren't going to write institutional history. And so and that I was it was much more interested. I have my own experience of advocating for women's ordination in the LDS church, I was part of the first board of ordain women and helped organize people on Temple Square a decade ago now, and so I had an understanding of like, the experience of what it was like to be in feminist communities and to do activism, you know, with other people. And so I wanted I wanted what we did to largely tell some kind of grassroots story instead of centering the church institution in that story. And so that was important to me. Okay,

Karin Peter 09:44

David, what did you discover within yourself that you thought this is important for people to hear?

David Howlett 09:53

I guess so. For a long time I've this has been something like that's been important to be in various ways I think, my own kind of like, renewing on my membership in Community of Christ in my 20s. I came from I was raised in restoration as background, but baptized RLDS in 1986, a fateful year for a Restorationist, if you will. I was I was eight then. And then my parents became Restorationists. And I did too because I was with them, and went to Restorationist High School. And in my 20s, I renewed my membership in Community of Christ, because by that point, I really did believe in women's ordination. And I came to those conclusions parallel to what people were thinking about in the 70s and 80s. It was like, Well, when I finally read them, I realized, actually, I agree with them. So that was something that happened with me in my 20s. And it was part of my own kind of like, religious kind of like young adult affirmation of new commitments and reaffirmation of commitments. So, I in grad school, worked on some things. One grad paper women's ordination, in the RLDS church among Denae or Navajo women, it wasn't a particularly good paper, but I was trying to think about it and write about it at that point as well. So I, so I had something I wanted to do for a while and I knew sources existed. I knew that there were like theses that existed, but I thought, well, we can, this could be put into a larger context and a bigger story. And I think the story should be interesting to people, beyond Community of Christ, but think Community of Christ, especially.

Karin Peter 11:39

So when you began to work, then, with both your personal interest and your academic interests in this, what were some of the challenges in tracking this in Community of Christ? And the reason I ask is that

we do a series on women and Community of Christ history with Wendy Eaton here on Cuppa Joe and she just insist that we would that we tell the stories of women and get as close to their words as we can get and not use words of men to describe what we're talking about in women's history. And so I've become really aware of how challenging that is in Community of Christ. So I realized that's one challenge, but what were some of the initial challenges you faced.

Nancy Ross 12:27

So a lot of the women who did so much of this early work and were involved in grassroots groups like AWARE, or the RLDS Women's Caucus, before it are, are very elderly people, or they have passed on. And so one of the challenges for us is to, you know, try and capture some of these oral histories, some of the people that we would love to interview, are alive, but not really able to be interviewed. And that is a great sadness, and we're aware of some of the people who are, you know, we're aware that if they were able to tell their own story, they would add a richness to what we have to say, and undoubtedly many, many additional interesting things like insights and tidbits into what we have to say.

David Howlett 13:19

There's, I mean, oral history is provide us with an added way of trying to get at sources where there really aren't written sources in archives. But even written sources, where we're lucky enough to have some folks like Marge Troeh that donated some papers to the archives. We're lucky enough to have folks like Ruthann Wood, who kept some of her things from AWARE from, you know, the 1980s in a file. But then we're also aware that there are things that exist that we just don't have copies of, like, there's a full range of all the AWARE newsletters, for instance, were stood for awake worship...What's the...

Nancy Ross 13:58

action renewal education?

David Howlett 14:00

Yes, yes. So it was the name for the conscience raising group that was organized first in 1975 in Independence, and so but that group had like, sort of like a newsletter, sort of it was like, sometimes it was three by five cards, sometimes it was things they would send out. But those documents do exist. We just can't have we just have sporadic amounts of those kinds of documents. So which, and the ones that do exist are amazing. And you piece things together, then you interview people, and you understand what those documents were and context for them. But the other challenge is like, both Nancy and I have full time jobs. And both of us are parents. And it's like, well, we'd love to do more interviews, but it's in a do their research is there's no end to it. And one of the challenges too, is like in the process of doing research, you find out about things about people you need to talk to and then you find out oh my gosh, they passed away two years ago. If only I had known this two years ago, that kind of thing. Yeah. So that's also a challenge.

Karin Peter 15:03

It is an interesting time period for a lot of us who came of age in the 70s. When we talk about church history, or historical research and the 1970s, we blanch because we don't consider that historical. But, but I can see that would be extremely difficult, that particular age group because just of the generational

shift, that happens, and I don't think women's issues were considered important enough to really document and save and categorize at that time.

Nancy Ross 15:36

No, and that's certainly we've worked with Rachel Killebrew, the church archivist, who has been such a tremendous help for us every time she comes across anything, as she's cataloging boxes that she thinks might be relevant to us. She sends us. She lets us know what she's finding. And that's wonderful. But I think generally, because at this time period, right, the church, institutional history was largely excluded women, and so there are fewer resources to draw on, making oral histories all the more valuable. And really, one of the benefits of doing a talk like for the Historic Sites Foundation is that people come out of the woodwork and you know, and tell other stories. And we've had a little bit of that already.

Karin Peter 16:32

So as you began to put your presentation together, did you gain any, any particular new insights, as you prepare? Did something do you have epiphanies on anything that went, Oh, that makes everything makes sense now or not? Particularly, is in light of our own experience now, what carried forward what, what makes sense when you think about our experience now, when you began to look at the history of this?

Nancy Ross 17:04

So I think that one thing that kind of jumps out to me like in thinking of like my broader church experience here in Community of Christ is that women who are who are my so I never lived through the 1970s, I was born in 1980. And so women who are my age and younger, who, who really grew up in a very different church than their mothers grew up when, with regard to the LDS church and Community of Christ, they didn't see the struggle that, that that David and I studied, right. They didn't see the challenge and the challenging voices and our kind of assumed feminism and the ideas of equality as part of the background of their lives and as normal. And, they didn't have to fight for it. And which is very different from when we're reading about and listening to the experiences of the AWARE women, which is we're, we're, it's very obvious, you know, what they're reading and that feminist consciousness raising, and social awareness are like new and interesting. And that these are real interests for these women were often women, my age and younger, are less interested in the details of, of such things and, and forget or don't know that like that this was a real struggle that was never inevitable. And, and I think that that is a real challenge. And as someone who has advocated in challenging circumstances, for women's ordination, I understand something of the social risk that is involved of what happens when you are deeply part of a faith community and family members strongly disagree with you, and all and how such things bring to the foreground, rightly this is it's just it, this is just a challenging thing to do. And I think that younger generations of women get to benefit from these changes without understanding the costs, or the real tensions that existed around the change. I think David is in a different situation, because his family situation, you know, kind of lived that some of those tensions in a different way.

Karin Peter 19:26

So David let's talk about that. What new insights did you gain you had you kind of had your epiphany in your 20s. But as you began this research, what was your experience?

David Howlett 19:39

Well, so I guess, maybe two unrelated things, but one along with what Nancy was saying. I had read a fair amount of the research of women's ordination in America. And just to be clear, feminists in the 1970s were not united on the idea of women's ordination as being an issue They were for or against. And the reason why is that feminists, some feminists, including some RLDS feminists, thought that priesthood equals patriarchy. It is, you know, it's the institutional system and you don't want patriarchy, you want to, like, get rid of the patriarchy, get rid of like hierarchy and clericism. And so therefore, they don't want priesthood. So they wanted a different form of like being in the church. And then there are others who say, no, there is you can't achieve power without priesthood. And so there's that argument, or they want and in the process to those who advocate for priesthood want a more egalitarian priesthood too. It is very, very similar to the kinds of arguments and debates that Roman Catholics were having, who are feminists who have the exact same conversation. And you can go down the line of like feminists and all kinds of groups that are religious, have this very same conversation, so that were part of that bigger conversation that feminists are having. But I think that might be you could call that a smaller conversation, because that's a folks who identify self-identify as feminists. But I think the upshot is to say that groups that don't have somehow a general expectation of equality, don't get women's ordination, or it doesn't stick anyway. So I think one of the biggest insights is to say that what advocacy groups like AWARE and others that were grassroots really did was they helped create a general expectation for equality, that became very diffuse within the church, what whatever people thought about ordination, and that itself helps ordination to happen in the first place, with Wallace B. Smith, even having a revelation in the first place and people voting on it. And then it becoming normative and priesthood being different in the end in the RLDS church. And that's one of the biggest kinds of things that advocacy groups did. And as we've interviewed people, it wasn't simply like they're all for women's ordination, they're actually divided on that issue. But they were all for an egalitarian relationship among people in the church. And how that was accomplished, they had different visions for that. But they were part of a bigger kind of like, setting that was made possible, a general expectation for equality within the RLDS church, it wasn't just a summoning in society, whatever society is because there are plenty of churches where it's did not happen, there was no general expectation for equality, living in the same North American culture. But in this particular church centered in North America, not exclusively, obviously, there was a general expectation for equality. And that took work. And you can look at these people in these groups as helping with that.

Karin Peter 22:47

And as I look at where we are, now, I can kind of watch the footsteps connect from there to our commitment to everything printed in three languages, the three official languages of the church, equality and access of resources and funds and, and field ministry, even the expectation of, of the appreciation and unity of the diversity of the church as well, you can trace that into that same kind of foundation of equality. So what are other kind of understandings in Community of Christ that kind of came out of this period of feminist perspective? Or maybe a better way to ask it is, as people become more aware of the history of feminism in Community of Christ, how might that shape and form us as a people, as disciples in Community of Christ or continuing to shape and form us.

Nancy Ross 23:54

So it's, it's it really seems, from our study, that this issue of women's ordination had a really big impact on the church beyond just the issue of women's ordination, and something that is very clear. So before women's ordination, and depending on the area, but in many areas, it seems that it was rare for women to speak from the pulpit. And, and a lot of what the grassroots group is doing is for women to just, you know, kind of land in the pulpit and give a prayer or given an announcement or really just say anything, just so that people could begin to visualize what women's leadership might look like. But something that as AWARE is kind of advocating for a variety of things, including, you know, women's ordination, Marge Troeh from the Women's Commission side is really advocating for the church to think more expansively about the Office of member and this is something that today I think, is very visible in Community of Christ. I've only been in the church for not quite a decade. And one thing that was immediately obvious to me was that as a non-member in the church, but as someone who regularly attended, I was able to do a lot of things in the church that I wouldn't have been allowed to do, even as a temple recommend holding LDS woman. And so the sense of that most people can do most of the things in the church. And that ministry has a very expansive definition, instead of being largely limited to priesthood or understanding, from many conversations with people is that prior to women's ordination ministry was really understood as something that's synonymous with holding priesthood, and that as a result of this change, that there was a really then expanded definition of ministry, and so that so much of the work that women were already doing for the church, then came to be understood as ministry.

Karin Peter 25:51

David?

David Howlett 25:52

One idea, too, I think that these feminist groups too, AWARE in particular, and Sharon Paton Welsh as one exemplar of this, so Sharon Paton Welsh who will later leave Community of Christ in the 19, late 70s, who was a part of AWARE and become a Unitarian Harvard Divinity School Professor in the early 80s. So, she advocates for in 1977, the basis for thinking about women's ordination, which she's advocating for, should be the worth of all persons. And it should be a foundational idea. I think feminists in the 70s in the RLDS church, kind of run with these ideas, and especially this idea, the worth of all persons. And I think they help popularize that concept and congeal a theology around it. I do think you see that? Well, what Sharon Welch is doing is drawing upon earlier RLDS scripture and more recent ones from the 70s, too, but she's giving voice to it theologically. And I think that that is a small point. But it's still something that if you ask Community of Christ folks today about worth of all persons, they recognize that language automatically. So they're like various ways, which people could have made this case for women's ordination from restoration heritage, but that was how a lot of feminists in the 70s talked about it and thought about it was worth of all persons. And that has an expansive kind of like, like ability to talk about all kinds of things beyond simply about discrimination based upon gender, but all kinds of forms of worth, that shouldn't happen and not, there shouldn't be certain forms of discrimination as a result.

Karin Peter 27:28

And not done in a vacuum. Sometimes we forget in Community of Christ as these things happened within our own tradition, they were happening in the broader culture as well. And so there are correlations with feminist theologians that were making those writings and discoveries and research and lots of traditions. And we could, it would behoove us to see our own journey as part of that.

Nancy Ross 27:52

Very much, very much so. One of the things that we come across in the AWARE documents like from Marge Troeh's, archive files are reading lists, and so, and of course, the people they are, they are reading, you know, they're reading Catholic, like Catholic feminist theologians, who were doing a lot of the early pioneering work with feminist theology. And, you know, they're very much aware of what other feminists in other traditions are doing, which is interesting to me, because Mormon feminists on the LDS side, are, are really less aware and less using the resources outside of the LDS church to kind of support their feminism. And so, you know, RLDS feminists are pretty connected to what feminists in other traditions are doing. And I think that's exciting and important to remember.

Karin Peter 28:40

Absolutely. So I want to take this from the 300,000 foot level, I don't know how high didn't spaceships go down to personal level, how has your study of feminism broadly and in religious traditions and in Community of Christ shaped your own personal discipleship has it had an effect on you and your discipleship?

Nancy Ross 29:07

So I think that I think that there are so many ways in which my study of feminism has shaped has like, shaped my faith and my sense of who I am in the world. What David had mentioned earlier with regard to intersectionality, like reflecting on who I am and what my identities are, and where I hold power in society, and where I don't hold power in society, and then understanding that that impacts how I move through the world and it impacts how other people move through the world has been really foundational to, you know, creating a different kind of worldview than the one that I that I grew up that I inherited from being a Mormon person. And then I think more specifically studying RLDS women's history in this way is to understand that just because something is right does not mean that like the church is is going to immediately embrace it, but rather, ultimately it, you know, this is first referenced perhaps in 1920. And there were some there was a rogue ordination in the 1880s. And so the possibility or the idea of women's ordination was around a long time before people started advocating for it seriously. And then once people started advocating for it seriously, it was about 14 years, in order to get that kind of change that was needed in the church, to pave the way for women's ordination. And so I think sometimes, in a tradition that values things like revelation, we forget that advocacy is often a huge and important part of that role, and not just waiting for others to to have a grand moment of epiphany, which is often not where change begins.

Karin Peter 30:56

That's, that's such an important lesson. Nancy, thanks for for pointing that out. David, how about you?

David Howlett 31:03

And this was a question about my own personal discipleship as well. I guess I kind of narrate a part of my own why I became part of Community of Christ and I, it is hard to overestimate how this question of women's ordination affected me personally, I guess I could overestimate it. But I mean, but my earliest memories of church were memories of people having arguments on women's ordination. And like of my family, going to church, congregation after congregation in Independence, after the congregations became Liberalist, the way my parents explained it. And this was like, this was something that shaped my childhood. And then something that I kind of had this sense of too from even the church communities I was in this, there's something deeply unfair about denying women ordination, it seemed unfair to me as a high school student, looking around at my restorationist high school and seeing very talented, very spiritual, young women, who I knew would never be priesthood, who would never give sermons who actually had these gifts, and would never have that. And that seemed really unfair, even then, I thought that was not quite right. So I think, and I guess that's one, I mean, where does that those notions of fairness come from things like that. It's, well, it's part of your family, but the tradition, even the conservative tradition, that gave me that, that had this kind of like complementarian, if you will list of men women are just different. It's not that they're unequal. they're just different as a complementarian idea, even within that tradition, there were seeds of undoing it, I think, you know, seeds, which in this bigger tradition, could lead someone to say, but yet there is something unjust about this? And are we kind of supposed to value that and so there was that that was part of it. I think, for me, studying history also was part of it of like, studying history became also a way of not just of studying something about the past I was interested in, it became actually some ways of like my own questions and spiritual exploration really, which isn't an unusual story. We often study things we really care about. And so that for me, studying church history, which then put in the context of American religious history, became a way for me to to explore that heritage and contradictions and problems from the past and the immediate past of my own, you know, experience in churches.

Karin Peter 33:33

That's fascinating that you both had such diverse experiences, and yet, coming together to look at this subject growing up Restorationist, growing up Mormon, what I'm hearing is that it spoke to both of you and your innate sense of justice. And what that what that has to look like, lived out.

Nancy Ross 33:56

Absolutely. And I think we bring those lived experiences to the conversations that we have into the work that we do. And I think that's, that, you know, that that's part of the that's makes things more interesting.

Karin Peter 34:09

So I wanted to give you an opportunity to share with our listeners like what is the one takeaway that you hope listeners get from this lecture, because we're going to point our listeners right to the historicsitesfoundation.org website to watch this lecture. It's been archived there. What's your one, the hope that that people take away from this?

David Howlett 34:33

So I love one of Nancy's earlier points, which I really feel passionate about of saying like church history doesn't just happen at conferences, or in presidential pronouncements or documents, but it happens.... People make up church history, and that includes all members of the church. And so I think, focusing

on also, the work of grassroots groups shows that change has happened in the church not simply because of conference actions which are important but also the work of, of grassroots. And honestly, second point, when it's just grassroots, or if it's just top down, changes don't often work very well. It has to be like, also studies women's ordination consistently have shown post 1970s. It's only when grassroots and institutions come together, in some ways, like some support within the institution, a significant grassroots movement, that's when changing women's ordination can happen. And when one of those is lacking, like, there's no one in the institution is going to support it, the grassroots can actually affect the change. But also, if there's not a grassroots actually helping to create that, you also will have like, it goes nowhere in the institution to so I think those two working together have been, at least at this up nice, consistently, what's happened for any religious group within the United States, at least, to create some kind of change over women in ministry. So that's a big one big takeaway.

Nancy Ross 35:59

So I want to I want to just briefly tell the story that we tell in our lecture, and this is, I think, my favorite story that we that we have heard, and this and we've heard different versions of this from a couple of different people, including from a John Whitmer Historic Society talk from a couple of years ago. And one of the stories I believe it is from the 1976 World Conference, that the RLDS women's caucus wanted to have space within on the conference program to you know, gather and discuss issues as women. And they approached the church about such a thing, and they were denied. And then they arranged to have a meeting off site. So like at a local at a local school. And then they asked to be able to put their message their posters on message boards, and again, they were denied. And Madeline Brunson, the archivist decided that what they should do is put up the posters in the women's bathrooms, and then, and then that, and then nobody who would be upset would see them. And they'd be able to advertise their meeting. And then at their meeting, they had a lot of protesters show up. And I think one of the things, so I feel like this is a really important story, which illustrates exactly the sense of struggle, which is the church was not going to help women organize for anything at World Conference in 1976. And, and it said no to maybe the very reasonable request of notices on bulletin boards, and that even as these women were trying to meet in a separate location, there were still other people showing up to protest this thing. And I think that that speaks to the difficulty. Sometimes we want to think that the things that have happened in history were inevitable, it was inevitable that change was made. And I think that the determination of these women to continue to advocate for women's ordination and/or expanded roles for women in the church, regardless of personal cost, and even when they were, you know, transgressing the bounds that the church had set for them, it was not at all inevitable. And, and it's something that they that, you know, eventually did need to come through the prophetic voice. But that, you know, it didn't come out of nowhere. You know, it came, it came out of action and persistence. And I think that that can be an easy thing to forget. Yeah.

Karin Peter 38:38

Great struggle in some of these instances. And we've seen that with other diet diverse groups as well. Yes, it changes the church. Okay, so we are getting close to the end of our episode, but I want to make sure that I give opportunity for any closing thoughts that you would like to leave with our listeners. So, David, I'm going to come back to you. Any things you want to make sure you share with our listeners before we end our episode?

David Howlett 39:13

I don't know if share as much as I'd like to ask a question to the listeners. Like if you have stories that you'd like to share with us on this topic, and up to the grassroots feminism, but about women's ordination struggles with that, and even like organized opposition or unorganized opposition. We'd love to hear those stories. So add to what we know about that. Because we're always learning something new. We think we know a lot and then we realize oh, there's lots we don't know. So please share those with us. So yeah, please contact us.

Karin Peter 39:44

Okay, listeners, you heard that and we'll give contact information at the end of this episode. Nancy, I want to give you a chance for closing thoughts.

Nancy Ross 39:53

No, I just want to echo what David said, which is that if you have things to share, we would love to them. Wonderful.

Karin Peter 40:01

So for those of you who would like to share stories of women's activism and feminism and Community of Christ and RLDS Church and the story of how women's ordination came about, you can contact the David at Dhowlett@smith.edu. And you can also contact David through headquarters through the Sacred Sory Team. I think you can an email and contact in that way as well. For Nancy, that'd be Nancy is it Nancy.Ross, on your email, Nancy.Ross@Utahtech.edu. And we'll put both of those email addresses in the notes for this episode on the Project Zion Podcast website. And so for our listeners, we here we encourage you to view this lecture as well as all the other lectures from the Historic Sites Foundation fall winter 2023 series at historicsitesfoundation.org. And before you close, I feel like we just found a tagline that we should be using on Cuppa Joe, and that is people make up church history. I will take that as from this lecture. And this is Cuppa Joe, part of the Project Zion Podcast. I'm your host, Karin Peter. Our guests have been David Howlett and Nancy Ross. We thank them both for being here and thank you for listening.