

Extra Shot | International Perspectives on Sacred Space

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Carlos Enrique Mejia, Esras Hernandez, Mareva Arnaud Tchong, Angela Ramirez, Robin Linkhart, Catherine Mambwe

Robin Linkhart 00:27

Welcome to Project Zion Podcast. This is your host Robin Linkhart. And today I'm visiting with four Community of Christ apostles, who support diverse areas of the church across the globe. Together, they will share a little bit about the unique church history in the nations they serve, and how their people feel connected with sacred places in the church both near and far. They will also share about how God is moving in the nations they support and the vision and hope they have for the future. Join me now as we spend time with Mareva, Carlos, Angela, and Catherine.

I'm here now with Apostle Mareva Arnaud Tchong, who supports the Pacific Asia mission field. She is also the President of the Council of 12. Welcome, Mareva, we're so glad to have you.

Mareva Arnaud Tchong 01:25

Merci.

Robin Linkhart 01:28

I want to ask you a few questions today. And the first one is, what can you share about the unique church history in the nations that you serve?

Mareva Arnaud Tchong 01:39

So in the nations I serve, the unique history of the church is inherently connected to the arrival of faithful individuals from the Western world, and the strong faith of our ancestors. The establishment of the church has often been the result of missionaries. Local missionaries or believers from these Western cultures who brought with them their teachings and religious practices. And while deeply acknowledging and respecting the indigenous cultures, and peoples of these nations when they arrived, where it was important, it is important to know that the influence of Western people has often overlaid certain ancient practices, and beliefs. And as the church established itself in these regions, like in the Pacific or in Asia, it brought a new religious perspective, often different from indigenous beliefs. So, now I am quoting more about the history of the church in French Polynesia, if you don't mind. It reflects a complex dynamic between introduced Western faith and the traditional spiritual practices of French

Polynesia. Some aspects of local culture have been preserved and incorporated deeply in spirituality, while other ancient practices have sometimes been overshadowed, or transformed. But it's essential to emphasize that this interaction between these beliefs has not been uniform, or devoid of tensions. Local communities have often sought to find a balance between their traditional practices and the newly introduced faith. And it creates of course, a unique history of the church presence in in French Polynesia. So the power of the faith of the people is something I will always remind about the unique church history in the nation. And continual revelation is the correct way to, who is alive and God speaking through the ages and to different people is today one of the other aspects really essential because we are so different today than what we used to be in the past. We had to live through that experience. Maybe today the people will say, Oh, the history of the church is really kind of colonialism. Maybe depending in what aspects you're talking about. But we need, we needed, I don't know but it was our path. And that history makes us strong today. It is strange how we are, our ancient practices were shadowed like that. But today we are open eyes, with what God is calling us to be. We know that our culture is valued and our language, our way to seeing things we were prohibited in the past, we are now open to reflect on doing or not doing. And it's really the richness of the history. So I think that's what I will share about the unique church history in, in these nations and in French Polynesia.

Robin Linkhart 06:13

That's beautiful. And I love that rich tradition of story that that you share with us and a sense of coming full circle and embracing all of who you are, and living faithfully in the context of the story of the church as a whole. So yeah, unity in diversity, we finally got only scratched the surface. Yes,

Mareva Arnaud Tchong 06:40

It's true Robin, Apostle Robin, because when we begin, we never asked questions. We really believe it's deep in our stomach. In the stomach, we really believe. But after the same Western culture came and taught us, okay, reflect on yourself. So we were struggling with ourselves, because we were, we believe, in a way, and suddenly they are explaining that God is calling us to be ourselves. So what's the meaning of that? But in all these steps, today we understand who we are, and we have the choice to express our faith. So like you said, we made that journey, a circle of new beginnings. It's painful, sometime, and it is tiring, because we said, oh, it should be easy. Tell us and let's go. But no. And today's way, it's really wonderful to know that we can be who we are. And God is in the midst. Yeah, our Jesus can be brown or white. It's not a question of color, it's just an image of, we can find Jesus everywhere.

Robin Linkhart 08:22

I love that. So how did the church begin there at the very beginning?

Mareva Arnaud Tchong 08:29

So, the first missionary of descent church arrived in 1844 for such a long time, and they arrive on the island of Hawaii. Addison Pratt, Benjamin Grouard, and Noah Rogers. And first baptism, just the same year Polynesian, most of them. And if I have to make short, we were really strong on the islands called the Tuamotu Archipelago. Today, you will see that the majority of the Tuamotu Archipelago, are members of the church, so it's a lot of little islands. But, because of French laws at a time, these missionaries or or missionaries who were not French, they had to leave. So, they left, and local

indigenous faithful members stayed there. But in 1873, two missionaries of the Reorganization came back Wandell, Charles, and Glau Rodger and they when they arrived in Tahiti, or just at the ferryboats because they arrived by plane, no, by boat. But when they arrived there, they asked, Are there Saints somewhere here? And the people there heard about the Saints because the local indigenous continued to pray. And so they said, Yeah, we heard about a group of people on this mountain called Teparepare. And so they walked, they arrived there. They met the Saints, and kind of, it's not a miracle, it's just a Spirit thing, connection, and the reorganization took place. And that year, 1884, so another missionary arrived called Thomas [Apostle Thomas W. Smith] and we call him Tapatu. He arrives in Tahiti, and officially he binds the Saints of French Polynesia to be reorganized and connected with a church called at that time Church of Joseph Smith, church here, they headquarters. And he rebaptised all the Saints. The ones who wanted to be in the reorganization, he went on all islands, one by one. And still, we are we are here. So we had after that, a lot of missionaries who came. Most of them come from here, the United States. They were Mission Center, not Mission Center, but District/Stake, I don't know what's the name at that time president. And we had high priests and bishops and priesthood local, were ordained. So it was good to so there is this parallel? No. And we had our first leaders, local leaders. And since, we have only local leaders, leading the church there

Robin Linkhart 12:32

Including their Apostle. That's wonderful. I love that story. And so, Mareva, are there special sacred places or spaces that people feel connected with in light of the of thier history.

Mareva Arnaud Tchong 12:52

Oh, we do land i i mentioned, that land called Teparepare. The place where the Saints were sort of praying, singing, while waiting news, and where the reorganized, the missionaries of the reorganization came and met them there is one of that place. We have a lot of sites are so on islands, where missionaries went, stayed, and passed away. We had a few missionaries who passed away and they are still buried there. So these, well It's not sacred, however, members are still taking care of these places. But the one I said, Teparepare is one who is important. However, today, because of the space, you know that time you have all these huge space with with trees, but today, a lot of things buildings built around, and we have French laws to about noise. So we can't really organize our big services on that site. So the site is kind of using for associations and for our own with small activities or by congregations. But even though it's still precious, for the people. They can see that, they are open to, because they understand that this land is precious, however not really, for some, not useful for this time. So they are open to just see that the place the most important is in your heart is where you are, where the presence of God, where you can share your mission. It's the most important. So at this time, land is still hear. History, on this land, I have a lot of memories inside my child today. But, I can see the shift in way to think about, yeah, we have that land, but we can't use it as we would like, for mission. So what are we doing with that? It will take time, I'm sure for many. But for others, they are ready. We are a community based, based people. So we will wait a little bit to see what God is asking us to do with that site.

Robin Linkhart 16:01

Yeah. Did you have any last words you want to share with our listeners, before we wrap this up,

Mareva Arnaud Tchong 16:08

it was my honor to to give these little seeds of the history in the house, your house, your family at a place where you are. And, I'm sure we have common points. We have also unique and specific points in our history. But the beauty is that we are together in this journey and I cannot imagine doing this journey just by ourselves. It's ... we are not complete. So everywhere, wherever you are, whenever it is. We need you. We need all of us who like who we are authentic. And let's continue the write the history to create the story.

Robin Linkhart 17:10

I love it. Well, thank you so much for being with us mermaids, and we really appreciate it and thank you for sharing your story.

Mareva Arnaud Tchong 17:16

Merci Beaucoup.

Robin Linkhart 17:17

I am now here with Apostle Carlos Enrique Mejia, who supports the Central and South American mission fields,

Esras Hernandez 17:28

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 17:35

Carlos, we're so happy to have you with us today.

Esras Hernandez 17:39

Speaking in Spanish.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 17:48

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 17:50

It's a blessing to be able to share and thank you for sharing that invitation.

Robin Linkhart 17:55

And we also have Esras Hernandez with us to help us with our translations. Thank you Esras.

Esras Hernandez 18:01

You're welcome.

Robin Linkhart 18:03

Carlos, I have a few questions. I want to ask you today and then just let you share whatever you want to share in response to those.

Esras Hernandez 18:11

Speaking in Spanish i'm really interested in what you can share about the unique church history in the nation's that you serve and how the church got started. Speaking in Spanish

Robin Linkhart 18:42

And we'd love to hear about any special sacred places or spaces that the people of those nations feel connected with.

Esras Hernandez 18:54

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 18:58

So just take it wherever you want to as you tell us the story.

Esras Hernandez 19:04

Speaking in Spanish.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 19:05

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 19:12

[Translation] It is perhaps is a story that many people have already heard.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 19:18

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 19:23

[Tranlation] And is the story of how the churches started in Central America.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 19:28

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 19:29

[Translation] This story is very special because of the way it started.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 19:39

Speaking in Spanish [Translation] The year of 1957. a medical doctor, a member of the church here from Independence, Missouri.

Esras Hernandez 19:49

Speaking in Spanish [Translation] was diagnosed with terminal cancer and he didn't expect to live much longer.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 20:14

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 20:28

[Translation] So, he felt the need to be in a very different place, a place he didn't know about or have never even heard about before. So he sold all his belongings and took his family back to Honduras

Carlos Enrique Mejia 20:51

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 20:52

[Translation] He spent some time in Mexico, but he didn't feel the Spirit telling him that that was the place he should be. Speaking in Spanish. [Translation] He went to Guatemala and also didn't receive any confirmation.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 21:19

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 21:21

[Translation] He got to Honduras.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 21:28

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 21:33

When he came across a certain place in Honduras near a lake, he received the confirmation that that was a place he should be.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 21:42

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 21:56

[Translation] So he settled his family there, they bought land. And his wife being a teacher, a professor. She started teaching English to the population around and he, himself, started practicing medicine for the people.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 22:21

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 22:26

[Translation] So he started also the work of the Lord he started evangelizing and bringing the good news to the people in that area.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 22:39

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 22:42

And that place was called Lavon Affair.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 22:45

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 22:48

[Translation] Because the work they were doing they felt they were doing them in good faith in Spanish is La Buena Fe.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 23:03

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 23:08

[Translation] They started holding worship services and Bible study and started communicating the message of the church.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 23:21

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 23:28

[Translation] So relations and connections started to grow, and little by little, the congregation started to spread.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 23:36

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 23:39

[Translation] A few years later he passed away in that place.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 23:48

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 23:51

[Translation] He was very buried in a place in a town nearby that area ptosis

Carlos Enrique Mejia 24:01

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 24:06

[Translation] Since he was never he has he baptize people and they also have worship services.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 24:18

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 24:23

[Translation] So congregations were planted, and that's how the church has started to grow in Honduras.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 24:31

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 24:45

[Translation] So it was there, that a couple young people to you that probably you know, start doing youth camps 45 years ago.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 24:58

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 25:00

[Translation] And I'm talking about Dave Brock..

Carlos Enrique Mejia 25:13

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez

[Translation] That is how the church in Honduras was born there.

Carlos Enrique Mejia

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 25:35

[Translation] One may wonder how to church gone to grow? And the answer to that question is that volunteer, people who volunteer to go into the work.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 25:46

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 25:46

[Translation] I'm saying that in 1957 the church was born in Honduras.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 26:00

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 26:05

[Translation] And from there the church was established in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 26:21

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 26:26

[Translation] I remember at times that it was from Honduras that he started coming to El Salvador and Guatemala and with the help of other people, they started planting the church in all those countries.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 26:43

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 26:48

[Translation] And then by that time, we were already a Mission Center. But it's from there that we go to establish the church in Nicaragua,

Carlos Enrique Mejia 27:09

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 27:11

[Translation] We now have new congregations that are emerging and is part of the history of the church in Central America.

Robin Linkhart 27:20

So Honduras was the mother church of all, it all came out of there.

Estras Hernandez 27:26

Speaking in Spanish.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 27:31

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 27:36

[Translation] And we have the vision of actually planting the church in Costa Rica in the future.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 27:49

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 27:55

[Translation] Regarding the third question. There is a place that is one of the historical sites of the World Church.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 28:09

Speaking in Spanish. [Translation] And is this campground called Campamento El Buena Fe. Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 28:23

[Translation] We kept displays and we even refurbished the building where this first brother founded the first clinic in Honduras.

Robin Linkhart 28:47

Wow. That sounds very important and meaningful for your people.

Esras Hernandez 28:52

Speaking in Spanish.

Carlos Enrique Mejia

Speaking in Spanish

Esras Hernandez 29:04

[Translation] Yes because it's such a rich place. And throughout generations we have taught all members the importance of that place for us.

Robin Linkhart 29:32

Do you still hold camps and reunions and gatherings at that place?

Esras Hernandez 29:37

Speaking in Spanish.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 29:41

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 29:50

[Translation] Yes, but not only for members. Over time we have developed that place and now we also kind of rent it as a conference center for other denominations.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 30:11

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 30:12

[Translation] We built an auditorium that can hold around 1000 people, which we call the Peace Auditorium.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 30:34

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 30:44

[Translation] Brother Veazey had the chance and we had the blessing of having him come and dedicate the building that we are leaving a legacy for future generations.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 30:59

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 31:05

[Translation] And just like those first people who came and left a heritage for us, we are also trying to develop the place and leave a heritage for the generations to come.

Robin Linkhart 31:31

So, as the Central and South American mission fields and you as their apostle, leading mission is there anything you want to share with our listeners about the hope that you have for the future?

Estras Hernandez 31:50

Speaking in Spanish. Speaking in Spanish. [Translation] Hope is so something we should always have when we look into the future.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 32:16

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 32:24

[Translation] So my hope is that present generations and future generations may be committed in order to continue our history.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 32:43

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 32:46

[Translation] We don't want to remain kind of at the same place or the same level stagnant if you will will but we want to grow and to other places as well.

Robin Linkhart 33:09

Well, Carlos, thank you so much for sharing your story with us.

Estras Hernandez 33:14

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 33:17

You have brought inspiration and hope and getting to know the people of the church and the places that you serve.

Estras Hernandez 33:28

Speaking in Spanish.

Carlos Enrique Mejia 33:34

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 33:38

[Translation] Thank you for letting us share the story. One of many.

Robin Linkhart 33:45

Thank you and thank you Esras. Well, I want to welcome a very special guest Angela Ramirez.

Esras Hernandez 33:54

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 33:58

And also our wonderful interpreter and translator Esras Hernandez of Mexico City, Mexico.

Esras Hernandez 34:07

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 34:11

Angela was ordained an apostle at the 2023 World Conference.

Esras Hernandez 34:18

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 34:22

And she supports Mexico-Texas, Dominican Republic, and Caribbean mission centers.

Esras Hernandez 34:32

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 34:38

Welcome Angela. Thank you for being here today.

Esras Hernandez 34:42

Speaking in Spanish.

Angela Ramirez 34:45

Speaking in Spanish.

Catherine Mambwe 34:47

[Translation] Thank you for having me.

Robin Linkhart 34:50

Today our topic consists of three questions. The first question is what can you share about the unique church history in the nations you serve.

Esras Hernandez 35:04

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 35:13

And the second question is, how did the church begin there?

Esras Hernandez 35:20

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 35:23

the third question is Are there special sacred places or spaces people feel connected with?

Esras Hernandez 35:41

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 35:43

So Angela, you had these questions before we met today...

Esras Hernandez 35:48

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 35:53

I think it would be great to just give you time to respond to those questions in any way that you want to.

Esras Hernandez 36:00

Speaking in Spanish.

Angela Ramirez 36:02

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 36:03

[Translation] Thank you, Sister. I will start by talking about where I live.

Angela Ramirez 36:26

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 36:30

I will start my conversation about how the churches started in Dominican Republic.

Angela Ramirez 36:39

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 36:40

[Translation] The churches started there around the 80s. No, sorry. [Spanish. Sorry. That's okay.] The churches started there in the decade of the 70s.

Angela Ramirez 36:58

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 37:02

[Translation] And, it came to the country through missionaries that came from Haiti.

Angela Ramirez 37:12

Speaking in Spanish. [Translation] Then the church was legally established at the beginning of the decade of the 1980s.

Esras Hernandez 37:32

[Translation] The churches started specifically in the La Romana area.

Angela Ramirez 37:34

Speaking in Spanish. Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 37:40

[Translation] Over time the church grew and it grew towards the area of San Pedro.

Angela Ramirez 37:57

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 38:09

[Translation] And nowadays it is established also in Santo Domingo, Constanza

Angela Ramirez 38:20

Santiago, San Juan

Esras Hernandez 38:24

Santiago, San Juan.

Angela Ramirez 38:25

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 38:27

[Translation] And several other areas that are emerging congregations,

Angela Ramirez 38:40

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 38:41

[Translation] We have several vibrant congregations.

Angela Ramirez 38:47

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 38:52

[Translation] Thanks to the leadership and the work of several people who started planting church since the beginning.

Angela Ramirez 39:06

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 39:08

[Translation] Now in other countries we have the Mission Center, Mexico-Texas Mission Center. Speaking in Spanish.

Angela Ramirez 39:19

[Translation] And the mission there has been going on for many years. Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 39:31

[Translation] So when mission centers were established, several congregations across the border from Mexico and United States joined the Mexico Mission Center

Angela Ramirez 39:50

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 39:50

[Translation] it is a very interesting Mission Center because it's a bilingual mission center.

Angela Ramirez 40:01

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 40:02

[Translation] Sometimes cultures can be a little bit different but you work around it.

Angela Ramirez 40:12

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 40:13

[Translation] We also have mission in Jamaica.

Angela Ramirez 40:24

Speaking in Spanish.

Estras Hernandez 40:28

{Translation] We've been in contact with the Jamaica mission and they have also very vibrant congregations. And we have been also gathering in...

Angela Ramirez 40:39

Speaking in Spanish. [Translation] We have a very interesting congregation in Grand Cayman. Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 40:53

[Translation] I have not yet visited containment but we have had several meetings in conversation with leaders there.

Angela Ramirez 41:07

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 41:11

[Translation] For this year we have planned with several youths from Graceland University.

Angela Ramirez 41:22

Speaking in Spanish. [Translation] We have planned to have summer school there. Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 41:36

[Translation] To work in that field.

Robin Linkhart 41:39

It sounds very interesting and the the land, the geography that you visit is are beautiful places.

Esras Hernandez 41:46

Speaking in Spanish. Speaking in Spanish. [Translation] So, even though I have not been there personally through conversations and working with them, it shows or I have understood that for them something that is very important are the buildings.

Angela Ramirez 42:37

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 42:43

[Translation] For them to in order to have gatherings it is very important to have a physical space for them is their sacred space.

Angela Ramirez 42:59

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 43:02

[Translation] Although we cannot forget that we also have a virtual congregation in my field.

Angela Ramirez 43:11

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 43:21

[Translation] The Dominican Republic Mission Center as a project of a virtual congregation with another group in New York.

Robin Linkhart 43:33

Oh my gosh, that's amazing.

Angela Ramirez 43:35

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 43:43

[Translation] During the pandemic, pandemic times, we were very interested in having disconnection with expats in that area. So it's been very interesting.

Angela Ramirez 43:58

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 43:58

[Translation] We gather every Tuesday.

Angela Ramirez 44:02

So Carla Murthy algo, diferente

Esras Hernandez 44:06

[Translation] And every Tuesday every gathering, we have something different. A

Angela Ramirez 44:11

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 44:12

[Translation] And people participate very enthusiastically.

Robin Linkhart 44:21

So the connection with the expatriates in New York has continued after the pandemic?

Esras Hernandez 44:28

Speaking in Spanish.

Angela Ramirez 44:32

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 44:38

[Translation] Yes, it has continued and we're also making plans for a possible face in the future.

Angela Ramirez 44:52

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 45:00

[Translation] And it also happens that is not only the expats living in New Jersey, sometimes we have other people from other congregations that are not able to attend their local congregation as often as possible. They also connect through some.

Robin Linkhart 45:22

So that's been a wonderful blessing.

Esras Hernandez 45:25

Speaking in Spanish.

Robin Linkhart 45:28

So Angela, did you have anything else you'd like to share with us today?

Esras Hernandez

Speaking in Spanish

Angela Ramirez 45:39

Speaking in Spanish. .

Esras Hernandez 45:51

[Translation] Yes. Throughout this time, we are called as a church to look beyond the horizon.

Angela Ramirez 46:03

Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 46:03

[Translation] To look towards the future with hope.

Angela Ramirez 46:08

Speaking in Spanish. [Translation} Knowing that God is with us. Speaking in Spanish.

Esras Hernandez 46:15

[Translation] That he is with us today tomorrow and always.

Robin Linkhart 46:21

Amen. Sister, thank you so much for being with us.

Esras Hernandez 46:25

Speaking in Spanish.

Angela Ramirez 46:27

A pleasure

Esras Hernandez 46:29

A pleasure.

Robin Linkhart 46:30

And thank you Esras.

Esras Hernandez 46:32

Thank you.

Robin Linkhart 46:33

I'm here now with apostle Catherine modway, who supports the West South and East Africa mission field. Thank you so much for being with us today, Katherine.

Catherine Mambwe 46:46

Yeah, I'm very happy to.

Robin Linkhart 46:50

Well, Catherine today many apostles from across the globe have shared stories with us from the nations they serve, and how the message and mission of Community of Christ came to be planted in their areas in ways that took root and became vibrant expressions of our denomination and our movement. And even today, as the church lets go of deeply meaningful historic sites, it has been renewing and enriching to hear the unique stories of the church, in other parts of the world. I know that our listeners' hearts along with mine are filled with hope as we hear these testimonies of how God is living vibrantly through faithful disciples who are living their whole lives and becoming a shining lights of Christ's peace. Catherine, what words of affirmation might you have for us today?

Catherine Mambwe 47:59

Thank you very much for giving me this rare opportunity. On behalf of the people I serve,. I am deeply sorry for those who feel a great loss. I do understand how tough this decision to sell was. Letting go of something with sentimental value can be incredibly difficult to handle. I personally only visited the Nauvoo, not Kirtland. I have read the historical books of how these places came to be, and the part they play in our collective history. I and the people I serve are more connected to the Independence Temple. Our people visited often, and were part of its dedication. The great connection to it's not only its beauty, but the ministry that happens here. The deep meaning of the worshipers path and the labyrinth, like our church and sisters in Kirtland. We also have pieces of ourselves built into this temple. Our offerings of little bits of wood, make up the cross in the temple foyer. We also love and are dear to the ministries of the temple. Doctrine and Covenants 156:5a-d reminds us why it was dedicated. A symbol of peace, education, wholeness, reconciliation, and healing of the Spirit. As people of the temple, we live out the ministries of the temple in so many ways. You know, back home, we worship

together. We do discipleship formation. We care about one another. And in most cases, we have projects we do together. For the women, they do the soapmaking. They do the sewing, and so many things which can bring peace into their lives. We are people who live in that connectedness, whatever we do, we do things together, to connect us. And when we do that, we bring peace to ourselves. My hope is that our history will continue to be told and shared in all the places we live, and serve around the world. Our heritage, for the stories of our people are a witness to God, and provide blessing to the world. We will continue to write the page of that story into the future as we share Christ's peace in all the places that we live. Thank you so much for sharing this with me.

Robin Linkhart 51:31

And thank you, Catherine, for being with us today. And giving us a little window into the lives of the people that you love and serve and support. Take good care, and we'll see you next time.

That brings us to the end of our time together folks. I want to once again thank our guests Mareva, Carlos, Angela, and Catherine for making time to share their stories with us. And extra special thanks to our interpreter, Esras Hernandez. As always our thanks to all of you our listeners. If you would like to hear more about this new chapter in Community of Christ story, look for links to more information in the show notes. This is your host Robin Linkhart, and you are listening to Project Zion Podcast. Go out and make the world a better place. Take care bye bye.