

EPIISODE 4 SCRIPT COCCA

WHEN THEY ASKED JESUS WHAT WAS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT, HE SAID
“TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, SOUL, AND MIND AND STRENGTH, AND
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF”

THIS, IS REVEREND JERRY ZEHR, OF THE CARMEL CHRISTIAN CHURCH ON MAIN
STREET. JERRY HAS A PASSION FOR INTERFAITH WORK, AND IS THE PRESIDENT
OF THE CARMEL INTERFAITH ALLIANCE WHOSE GOAL IS TO WORK ALONGSIDE
MUSLIM, JEWISH, AND HINDU CONGREGATIONS. FOR THE LAST PODCAST OF
THE SEMESTER, I AM XAVIER COCCA.

WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, I HAD FRIENDS WHO WERE UNITARIAN, FRIENDS
WHO WERE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, AND AGAIN, AS I HEARD MY
MINISTER TELLING ME THEY WERE GOING TO HELL, I DIDN'T BUY IT BECAUSE I
SAW THEIR HEART, AND I SAW THEM LIVING OUT WONDERFUL WAYS OF THE
TEACHINGS OF CHRIST AS FAR AS LOVING AND CARING, AND BEING
COMPASSIONATE, AND SO I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND IT, BUT I FELT LIKE THEY
WERE CHILDREN OF GOD TOO.

WHEN JERRY GRADUATED COLLEGE WITH A DEGREE IN SPEECH AND THEATER,
HE LEFT FOR CALIFORNIA, AND DIDN'T ATTEND CHURCH FOR THE TIME BEING,
BUT HE KNEW ALL ALONG, THAT SOMETHING WAS MISSING.

I WANTED TO BE AND TALK WITH PEOPLE ABOUT THE DEEPER PARTS OF THEIR LIVES. I IN FACT FOUND A LOT OF THE ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS TO BE PRETTY ARTIFICIAL AND PRETTY, OH VERY VERY TOUGH TO KEEP YOUR CHARACTER AND MORALS A LOT OF TIMES.

JERRY FEELS AS THOUGH CHRISTIANITY CAN BE EASY TO MISUNDERSTOOD WHICH MIGHT CAUSE PEOPLE TO TURN THEIR BACK ON THE CHURCH.

I THINK THERE'S A MISCONCEPTION THAT ALL CHRISTIANS BELIEVE ELIKE PAT ROBERTSON OR SOME OF THE TV PREACHERS WHO ARE VERY JUDGEMENTAL AND EXCLUSIVE. AND SO I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO SAY "I DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE CHURCH BECAUSE I JUST HEAR THESE TV PREACHERS WHO SLAM GAY PEOPLE AND SLAM YOU KNOW ALL THESE OTHER RELIGIONS" WHEN IN FACT THERE ARE MANY CHRISTIANS WHO I THINK SEE A MUCH BROADER VIEW OF GOD AND THAT WE SEE AND LIVING OUT THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS IS BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP AND CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER.

THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER, JERRY HAS SEEN THE POSITIVITY THAT HIS WORK REFLECTS PLAY OUT IN THE COMMUNITY. HE WANTS TO SEE PEOPLE FIND THEIR WAY TOWARDS GOD, BUT HE EMPHASIZES THE IDEA THAT THEY NEED TO COME TO THEIR OWN CONCLUSIONS.

YOU DON'T GIVE THEM THE ANSWERS BECAUSE EVERYBODY HAS TO FIND THEIR OWN ANSWERS, BUT THAT YOU WALK ON THAT JOURNEY WITH THEM AND HELP THEM, SUPPORT THEM, AND SEE THEM GROW IN THEIR FAITH. THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE MENTORS IN MY LIFE WHO I WOULD NOT BE WHO I WAS TODAY WITHOUT THOSE MENTORS.

SINCE JERRY HAS DEVOTED A LARGE PORTION OF HIS LIFE TO INTERFAITH WORK, HE FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT COEXISTING IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE, BUT IT'S THE WAY TO GO.

IT IS GROWING, IT IS BETTER. WE'RE SEEING A BETTER APPRECIATION OF PEOPLE THERE WAS A TIME WHERE CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS WOULDN'T EVEN TALK WITH ONE ANOTHER. THERE WAS A TIME WHERE YOU COULDN'T MARRY IF YOU WERE CATHOLIC, YOU COULDN'T MARRY SOMEONE WHO WAS PROTESTANT. LET ALONE JEWISH. THERE WAS A TIME WHERE THERE WERE WARS OVER IN IRELAND BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND PROTESTANTS AND SO WE'VE COME A LONG WAY AND THAT WE'RE GETTING BETTER. YES THERE ARE STILL WARS, BUT THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS ARE SLOWLY STEPPING UP I THIN. THEY'RE SPEAKING OUT. AND WE'RE SEEING WONDERFUL WAYS OF JOINING TOGETHER AND WORKING TOGETHER. TRUE PEACE WILL COME WHEN WE CAN LEARN TO LOVE AND COEXIST, AND RESPECT ONE ANOTHER.

ACCORDING TO REVEREND JERRY ZEHR OF THE CARMEL CHRISTIAN CHURCH, WE SHOULD ALL LOVE AND TREAT OUR NEIGHBORS THE SAME WAY WE WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED. HE ALSO POINTS OUT THAT THIS IDEOLOGY IS SOMETHING THAT'S NOT UNIQUE TO CHRISTIANS. AS STATED IN THE QURAN, "WHATEVER GOOD THEY DO, THEY WILL NOT BE DENIED IT BY GOD, AND GOD KNOWS WHO THE RIGHTEOUS ARE.

ALL RELIGIONS, ALL PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE OF GOD AND FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO SAY THAT CHRISTIANS ARE THE ONLY WAY TO HEAVEN OR YOU HAVE TO BE CHRISTIAN TO GO TO HEAVEN, I THINK THAT'S VERY SHORT SIGHTED AND NARROW. ONE, BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW THE MIND OF GOD SO WHO ARE WE TO JUDGE THOSE PEOPLE, TWO I HAVE A HARD TIME BELIEVING THAT THREE QUARTERS OF THE WORLD WHO AREN'T LIKE US ARE GOING TO GO TO HELL. I JUST WANT TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO BE ON THE JOURNEY GOD IS THE CREATOR OF ALL LIFE AND SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO WRAP OUR MINDS AROUND THAT, BUT WE KNOW, I BELIEVE THAT WE ARE SPIRITUAL. THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE OUR HEART THAT'S INSIDE OF US. WHEN WE LISTEN TO OUR CONSCIOUS, IT TELLS US. BE ON THE JOURNEY OF THAT FOUNDATION OF YOUR LIFE. ASK QUESTIONS, SEEK THINGS, AND JUST BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE THE ANSWERS, DON'T GIVE UP BECAUSE WHEN WE CONTINUE TO SEEK UNDERSTANDING OF TRUTH, IT ISN'T IN THE MATERIAL WORLD, IT REALLY IS IN THE DEEPEST PARTS OF OUR HEART THAT WILL GIVE US MEANING IN OUR LIFE.