

Robin Yuill- What ideas from Christianity were the most influential in your journey?

Seth Kaper-Dale: Ok. So is it on? Ok, the most influential things in my Christian journey have been, for example, the Lord's Prayer says thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven, that thing we're praying for is a world that. Is so beautiful. That it looks like things we could only. Imagine would be. Present in heaven. So that's what I want to work for and look for every single day. I want a world of. I want a world of you know, where where people can be healed of the things that hurt them, where people have opportunities to see and experience beauty.

Robin Yuill- Could you describe your journey to become a pastor?

Seth Kaper-Dale So when I was in College in Michigan, I never thought about being a pastor before. I was interested in sports journalism and teaching gym like, that's all I cared about. And then I was in college and during my first semester, I took a religion. Society class and I was very influenced by 1 lecturer who came in who was a. Migrant farm Kid turned pastor. I started going to his church just to get a feel for what that. Was about and. It within a very short time I was. I realized that what I wanted to do with my life was to be a pastor. I was as interested in sort of the transformation of life on Earth as I was in anything beyond this earth. And I it was in that space that I can't realized. Actually, religion isn't about what happens after we die. About what happens while we live? And from then on. That was my the beginning of my journey.

Robin Yuill- How did your relationship between your church and immigration affairs develop?

Seth Kaper-Dale So our relationship with the work of immigration really started through the love of a particular family. We had a family, handyman and family here in Yana. Who had gotten? Involved in this church there from Indonesia. Lots of Indonesians had gotten involved here just before my wife and I became pastors in 2001. What we didn't know is that none of them had documentation to be here, and that the moment in history in their country that had led to an economic collapse and. The collapse of public safety. Had led anyone who could flee to flee, and at that time our economy was booming and it made it easy for immigrants to come in because we wanted cheap labor. And these folks that come in for safety through that moment in time and now in 2000 and. 9 this young man who whose kids we baptized was picked up by ice and put in detention and almost deported it, and sort of that. That unbelievable feeling from the community. That how dare you take somebody who is our brother? Set us up off on a trajectory. So the story is much longer than that, but that got us deep into the mix. And the more we got into it, the more concerned we became about Democrat and Republican alike. Broken immigration policies for decades. 1 decades into the ways it was really an atrocious abuse of poor people. But in 2002, John Ashcroft, who was the attorney general at the time, came up with a program called N Sears, the national registration entry and Exit System. And anyone from the 15 largest Muslim countries in the world, which in Tunisia is the largest. If you're a male ages 16 to 65, you had to report or be considered a terrorist. So I was a new pastor. All these Indonesians started coming to me and saying, hey, we're undocumented and this new thing just came out in the media. What do

we do and I assumed honesty was like the right thing. So I said, hey, you know, let's go try to make this right let's, you know, honesty is the best policy. Go turn yourself in. It turned out that was the worst advice. Because these then became political pawns, they were that suddenly immigration to where everybody lived and what they did for work and blah blah blah. And they just started picking them off. So in 2006, there was one evening in 35 Indonesians got rounded up in a pre dawn. Raid from the same. Apartment complex and happen now and all those guys are deported and 60 kids lost their dad in one night and nobody gave it care. And that enraged me to such a level that I started. Getting more and. More deeply involved. The other major story is that when Harry. Panamanian was in detention. Eventually they tried to deport him and they started by sending him to Tacoma, WA and at the time the practice was collect as many the Asians as you can and then stick them on airplane together and just drop them off 1 country another next. So Harry was picked. Job from Elizabeth Detention Center in New Jersey, taking the airport flown to Tacoma, but I managed to talk my way onto that airplane and this was like kind of crazy. But I did and I sat on that airplane with him the day he was being sent away to Tacoma, and then immediately came home and called the media and said. I just talked my way into an airplane and it was to protect this guy and the media attention from that intervention, even though I didn't stop the plane was a huge help in about 3 weeks later, getting Harry released and returned to this community.

Robin Yuill- Has the work of your congregation deepened or modified your understanding of the Christian ideas and principles?

Seth Kaper-Dale That's interesting, right? So I very much believe that theology, which is sort of the knowing of God, is a second act. First act is action. So praxis action. Proceeds, reflection theological reflection. So yes, completely the actions of our church and the actions of those thrust upon people in our church, both the positive actions and the negative actions, have created the Crucible in which we've had theological reflection. And that's meant that we're an ever changing community because we have to wrestle with new realities.

Robin Yuill- From the Christian nationalism to theology of deliberation, Christianity is extremely diverse. Do you see a path for building a common ground among people who believe on Jesus has Messiah?

Seth Kaper-Dale Did you say white nationalism as one? Is that spectrum Christian nationalism?

Robin Yuill- Christian nationals.

Seth Kaper-Dale Yeah, yeah, same thing basically. What I would say is. I'm definitely like a liberation theology angle on things. I am not so interested or concerned about building a bridge with Christian nationalists. I'm much more interested about in building bridges with Muslims and Jews and people of goodwill from every faith community, finding common ground and the sort of right wing extremists. I I don't feel the need to. Spend a lot of airtime. Figuring them out, I just. I would rather not prioritize that.

Robin Yuill- Our materialistic society seems far from spiritually and non quantifiable. Do you share this conclusion? Do you see the path to connecting us with the elements of life that cannot be brought or sold?

Seth Kaper-Dale Can you say it one more time?

Robin Yuill Our materialistic society seems far from spirituality and non quantifiable. Do you share this conclusion? Do you see a path to connect us with the elements of life that cannot be bought or sold?

Seth Kaper-Dale So first of all, I would say I. Don't accept the division of spirituality from material. I think that helping folks obtain a vehicle if they need it to. Live a good life is a form of spirituality that helping people find a job where they can make them self-sufficient is a form of spirituality. So material and spiritual are not divorced. Do I think we sometimes are obsessed with things material in this world? Yes, but I don't think that the alternative is the spiritual life. I think that that the spiritual life is when you are living in a way that where you're bringing out the best of what God has given us materially in a way that serves all people. Like liberation, theology is not devoid of material. It's all about material. It's about everybody having the material needed. For full flourishing.

Robin Yuill- Back in 2017, you ventured into election electoral politics. Any lessons you would like to share from your experience?

Seth Kaper-Dale I ran for governor. And was committed to running as if I really wanted to be governor, and so I would say I did really want to be gone. I knew that my chances were. I was running not as a Democrat and not as a Republican, so I really had two goals. One was to learn to speak of the upside down reality that I believe is present in Christianity, but should be present everywhere, which is the last or first that the last of the first should be the mantra of how we live. Public common life, and if it's not, if we're not firstly thinking about those who are left out in every sphere, then we're not. We're not properly ordered and organized. So I came at every lecture, every debate. Every question from a am I answering this from a last or first criteria. So I spent most of my time. Seeking the votes of children, undocumented people and people in jail. 3 populations at in New Jersey are not allowed to vote, right, so I that's they're the last. You know, there's others who are last, but just kind of that's to say, here's my prior. Already said, the thing I did that I'm most proud of from that year is I believe that we should be a sanctuary state with teeth, meaning it's not enough to just kind of say, well, we're welcoming and affirming, no, we're we are going to fight to protect immigrants from the draconian. Policies of the Trump administration and we're not gonna. No, we're not gonna back down. And Phil Murphy had to stay further. Then he probably wanted to for political reasons, because I was left of him. So, if he was going to keep the vote of. Left-leaning people he needed to also use the language of sanctuary state, which he did.

Robin Yuill- Which would you like your legacy as a pasture and local historian maker to be?

Seth Kaper-Dale You know, it's funny. I don't really ever think about that question. I just want to. Do you like it? The right thing today and tomorrow and like I never really. I never do. What do they call it? Like nonprofit World or in any kind of corporate world? People always wanting you to do legacy, not legacy planning. But whatever the you think of the term, like planning for the time you leave, I don't want to do that. I just kind of. Like the spirit of God is at work right now, and I'm really excited about how things have unfolded and it's exciting every day. And when it comes time for me to go, you know, God will do something neat in the next person. So I have no. Influence or interest in like. Thinking much on that, just you know that I've done this 23 years, 22 years and I'll do it probably another 20 years because I love it. And then at the end, hopefully I can leave feeling like this was a strong 43 years of. Serving in ways that we're loving and helpful to people.