

Elli Oswald and Karen Springs

[00:00:00] **Dr. Rick:** [00:00:00] All right. Welcome again to the Think Orphan Podcast. This is Rick Morton, along with Phil Darke. Phil, how are things in California today, buddy?

Phil: [00:00:08] They're going all right. They are going all right.

It's it's not the sunny California, like you hear about and all the movies and you watch and you see, and everyone's talking about sunny California. It is a lot more like Seattle, which is interesting since that is where both of our guests are from you. Like how I did that.

Dr. Rick: [00:00:25] That was nice. That was really nice.

Phil: [00:00:27] So, yeah, I'm every, so often I come up with things like that, where it's just, it's just smooth as butter. So you know, in all seriousness

Dr. Rick: [00:00:37] and everybody saw my surprise because we really don't rehearse this. I know you find that hard to believe folks, but. It just kind of happens.

Phil: [00:00:44] It just, it just does exactly right.

It just happens. So no, it is, it is called and rainy and just cloudy. And it is just like that up in Seattle too. And our guests actually are from Seattle. Wasn't kidding. Our two guests today are two of them. Our four [00:01:00] guests and, you know, from the conversations I've had with people out there, they're two of our favorite guests, you know, and I think it's probably got a lot to do with the way that we interviewed them.

I'm sure it had to do a lot of that, what it is, but you know, other than that, They are just put two phenomenal women that are doing some incredible things. And so, Rick, I got a crazy thought now, why don't you introduce one and I'll introduce the other, and you can choose who you want to introduce.

Dr. Rick: [00:01:28] I mean, you know Karen Springs is one of my favorites, one of my, one of my favorite guests and just one of my favorite people on the planet.

And so we are privileged to have her back. She's the author of *Adoption in the Rear View Mirror*. Or Adoption Through the Rear View Mirror. She's the Communications Lead for World Without Orphans and has extensive experience working in in the orphan care world. Particularly a lot of hands-on experience in Ukraine, but but literally as somebody who is, is known around the world.

And so [00:02:00] we're excited to have Karen with us and also.

Phil: [00:02:05] Elli Oswald. So Elli Oswald and what you didn't mention about Karen, she's also a, she's a teacher by day now she's teaching. So she's just a Jack of all trades multifaceted. Well, excuse me. So and we also have Elli Oswald with us today.

She is the Executive Director of Faith to Action, which I'm sure many of you listening right now know of Faith to Action. We've had so many other guests on the show talk about Faith

to Action, because a lot of the resources they put out in some amazing things that they. You've done over the years.

And what we're going to be talking about on this episode in particular is the Global Church Pledge, which Faith to Action and some, a lot of other organizations, including Providence World, which is mine. And I don't know if Lifeline has signed it yet, but a lot of organizations have signed. So we're going to talk more about that. And just really what they've been up to [00:03:00] since the last time they went on the show with which, for Karen was not that long. So we get to talk with both of these ladies and without more from, from Rick and I, cause I'm sure you guys now that you know who our guests are, you're sitting there going, can you guys just be quiet and get to Elli and Karen?

And so we're going to do that just with one more thing I'm going to say to you is if you haven't already subscribe to the podcast and definitely connect with us. If you have any questions, if you have other guests you want to tell us about to get on this show, let us know, give us a D drop us an email at info@thinkorphan.com. So without more from us, we're going to get to Elli Oswald and Karen Springs.

Hello, Karen. Ali welcome. We are back at Think Orphan, you know, and this has been for Karen. It hasn't been that long. You know, it's been a, you know, a few, couple months, few months since we've, since we've talked to you about your awesome book [00:04:00] that, you know, we've had a ton of feedback on that show and it's been probably, you know, similar feedback to what you're getting for the book, which was it's phenomenal.

And thank you for what you're doing. And who you are, and I know we're all appreciative for it. So, Karen, thanks for coming back on the show with us.

Karen: [00:04:17] Thank you, Phil. Thank you, Rick. It's my privilege or pleasure. My pleasure to be here. Thank you. That's all right. My pleasure.

Phil: [00:04:31] I I'm confused right now, so I'm just going to go to Elli. Elli, how are you doing?

Elli: [00:04:37] I'm doing pretty well, right? These days pretty well is, is wonderful. So yeah, doing

Phil: [00:04:43] good. Well, great. Well, you know, as Rick and I were talking about you, you know, you ladies didn't get to hear what we were talking about, but it was, it was probably 98% good stuff. So about both of you now, we just, we're introducing you guys talking about the Global Church Pledge is what we get to talk about today. [00:05:00] But before we get there, I just want to, you know, each of you to give a quick reminder, both of you who have been on the podcast, we're going to put those episodes that you've been on in the past. Karen you've been on twice before. So you have now tied Peter Greer and Brendan Stiver as the

guests who have been on the most on the forefront broadcasts or congratulate.

Karen: [00:05:18] Oh, wow.

Phil: [00:05:20] We don't really have any prizes for that, but if we did, it would be pretty awesome. And and so, you know, I just want to hear just really just what, what do you guys, who you guys are and why? You know, just really how people can get to know a little bit more about you guys.

Karen: [00:05:38] Yeah. Yeah. So I am serving as the Communications Lead at World Without Orphans, where I'm working alongside our global team to report on what's going on globally with our regional ambassadors and to share stories of encouragement and hope and try to communicate that out to our community and [00:06:00] beyond.

And as you said, I recently launched the book, Adoption Through the Rear View Mirror. So I've been trying to share that in the year of. At the pandemic when I can't go to conferences and, and share, and the like, which I know has been a challenge for many in our space, but I guess the beautiful thing about writing is people can still read even if they can't go anywhere.

So maybe more people have been able to read because of that. So and I've known Elli for goodness many, several years now. As she has worked alongside us with the world without orphans and I'll let her share about her.

Elli: [00:06:36] Yeah. Yeah. I'm with Faith to Action. As we talked about last time, really the focus of Faith to Action is to reach out to us Christians, but Christians all over the world, but specifically us Christians to try to educate and mobilize them to support best practices and care for kids, especially recognizing the importance of family in the life of a child.

So in the middle of a pandemic a lot [00:07:00] of the normal ways that we connect with people are gone, but I will say, I think it's been a really rough year. I mean, we all know that. But they're 2000 hundred 20 now, where I guess this will be showing two to 2021. But there's been some really good things happening at Faith to Action.

And I think in the family care movement in general, we're finding new ways to engage people. Maybe reaching more like with the book, maybe reaching more than we have in the past, definitely reaching more people than we have in the past. The depth of our engagement is, is harder, but And we've been able to work with organizations who are transitioning, who are trying to figure out how to, how to do better.

Maybe transitioning from more of a foundation in residential care and the orphanage model to more family based care journeying with them as they kind of work through what that means for their organization. And we've done a lot of that. We had a cohort last this fall With a hundred organizations that were transitioning that went through a training and then got coaching and connected with other organizations that can [00:08:00] help them through this transition.

So a lot of really good things. But we're missing seeing each other face-to-face and we're excited for our day when we can do that again.

Phil: [00:08:07] Absolutely. And, you know, it's, it's funny because you say, you talk about the cohorts, you talk about the transitioning. And I, I just think of all the, as I said in the

intro, there's so many of our former guests have, have used Faith to Action and the amazing resources that faith action has.

And just one of our recent guest, Spencer Reeves with Child Hope International and Haiti, and the transitions they're doing and talking about how much they've been working with you guys. And it's just so great. I mean, I know it's the shock to you to hear that. I love hearing stories about collaboration and connection during that are actually doing what we're talking about, where it's let's get together and, you know, not think about what it's, you know, what we might get out of it or what this, or what that, but just how can the care of these children around the world?

Become, you know, more and more excellent than more and more what we know it's it's family based and to get the children into the [00:09:00] families. And so that's, that's what I love seeing, you know, and, and I will say one more thing that we, I neglected to mention early on is this the first time we've had four people on the, Oh, I was

Karen: [00:09:11] wondering about

Phil: [00:09:12] that.

It's pretty.

Dr. Rick: [00:09:14] Hollywood squares is growing. We're like, you know, we're, we're gonna, we're gonna host a conference at this thing pretty soon, you

Phil: [00:09:21] know? Well, I mean, let me take a step back just so people don't write in and tell me that I'm wrong that we have had video conferences with more people, but not the actual departure of the show.

So on that note, I got a great sign the other day. And so you guys will appreciate this humor cause you know me well enough, but it was that they gave it to me at a men's event recently at the church. Cause they know me too. And it says I may be wrong, but I doubt it. So just that was something that's bonus coverage for you guys, Rick now it's your turn.

Dr. Rick: [00:09:54] And, you know, Phil's, Phil's not wrong about the fact that we're really excited about having both of you and, and that [00:10:00] this is a conversation that we've been in here to dig into. And so I guess probably the best place for us to start is really like, let's just talk about the Global Church Pledge and, and kind of the.

You know the why behind that. And, and so Ellie, if you could just kind of give us a little bit of background about what that is, and, and then kind of begin to orient our listeners to you know, how that intersects with their ministries possibly.

Ellie: [00:10:25] So, yes. Hopefully people are starting to hear about this Global Church Pledge.

People have maybe been a part of it are starting to hear about it. But it's actually, it's two sentences. It's nothing magical. I'll read them for you since we're going to be talking about it and might as well know what that is. The first sentence is we believe God designed families

as the best environment for children and young people to receive the love, belonging, and protection they need in order to flourish.

So that's the first sentence. The second is. Therefore on behalf of vulnerable children around the world, we commit to support efforts, which strengthen families invest in [00:11:00] family based solutions and combat the root causes of their vulnerability. So it's, it's relatively simple it's but it's comprehensive and it's positive.

And I think it took a lot of work to get there. But I think it is those things. Well, it, it's

Dr. Rick: [00:11:14] one of those statements that when you, you know, when you read it and you see it, you know, that like, there's, there's a conservation in every word, like it's, it's very intentional. And obviously it's there. A lot of people spend a lot of time to come to that agreement.

W why? Like what, what's the, what's the driving force behind trying to have a simple statement like this that is so intentional. That be something that, that we in the church adopt across the world.

Elli: [00:11:43] Well, I mean, it's, it's, it's because the church is important and it plays a really vital role in any change in care reform as we call it in any improvement that is going to happen globally and care for children it's vital.

For two reasons, one. Because the church is the one providing [00:12:00] care for children around the world. Just in the us, we actually are, by the time this podcast release we'll have data out that we worked with Barna group who does all sorts of wonderful research. 3000 Christians surveyed about their support for orphans and vulnerable children.

Abroad 31%. So about a third of all Christians in the us have given funding, given money to residential care in the last two years. That's 77, over 77 and a half million. People and imagine that maybe they all gave \$30 in the last two years, which is probably super duper low that's over \$2.3 billion.

So Christians are so generous in the way that they're giving on the ground. We know that Christians are serving children in so many ways, including orphanages. The local church is responding. So, so the, the church is there and there's areas of improvement. Of course, the second is Christians are also leading in [00:13:00] and they're the best suited to lead in the family care movement.

Church and Christians are the ones who, who have been and continue to serve families and Karen can talk story after story, she shares stories about World Without Orphan partners.

Another study that came out from Barna last year before the crisis that was looking at what pastors care about. And one of the number one things was they care about the families, the health of the families in their congregation. The church is at the ground level. They're the face. They are the, face-to-face the real, the long term, sustainable family care mechanism.

And they can provide emergency response to families. They can provide alternative care to kids that need it. So, so we're not the us Christians. Aren't the only one. We're not the only

ones that were important to everyone involved in care reform knows. That Christians and the church is a vital part of seeing any sort of change and improvement.

So this, this, this pledge is just a tool to continue to help mobilize to, [00:14:00] to let people commit to family care, but also to invite new people into this work that we're all doing together. I

Dr. Rick: [00:14:06] love it. I, you know, I think that, you know, honoring and kind of almost coming from that field, the logical side of things as well to say that you know, organizations are gonna come and go and, and they're going to live and sometimes outlived their usefulness, but we have this promise that right, the church is going to endure, like we're going to, we're going to see the church generation after generation and God's made that promise.

And so. I love the fact that, that you've gone, you've gone straight to the church and that this is a, this is a pledge and an initiative that's aimed at mobilizing the church. And, and so this is really, really exciting stuff, Phil.

Phil: [00:14:41] Definitely. No, I think that, that you have the, and it's not just the U S church pledge.

Right. So, you know, I think that's kind of where the world, without orphans as being a part of this. And if so many other organizations, right? I mean, can you, can you just quickly just share some of the organizations that people might recognize to show the breadth of this? I've kind of put [00:15:00] you on the spot here.

But I know, you know, in the, you know, at least some to just show the breadth of it from small to big, you know, and just really all over the world,

Elli: [00:15:08] I mean, is there at this point, we, you know, we're just launching the pledge just in January, launching the pledge. So it's not fully public, but as the overview the last year, and I can talk a little bit more about the history, you know, people have been involved in it.

And so we already have, I think it's like, Oh, 40 some organizations. So we're talking World Vision. We're talking the Chalmers Center who wrote the, When Helping Hurts. We're talking World Relief, obviously World Without Orphans. Smaller organizations that are, are you know, in, in countries, not just the Western international agencies Bethany Global, Buckner, CAFO you know, a lot of people you've seen or heard on this podcast.

People understand it. That's what surprises me. I I've been trying to help this move along, along with others in this facilitation team. And I keep thinking, if this isn't helpful, [00:16:00] I don't need to spend my time doing it, but people keep responding and saying, you know, this could be really useful. This is useful.

People are already using it. So the momentum is, is just building and we're following it in some ways.

Phil: [00:16:13] Yeah. And that, that reminds me of the video that you, you know, you sent me recently that, you know, as given our technology, isn't probably, we're not at the level of some of the podcasts I've seen that integrate video and it's really amazing how they do all that.

But what we're going to do is put the link. Okay. To the video, which then you can pretend that it's just seamlessly integrated into the video of our podcast. That it's a, it's actually really cool. There are like, like you said, there are several guests we've had on the show that are on that, but it really is you know, in the orphan care world, I like.

To say it's the star studded orphan care world video. And it's a lot of people if you've been doing this very long, I mean, Rick's not on it, but other than that, it's like the who's who of all orphan [00:17:00] careness. So, but in all seriousness though, the video is phenomenal. I mean, it's just a great three minute video that just really gives a, a quick, you know just here's what this global

Elli: [00:17:11] trigger.

Yup. There's that momentum like, again, this is just two sentences. It's not a, it's not a program. It's not an organization. It's not a campaign. It's just two sentences and people hear it and they say, yeah, yeah, let's do this. Let's I want to be a part of this. And I, and since you've never done this before, can I ask Karen a question?

Is that new

Dr. Rick: [00:17:33] territory being right in

Karen: [00:17:37] front of this history? I, the first time I was on the podcast, Phil's like nodding his head because he knows I'm going to say this, but I actually co-hosted and was the guest. So I asked the Phil questions the very first time I was on the post. So I say, Elli, do what you want.

Phil: [00:17:54] Hey, Karen, you're not the co-host this time

But I will say that [00:18:00] Karen is the pioneer of pioneers on this show. Like we want to party when we want to, I would say pioneer. You could also say Guinea pig, but it's pioneer, it's how the good that's the good, good side of it. So go ahead, Elli. You have no idea, you know, Absolutely go for it. I have no idea

Karen: [00:18:22] what I think about Phil and recognized

Elli: [00:18:26] more fun

Dr. Rick: [00:18:27] You put us in the waiting room.

Right, there you go.

Elli: [00:18:29] you guys are going to go to the waiting room. Yeah, no, Karen, I think so Faith to Action. Like the thing is, this is so much bigger than Faith to Action or even World Without

Orphans. And so, you know, one of the things we've tried to do is make sure that we are hearing from people to make sure it's as helpful as possible.

So. From Faith to Action's perspective. I was a U S missions pastor. We work mostly with the U S church. It cannot be ran by me because that's my perspective only. So Karen I'd love for you to, as in regards to the question that I was fieding on, you know, why, [00:19:00] why do we need a pledge? Why have the pledge from your perspective? Who you get to deal with the church around the globe every day?

You know, what are, what's the main, why for you.

Karen: [00:19:09] Well, I think you touched on this already, but like the beauty being in the simplicity of it, and you saying, you know, it's not the program, it's not the organization. And I think when it comes to an area like orphan care and we can all get into our lanes, you know, the lane of.

Well, we do family preservation or we do adoption, or we do foster care or we do intervention prevention and you get everyone gets in their lanes. And I think that sometimes, you know, we can lose sight of the overall goal. And I think so what's beautiful about this is. Like let's bring it down to the simplest thing of what can we all come to the table and agree to.

And then maybe from that table launch into our lanes. And I think that because there's no doubt that we do need the lanes that people are experts in and the people that can champion one maybe specific area. [00:20:00] But I think sometimes what happens is we get all those people in a room and then they, they, everybody wants their thing to rise to the top.

And so this is kind of the reverse of saying let's all come around the table and say, you know, we believe that children, you know, belong and families that was God's intention. And that we can say that strengthening families and investing in family based solutions and combating root causes of vulnerability, that those three things, yes, we all agree.

And now we can go off and do do our things. And so I think from the World Without Orphans' perspective you know, we called people to that vision of a world without orphans. And, and a lot of that initial call I think, was around foster care and adoption at the national level. It was, you know, let's find national solutions, but as we dug deeper and we're working with people on the ground, you know, we, we began to see where.

Really, there was a lot of need in prevention of how do you actually stop the funnel right. Of kids going into the system. And then or if they're, you know, if once they're in, how do you then get them out, but how do you cut off [00:21:00] that source? So I think that's, again, what's so beautiful about this is it's, it's bringing something to the global church and instead of starting with, Hey, close your orphanage down, or Hey, do this.

It's why don't we start a conversation around this. And if you agree with this. Then what might God have for you next? So I I've talked with Elli a lot about this as we really just see this, this is a conversation starter. Yes. It's like signing your name to say something, but it's,

it's something to bring people to the table to start the conversation about how to see kids in families.

Safely and that they're loving families.

Dr. Rick: [00:21:34] And I'd love to follow that up and just say for our listeners that are, that are out there really around the world that are, that are hearing this, and maybe they're hearing about the pledge for the first time. How can they take steps to, to advocate. They, you know, say they've heard it and they, they agree, like what are the practical steps that people can take from this point?

In order to, in order to step in and become part of the conversation and, and also [00:22:00] to use their influence, wherever they are to extend the conversation.

Elli: [00:22:05] Yeah. Well,

Karen: [00:22:05] I think, I mean, part of that is, is they're in their own realm of starting that conversation and there is going to be some more and I'm maybe going to paint it to Elli to say about getting more of the resources that we're putting together a whole press kit of how to have the assigning event or how to have a gathering around this.

Topic. And, and obviously those are starting as English based research says, but through our world without networks and network and other connections that we have our goal is to get this as widely translated as possible. And you'll notice on the website. And obviously I know your audience right now is English speakers, but if you go to the website, you will see a list of languages.

And that's in the process right now that even being updated and expanded so that people can use this globally. As you indicated it is the global church pledge. So I think even if it was a us, if this is a us listener, listening from their perspective and their church, they could first [00:23:00] ask the question, okay, is this something my church can get behind?

Can we, or is this where we're at? And then if we're partnering with a church in say Nicaragua, or we have a partnership in Haiti, is this something that we can bring to the church we partner with and say, Hey. Can we sign this together. And what does this mean for you? So I think it is, again, Elli's always so great at saying it is what you make of it.

You know, this can be, it literally can be, as I signed a website, which is not what we want it to be, but that's what it could be. Or it can be the launching pad of your national movement or your citywide movement to say, we want to see things different for children in our community.

Elli: [00:23:38] Yeah, I think there's a couple of things that I think helpful and understanding why a pledge, like what, why was a pledge really gonna do anything?

And like I tell, like Karen said is it really doesn't do anything without, without people behind it that are inviting people to it. And then journeying with them. Beyond it. And that's many of the people who listen to this podcast, I know, [00:24:00] cause they're, my friends are doing this work and they have something to invite people into.

And this is an opportunity. I, the hope is it brings, it brings momentum around what already exists. And so, you know, the pledge can do a couple of things. I think one, it, it helps people feel like a part of something much bigger. Much, much bigger. If you look at the logos that are on the website, if you, if you see the people who are signing this is, this movement is not, I often will go talk to people in a room of 30 or 40, and they're like, who are you to tell me this?

You know, and to say like, this is not Ellie, this is. This is a whole movement of people that are behind as the whole movement of the church. So it can help people feel like something better, bigger. It brings the liquidity to a message that can sometimes be hard. So doing work in a specific place, you know the opportunity to advocate with churches or with even like the government to say you know, what I've been saying is what the global church is saying here, look, see, we're a part of this bigger movement.

And the [00:25:00] last actually, personally, I didn't realize this until recently, but the last like 10 years, I've always thought if only people knew, like how many people think about this and are working on this and that are part of this, they would, they would be more open to the conversation because I'm often talking to people who this is the first time they've heard this idea of family based care.

So I think it brings validity. It also creates something that I used to call it peer pressure, but now I call it positive peer pressure. Cause I learned that in the world without orphans training recently, it creates that social pressure in, and I'm learning more about social change, all social change.

It doesn't happen one by one people don't change in isolation. They change when they look around and there's other people changing and they're like, Oh, I probably should change too. So it creates this kind of Social pressure, but hopefully a positive pressure and helps people to make some of those behavior changes earlier on.

And then even in behavior change, right? There's the theory of behavior changes. Like what is it? [00:26:00] Pre-contemplation contemplation decision and I don't know, whatever I'm messing this up. But there is a point where decision has to be made. And so this is, this tool can be helpful at that decision point.

It's a point where someone goes from, huh, really too. You know what I'm in, I'm in, I'm going to do this. And if that means I'm gonna. Join World Without Orphans leadership team. If that means I'm going to start funding, you know, some great organization like I'm committed, I'm in. So there's a lot of ways you can use it.

There's a lot of examples. We're already hearing of people using it to bring together church leaders in their community to, to help. You know, advocate to say the Christian, the faith community here believes in this. And as a government, we need you to do this or that. Bringing together donors that, you know, trying to bring donors along with a vision you have for short-term missions rallying churches, there's a lot of different ways.

People are starting to use it.

Phil: [00:26:53] Yeah. So I have another question, but before I ask, I want to make sure you have nothing else to ask Elli because you know, you've done.

[00:27:00] **Elli:** [00:27:02] All right.

Phil: [00:27:05] So. Yeah. I just want to make sure that the audience understands for those who don't know where this Global Church Pledge came from. And I've had a couple of questions I to ask, but the first one really goes to, it just didn't come out of Elli sitting in, or her office with a couple other people and just saying, Hey, here's what the pledge, the pledge needs to say this let's just.

Put it out there and get some people to sign it that are our cronies. And then we're just going to get it out there and then have everyone follow this thing. Right. So how did it come together? You know, and I obviously know, cause since I was there or part of it, anyone not at the very beginning, but I know that you and Krish Kandiah and some other folks talked about something and then some other things happen.

And so can you just kind of give the timeline so to speak of the Global Church Pledge? Yeah,

Elli: [00:27:54] well, I mean, it started way before that and you know, a few for the last few years, several kind of [00:28:00] members of this family care movement had been talking about a need for some sort of unifying statement. And and Ruslan, who's leading World Without Orphans at the time.

Leading Faith to Action. Rebecca Nhep, others kind of really talked about it a couple of years, I guess that was five years ago. But it wasn't really, it didn't really start taking action until one year ago, one year ago, December 19. Well, actually I think it was November, but December 19th is when the resolution came through.

That was when the UN said that they were going to focus the, their rights of the child resolution on. Family care, and that is a big deal. That was a very big deal. So a group of us came together in New York during the United Nations General Assembly meetings. Phil was there. And and we talked about how can we together?

Like, is there something more we could do together than doing it separately to accelerate efforts, to see Christian supporting safe and loving families around the world. There's 32 Christian organizations at that meeting. And we really, [00:29:00] essentially, the resolution was kind of further evidence for all of us that.

Care reform was happening. Like it's happening. This is real. Every single country in the world signed onto that resolution. And many people believe that this change is accelerating at a pace that we really haven't even seen before. So then we, we asked in that meeting, like, what is the church's role in care reform?

And what can we do? Is there something we can do to see the church take a greater role in this work And recognizing those shortfalls the Barna research that's coming out. I think I mentioned earlier, it also found that 91% of us Christians think that orphanages are necessary. They're just a necessary thing.

That's that we live with and 86% think they're good. They're a really good thing. So we, we know those things are aren't necessarily true that there are other options for kids that these. That there are other options that are showing better outcomes for kids. So there's room for the church to grow and how, [00:30:00] and it felt like too big of a problem and we had to come together to do it.

So the biggest consensus, I think, you know, just at the top level of everybody's mind is that in that meeting in New York is that we'd have to do we have to work together. We need to continue to wake up the church and call them to the work, to continue to call them because they're already in this work, but to continue to call them to the support of family care.

And there was a lot of different, big ideas that came out of that meeting. Phil, you probably remember some of them are coming together in other ways. Some haven't come in to kind of come together yet, but overall. I think we needed something that united us something that said, how do we all work together?

What, what is it that we come under? And so that's what the pledge was really responding to.

Phil: [00:30:45] Yeah, no. And that was a great, that was a great gathering because it was just so many different organizations, like you said earlier, big and small. I mean, mine's about as small as it gets. And there were some very, very large ones as well.

And, and what I loved [00:31:00] is it wasn't like the big dogs got there at the table and said, Hey, We're the big dogs and we're going to tell you the way it is. No, everyone was an equal there and that's the way it should be at the end of the day is, you know, we have our different ideas. We have our different skills and sometimes the little ones are the ones that are able to do certain things because of the flexibility.

And sometimes, obviously the big ones have the resources and ability to, and the connections and the relationships usually. Right. So it does take that team. It does take the group together, but as you said, that, that unifying, you know, what is our battle cry? You know, we as an organization say, we really need that battle cry.

We need that, that purpose statement, that mission, that vision that we're going to gather around, we're going to unify around it's our center, so to speak. And as if we're truly going to be a movement, then we got to have that battle cry that we know that this is success, right. If we just get a bunch of stuff done, but it's not.

Going toward that battle cry, then what are we really doing? You know? [00:32:00] And so in, like you said earlier that, you know, being that it's the global church pledge and not just a global orphan care pledge, even, you know, it really does bring in that, the context of, you know, what is, what are we doing here in the kingdom building?

What does that look like as well? So with that, you know, the, really the last kind of question before, we're not going to do two questions like we normally do. Cause you guys have already answered that one. I don't want you. Put you on the spot again about one person.

But before we get to that question that most people know if you haven't listened to the show, then you're go.

What is that question? We'll try to put off your suspense in you're wondering what that question is for a minute here, because I want to talk with you guys a little bit about what are the future plans? Of, you know, Faith to Action and World Without Orphans and what you're hoping other organizations have really, you know, we talked a little bit how organizations can use the pledge, but you talked about things you were working on, you talked about some other things that are going on and folks, you know, all of this will be out.

Not all of it. A lot of this will be out when this airs. So if you go to the show notes, you can get all the resources that. You know, we're [00:33:00] talking about here that are available. We'll have those links on the, on the show notes. So just go to thinkorphan.com and you can click on this episode and you can find out all these, you know, find all these resources there.

So that's really what would be one-stop shopping for you? Given that we're recording this right before Christmas one shop, stop one, stop shopping. It would be really nice if we could have that, but. Really one of those future plans to use the pledge the relationships created from, as you said, it's a conversation starter, but we want it to start conversations to do what and what is that hope for it?

Really to further the great work that's already going on, and that hopefully will continue going on that we know about around the world.

Elli: [00:33:40] I don't want to end without saying some of the practical things we need. Just, just to start there, but I mean, if you haven't signed the fledge pledge, you can sign online.

If you represent an organization, go into your organization and see if that's something you could put your logo on, because that's really exciting when we can say, you know, this organization is willing to get behind this. You can sign it as an [00:34:00] individual. You can save it as a church and organization.

It's all on. Globalchurchpledge.org. It's easy there's a translate button, if you would rather have it in a different language. And and all of that also probably more importantly is. Think about, take a second after you turn off this podcast and think about, is this couldn't this punch be helpful and what I'm doing?

You know, for example, we have we, we continue to engage the U S church and we often have a hard time with churches that are like really doing great work and are just, you know, I'm not sure how they engage in this. This work because you know, they're doing good work on the ground. What else do you want me to do?

And so the global work considering inviting some of those bigger churches that have influence on other churches and other Christians with great speakers to say, to put your name behind it. And that's just a way that fate taction is thinking strategically about how to use the pledge. Karen mentioned we have a promotional toolkit.

That is up there. And it has like examples of different ways people are using the pledge. It has the logo and it has the [00:35:00] video you can use. Anything really that will help you think about, maybe you want to do a launch event, a virtual lots of fence or a PR in-person launch event has bent. Like you could, we did one in DC before Coronavirus came and it was incredible moment for church leaders in the U S to come together and to sign some.

And, you know, it's so easy for us to bicker over little stuff, but for us to find something to come together on that unifies us. So there's, there's stuff like that. And also if you can translate the pledge, the two sentences, we'd love to get that. So those are just some practical things. But, but I can let Karen jump in on some of the bigger pieces, but.

Ultimately, I mean, it is about utilizing the pledge and also finding ways for it to bring us together so that we can bring others along with us. Let's continue to grow. Let's let's have the meeting conference let's, let's come together in this specific country and find ways that that will unify.

So we come together because we all agree with this now, where do [00:36:00] we go from here? Yeah.

Karen: [00:36:02] Yeah. And I think that I would add, again, I think the heart and the core DNA of World Without Orphans is collaboration and bringing the church and government and NGO and all the sectors together to solve each nation's orphan crisis and you know, in their own country.

And so again, I see the global church pledge as a piece of that puzzle. It's a, it's a piece. That, that marries really nicely with some of the other resources that we have in our world without orphans roadmap. And so we just see this as a really nice addition to that. And so I'll give a little plug for that.

If you want to go on our website as well to the world, to worldwithoutorphans.org and see our roadmap resource, which also just has some great ideas. Or the church coming together and starting those collaboration conversations and another exciting resource that we, that we have already available, but we're also going to be kind of launching and pushing it more in January.

And I think it goes really well with the global church pledge [00:37:00] is this church leaders' guide and throughout the pandemic over the last. Seven eight months. We've partnered really closely with Parenting for Lifelong Health and developed a ne taking some of the parenting tips that they were pushing during COVID, but actually revamping that all geared at church leaders.

And so as I've been chatting more about the global church pledge and also working with some of our team on this. Church leaders pack. We really just see it as like this awesome thing that we can hand to, to church leaders around the world and say, Hey, you can talk about this global church pledge and you can also see ways that you can help at risk families, either in your church or in your community and wraparound.

Because again, we want this to be a tool to see. They have people in their midst, right? This isn't, especially when we look at the global church and even here in the U S this isn't about looking far away, it's looking within your own neighborhood, your own city, your own region, whatever that looks like to say, [00:38:00] how can we help the vulnerable children, you know, or the vulnerable families that are being impacted right now?

Phil: [00:38:06] Yeah, that's great. I want to just say one more thing is that it really. You talk about it's only two sentences, but that's actually, I think where the brilliance of it come is, is that it's only two sentences, right? I mean, The idea of In Pursuit of Orphan Excellence was to frame a conversation for people around this.

A lot of the, how do we get families into this setting that we normally didn't have families, right? That's 200 and something pages, right. To have that. But I really think that this pledge has been so wonderfully crafted to really start that conversation and to be able to frame that conversation in two sentences, which

is, you know, really, I think attesting to the, to the people that have come together and the people that are involved with it. And I say that not because I was in that room, but I wasn't really involved with [00:39:00] the crafting of it. So I want to be making that very clear. Like I'm not tooting my own horn here.

I think there are some, just some people that have put a lot of work into making this a statement that, and it was, you know, a big, long conversation about it. Like what words and what's important. What's critical. What's you know, why, why are we doing this? And so I want to just say folks out there, you know, don't like, say, Oh, it's just, it's just something like Elli said, you know, or Karen, I can't remember which one you said.

Don't just go and sign it and go check the box. Done. No, really study this, this pledge and go, do I understand this? Do I understand what they're talking about? Do I understand why this is important or why this is it's? You know, it might seem to you like, of course this is basic stuff, but obviously it's not just simple, basic stuff or else.

Well, some of it's simple, it's not easy because it's not happening right now. So I think that's something to just, as you're engaging this folks to, to really, if you don't understand [00:40:00] it, send an email to the people that say, if you have questions, send an email to ask the questions. There is no dumb question, because these are things that, as you said, the numbers, 90 something percent, 80 something percent of people, you know, Think orphanages are a really good thing.

And, you know, and sometimes in the very exception to the rule, it's, it's necessary for certain kids in certain places. But for the, for the most part, you know, we're running get kids into families that are permanent. Long-term biological. Ideally, but other, you know, families that we can get kids into. So anyway, I just wanted to say that because it was, it was really encouraging to me to see it coming together because as I was in that room, but you know, little over a year ago to see how it's coming to fruition and go, man, this is, this is going to be really cool.

And then we are also seeing, as you've heard on the show with other guests that we've had, that there is this. Really groundswell of work together that people are doing.

[00:41:00] **Dr. Rick:** [00:40:59] So we've kind of come to that point in our podcast where you know, we've, we've talked a lot about about the, the pledge and, and we've talked about the collaboration that can happen around that, but we. We are now kind of at the place where we're going to ask that question. Right. And, and, and really it's rooted in the fact that, that, you know, part of being a part of this community is really listening to and growing from the things we hear from each other.

So I only, I'm going to, I'm going to ask you first, but what, what is one thing that you've read, watched or listened to recently that that's really informed your thinking about how we can love orphaned and vulnerable children with excellence?

Elli: [00:41:40] I don't know how many times I am bought books and watched videos and things like that because I listened to this podcast and I'm like, if they say it, I got to do it.

So I think this might've been, I actually have it right here. I'm actually not quite finished. It's a really, it's one of those books that you're like writing notes all over, but it's called Systems [00:42:00] Thinking for Social Change, somebody else might have already recommended it on this show. It says a practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences and achieving lasting results.

Sounds great. Right. We just read that book and we got it all. Thanks. No, but there's some really good stuff in one of the things Faith to Action, I think is kind of prioritizing in the next year or two. And when regards to new guidance, you know, we have a lot of things that we have, but is really helping the church and helping Christians think through.

But we call it a systems mindset, but we're not going to use that word because that's a scary, weird sounding word, but just going. And Rebecca Nhep said it at the World Without Orphans Forum. She said, you know, going into orphan care is not, you know, a buffet line where you look and you see, Whoa, I could do that.

Or I could do that thing, or I could do foster care. I could do an orphanage record, but really you need to look at, you know, what is around that can support children. What are the problems that are affecting children? And how can I link [00:43:00] to things that allow this, not just to be about me, but to be about a whole system that can.

No long-term care welfare children. And so this systems thinking for social change book is really helping me put language to some of that. And is, is really, I think something that comes from the social change world, but I think we are, we're kind of doing a social change. So I think it's important for us to be aware of, of that knowledge.

Dr. Rick: [00:43:26] That's awesome. Karen.

Elli: [00:43:29] Where is that line?

Karen: [00:43:34] I can't repeat what I said last time, since it's been six months since we talked last, so I need to be reading something new. Well, and I actually saw this, I'm reading

this book. This book was sent to me and I saw that you interviewed him recently and I have it by name, but the, as many as the stars by Robert Glover.

So I saw. He was in your podcast lineup. I haven't listened to the interview. Oh, look at those. Got his copy next to him too, but I just I'm halfway through and I have to say As a [00:44:00] storyteller myself and just somebody who really gravitates. And I've known Robert Glover professionally and have interacted with him in a professional space.

But I did not know a lot of his personal journey and just how God spoke so clearly and moved in so many miraculous ways to get him to China at the time and place. And so I think I've just been riveted by him. The story to see that God moved, you know, having an earth to get him there. And then just to see, I'm just at the very beginning in terms of where he's impacting the changes in the system, you know, the, the practical side of what Elli's just referencing, but this just being someone's story of really coming in and changing a system, but seeing how.

God really used him. So I've been very impacted by this book. I've, I've just like, kind of chunked away chapter at each night, but I'm really, really enjoying that book.

Dr. Rick: [00:44:50] Are you sure the two of you didn't talk because really like that we sort of have the theory and then the story to validate it's right there together.

That's awesome.

[00:45:00] **Elli:** [00:45:02] Absolutely. And can I give you props before we leave? There's a facilitation team of people that are working on the global pledge. Karen and I are on that, but there's an awesome group out of home for good. I think you've had Rebecca Patterson on this group before she's done so much work. She did that video.

There's a lot of people that have put input into this global church flooded. I just want to give all the credit to people who've been working really hard on it, but I'm honored to be able to have a piece of it because I think it is powerful and I'm excited to see where it goes.

Phil: [00:45:29] Yeah, I agree. I think it's really exciting.

Karen, there's a little dirty little secret of, of this. This show is if you haven't finished the book, you don't tell people you haven't finished

Karen: [00:45:41] it.

But remember from my previous podcast, I'm a truth teller. So there you go.

Elli: [00:45:49] You're worried. I'm always worried something at the end, like really bad. Well, I

Karen: [00:45:54] interviewed the guy on the show. They must've they're endorsing the book. Oh, so

[00:46:00] **Phil:** [00:46:01] no, I'm just kidding all at the same time. LA it's funny. Cause that was, we mentioned Brandon Stiver earlier. That was Brandon. Yeah. I have a recommendation when he was in the middle of his master's program.

Elli: [00:46:12] Now you say that I'm pretty sure I listened to that episode and bought the book from, I just realize that.

Thanks, Brandon.

Phil: [00:46:22] I'm Rebecca talking about systems theory at the World Without Orphans forum, so it's just coming full circle. So it's fun stuff. And so again, Love having you two on so much fun folks can tell out there. We had a lot of fun with this but respect both of you very, very much love doing this work with both of you and just thank you for all.

You're doing, thanks for taking the time to be a part of this. And yeah, we're just very, very excited to get this out to folks so they can learn from it.

Elli: [00:46:50] Thank you so much. Thank you.

Phil: [00:46:57] Well, thanks again to Ellie and [00:47:00] Karen. Again, Rick so much fun. I love those two women. It's fantastic to be able to work with them, to be able to learn from them and, and just to do this stuff with them.

You know, is, is a blast. And it's exciting to see how God is moving, to bring organizations together. Quite frankly, the lot of them, you didn't ever think that they'd worked together. She didn't go down the list, but when you see this global church pledge and all the different organizations that are a part of it, and I will be able to do that when you're listening to this, the pledge will be fully released and launched and all this stuff will be, you'll be able to get.

At our website at the think or not calm shown us here. So but Rick, what what'd you think what'd you think of it?

Dr. Rick: [00:47:44] Yeah. I mean, you know, Phil, I think, you know, just on the face of it, I mean the idea that you know, God created family for children is it was an idea that we all embrace and it's something that we believe deeply in.

And, and I [00:48:00] think the. You know, really the, the genius on this is the simplicity. Just a very simple site statement that size. You know, family is, is something, you know, from God and that God has you know, has, has ordained the family and the church and, and a statement that's, you know, that's kind of built around those two ideas is it's something that we definitely should you know, should embrace.

And so I'm just very thankful for for Karen and for Elli and for their, you know, for their great work and. So many different areas and obviously had been impacted by both of them but just really thankful for their leadership in this effort. And and I think we you know, there's not, there's not a whole lot more left to be said except go check out the statement and, and really kind of prayerfully consider how your church organization, anybody that you're affiliated with that you can you know, you can begin.

To to embrace the ideals that are, you know, that are representative in the [00:49:00] statement by claiming the statement.

Phil: [00:49:03] Yeah. You know, I think that at the end of the day, for me, anything that is for unity and unifying organizations and bringing people together, bringing organizations together to do work together and to simplify that process as much as possible is something I'm for, you know, and as long as it's something that is, is consistent with obviously Consistent with what we're doing and what we are, what our mission is to, to help orphan and vulnerable children, to flourish and children and families to flourish around the world.

That that is something that, you know, I think, you know, you and I both, we talk about it all the time on the show. Like that's why we're doing this show. Is to help children and families flourish. And it's why we do what we do in our homes. And it's why we are seeking to, you know, work with other organizations and [00:50:00] working so hard to collaborate with or other organizations, not just, you know, Check the box and say, Oh, we connected with somebody.

So we're done. No it's how do we actually work together to build the kingdom together? And what does that look like? And, you know, and that's, that's something that I see this as a step toward, as consistent with that conversation. And it's something that in isolation is not going to do anything. As they said, as, as Ali said, if all you do is sign a piece of paper and you check the box and you're done, that's not going to do anything right.

As we've talked in the past a collective where we can get organizations trained up and all the things that they need to do, if we get it in, in context and in connection with World Without Orphans and Christian Alliance for Orphans and all the work that our organizations are doing. And we have this pledge that basically acts as, you know, for lack of a better, better term, you know, lack of a better term, that the purpose statement for this [00:51:00] collective work that we're doing together. That encompasses, and really is this broad statement that encompasses what all of our organizations are doing and are all our individual mission statements and vision statements and everything that at the end of the day, it's, you know, it's kind of one step short of, you know, we're building the kingdom, right.

And that's, and that's, I think gets a little bit more something to grab onto, which is, which is fantastic in my opinion.

Dr. Rick: [00:51:24] Yeah. I think, you know, at the end of the day the statement is, is sufficiently. You know, specific have meaning, but it's, it's, it's intentionally broad enough to, you know, to really allow us to, you know, to be able to embrace it and cooperate.

And it's just, yeah, it's just very well done. So I hope our hope our, you know, our friends out there will go check it out, sign it, pledge it. You know, hold it up as one of those things and that that you referred to often as you're, you know, as, as you're thinking about and [00:52:00] evaluating the things that the you new administry and thinking about and evaluating how you, how you call it a cooperate, collaborate with others and you know, in, in how you accomplish ministry together.

Phil: [00:52:11] Good. So yeah, folks, I think it's ready. It's, you know, we're ready. It's time for us to sign off another, another episode, you know, I will say, as we're signing out, there's a, there's a great book that I'm in the middle of. And I just. I did this in honor of Karen Springs, just honestly saying she did not finish the book that, that she recommended.

And I am going to say that I'm recommending a book based on the author. James Montgomery Boice is the author of this book and he wrote this book, *Two Cities, Two Loves*. And I'm also. You know, piggybacking on the recommendation of Alistair Begg. And if he's going to recommend a book, I don't think I'm going to regret recommending it to you either.

And I've already started reading this. It's a fantastic book. *Two Cities, Two Loves*. It's basically Boice brings Augustine's *City of [00:53:00] God*, to a modern day understanding. And so it's, it's really the reason I bring it up. And then this episode is it's, it's really talking about. The kingdom of God versus the kingdom of man.

And if we're, it's true, they're going to be doing this kingdom work. We need to know that we are in the kingdom of God. We are citizens of the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of man in it, in that kingdom of God. It is an upside down kingdom where these kids, these vulnerable kids, these families that are suffering, that the poverty.

In poverty, the oppressed, the sick, the poor, they're the ones that are the core of the gut, you know, God's heart. And we are to love them. I mean, that is what we are to do. And if we are following God, if we are in the kingdom of God, that will be our heart. And we talk about that and in pursuit of orphan excellence and talking about it here, and it's something that I firmly believe.

And it's something that I hope, you know, as the more and more you look into this, the more and more you study scripture, the more and more you get involved in this work, the more you realize that this is the core of God's heart. So I do hope and [00:54:00] pray that you take everything that you learn in everything that you heard today.

Everything that you're hearing from all these episodes, from these books that you're reading. I love that Elli recommended a book that was from one of our former episodes and as was Karen's. And those are things that just excite me because I do hope and pray that you're taking everything that you've learned from this show and you're using it to help you understand how you can love orphaned and vulnerable children better and better each and every day.

Thanks a lot. Have a great week.