

Introduction: Welcome to Engage 360, Denver Seminary's podcast. Join us as we explore the redemptive power of the Gospel and the life-changing truth of scripture at work in our culture today.

Dr. Don Payne: Hey friends, welcome again to Engage 360 at Denver Seminary. My name is Don Payne. I'm glad to be your host for another conversation, and we've got a really intriguing guest with us this week. I'm eager for you to meet and hear from, let me set it up this way. The Apostle Paul's call for the church to be of one mind in Philippians 2, 1 to 4, has probably never been more apt than it is in these times, at least in this country because in light of everything that currently divides the church in this country, it almost makes me long for some of the quote unquote good old days where all that we had to fight about was what we then call the worship wars. Now I know I'm romanticizing the past because we didn't think they were very good old days at that time, but it kind of makes me long for them now. So, I have no idea how many books have been written about worship and the worship wars, but the conversations, as I recall, were pretty intense.

And in some places probably continue to be intense. Worship is clearly at the heart of relating to God. So, it shouldn't be any surprise that we take it so seriously. And it's equally tragic. I think that something that should unite us can so easily divide us or can otherwise lose its way. Anyway, I'm just overjoyed whenever I come across a resource or a person who has thought deeply about worship in a way that's genuinely theological, not merely cultural or experiential, but that, that speaks theologically into the depths of human experience. So, we are privileged this week and this episode to have as our guest, Dr. Glenn Packiam. And I'll tell you a little bit about Dr. Packiam in just a moment, but Glenn, welcome to Engage 360.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Thank you, Don. Glad to be on with you. And I am glad the worship wars are over.

Dr. Don Payne: Well, I hope, but maybe they'll recycle, who knows? Dr. Packiam is the associate senior pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs. And he is the lead pastor of their downtown congregation. They're a multi-site church these days. I don't know how many years, or how long have you had multi-site?

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Well, New Life Downtown was our first kind of offsite congregation that began in 2012. So nine years it's been nine and a half years. Now that we've done this and we do it a little bit like a parish model where there's live preaching and contextualized ministry at each congregation. So they're all a little bit different. It's not a video piped in message sort of thing, but very contextualized.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. And new life. Some of you will know about New Life, others around in other parts of the country may not, but New Life is a pretty large church, I guess it might qualify. I don't know what the metrics are for a mega church, but I mean, it's really big.

- Dr. Glenn Packiam: Yeah, it does and it carries, you know, whatever the listener might think about or mega church, I suppose you, you know, it is large, it does have loud music. It does have exuberant preaching and all of that, but we're grateful. I mean, the, the truth is Don, New Life has been through a lot of pain and its story late 2006 scandal of the founding senior pastor, new senior pastor comes in in 2007 and then a hundred days into his time. There's a gunman that comes on the campus and opens fire two, teenage girls lose their lives. I mean, tragedy upon tragedy. So here we are 14, 15 years later after both of those things. And we're just, we're grateful to be a healthy local church. That's I think that would be the descriptor we would aspire to the most, you know, a mega or not. We want to be healthy. We want to be faithful and we're grateful for ministry that's taking place.
- Dr. Don Payne: That's a good word. Because it's kind of remarkable. And I think maybe a marker of God's grace that a church who's been through so much has rebounded, and is thriving rather than continuing to spiral.
- Dr. Glenn Packiam: Absolutely right. And you know, we're going to be talking today about worship. I mean, worship has been a big part of New Life story from, from day one. And I would say, because we've been a worshipping church, it's one of the things that has anchored us during those ups and downs and those storms and continues to anchor us, even through this season of the pandemic and all of that, being a church that understands how to turn to God for hope or in places where you need hope to come to worship that way.
- Dr. Don Payne: Now you've got an interesting story. You hold a doctorate in theology and ministry from the university of Durham in the UK. So you're Durham, man. I'm a Manchester man, but you know.
- Dr. Glenn Packiam: I like their football team, you know, soccer team.
- Dr. Don Payne: Well, I do too, when they win. At least Man United, not Man City, not much a Man City fan, but I don't want to turn anybody off by that, but you know, when I was going to school there, Man City was nobody. That's another story, but so you did your studies in Durham in theology and ministry. You are both a theologian and a worship leader and a songwriter and got a.
- Dr. Glenn Packiam: Less of the worship leading these days more of the pastor preaching stuff, but back in my earlier years.
- Dr. Don Payne: Okay. we're also really glad that you're an adjunct faculty member here at Denver Seminary in our doctor of ministry program.
- Dr. Glenn Packiam: I'm grateful. I've loved my experience teaching at Denver Seminary and look forward to it coming up next year.

Dr. Don Payne: All right, let's talk about the books you've written. Now. I only have in front of me, two of them, and you have quite a number of others, the one I, well, why don't you just kind of rattle off your books? Okay. Tell us a little bit about them.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: The first one is called a Butterfly in Brazil, and that, that takes through, you know, the life of BMI is sort of how your life can make a world of difference. It's written to young people to help them understand that even if you have big dreams, you've got to start small and stay the course. And that sort of thing. The second book is called Secondhand Jesus. And that really came out of my own processing of the scandal that happened at New Life and recognizing some of the rumors of God as the message translation puts at the end of the book of Job, where Job says, I've lived off a rumor of you, but now I have it firsthand. So talk about that. Lucky the book, one of the books you have in front of you is about the Sermon on the Mount. And it's really a kingdom vision of the gospel, how we are recipients of this good news and participants in it.

The book after that was a thin one called Discover the Mystery of Faith, which is about resourcing from the great tradition of the church for worship. Worship practices from the Lord's table to confession, to psalm praying basically stuff that the evangelical church has left in the attic, so to speak, but that we can dust off and resource from. And then the 2019, there was a book called Blessed, Broken, and Given, which is that language of what Jesus does with bread and using that to kind of provoke a sacramental imagination in us to say that this, these three words are how we are to understand our life in Christ and the church's life in the world, Blessed, Broken, and Given. So and then the one that we're talking about today is the only academic book I've written so far. It's called Worship in the World to Come. And that's a rewritten version of my dissertation work at Durham.

Dr. Don Payne: I wondered about that, as I was looking through it. I thought that might be your dissertation. Now you also have a one that is forthcoming, don't you? The Resilient Pastor. Tell us about that.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Yeah, that comes out in February of 22. And that was in partnership with Barna. David Kinnaman at Barna approached me a year and a half ago and said, would I partner with them to write a book for pastors for the challenges that pastors are facing in a changing world. Naively, I said, yes. And then a month later, the pandemic began, you know, so talk about a change of moral world. Yeah. but it was wonderful to, to craft the research during 2020. So I outlined eight challenges for the pastor as an individual and four for the church, and then worked with their team to design research or the, you know, the survey questions that they then sent out to hundreds of pastors. And then after getting some of that data back, I had some focus groups with pastors in the U S Canada and the UK three different focus groups where we talk through those challenges. So the book is not data heavy though.

I don't want to intimidate people by that are people to be spooked by that it's about 10% data. Really it's 90% trying to call the wisdom of church history and

the scriptures, and to say, how does that give us insight into this moment? Cause Don, I don't believe that they are truly unprecedented moments. I think because the church has survived many storms and Christ has been the head of the church for, you know, a couple of thousand years, quite a while. And Paul says it this way in first Corinthians 15, Jesus has risen from the dead, therefore be steadfast immovable, knowing that your labor will not be in vain. So we're trying to find the wisdom of, in what ways has the church been here before and in what ways can even the story of the church, maybe pre Constantine shed some light for us in our world today.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. I'm glad you're doing that kind of work because you know, especially for many Americans who don't have a long historical memory, we tend to think that the moments we occupy in time or the first time that anybody has ever dealt with this stuff, when really most everything we're dealing with is a recycled version.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: There is some sense of it. I mean, we think about the church in Carthage after the, you know, the donatus controversy and then all of a sudden they're dealing with their own sort of epidemic or pandemic, and the divisions of a divided church trying to survive a health crisis. I mean, listen, there are all kinds of parallels in ways that we can learn and glean from church history.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. Here's to the church history, a plug for church history. Now we're going to talk a bit today about your book. You mentioned with, this is a published version of your doctoral work *Worship and the World to Come*. The sub subtitle is *Exploring Christian Hope in Contemporary Worship*. And as I said in the intro, what really excites me about this is that it's a genuinely theological approach to worship. And you've obviously given as some of your other book titles suggest a lot of attention to worship in one way or another. And it may be, might be worth mentioning if you don't mind that you are in a curious position of being an ordained Anglican priest serving in a non-English in a non liturgical, kind of a mainstream large mainstream evangelical church, which is I think fascinating. But I suspect that also brings for you, or you bring a lot of that Anglican devotion to worship that Anglican reflection about worship into the way into the culture and the climate of a non liturgical church.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: And I've had company along the way. I mean, Brady our senior pastor, several of my colleagues at the church, we've all been on this journey together. And I'll tell you part of the thing done that we recognized is when you're, when you're at a church where the leader has had a very public moral failure, you don't just replace the leader, you have to explore what about the model needs to change? And in those early years for us, we began to realize, look, if you just insert another person onto the same platform, you're still possibly setting them up to fail again. And I'm not saying that every leader is just as susceptible or whatever. Everyone's got their own particular things, but it's a good chance to examine the system that we're creating of the culture that we're creating. And when I shifted away from leading worship, primarily, you know, with an instrument worship

and song stuff, and started preaching at a service Sunday night service regularly in 2009, I realized, wait a minute, there's ego and vanity in my own heart.

What can we change about this? And I recognize that historical worship practices of the church had a way of de-centering the individual. Now there's an irony here, of course, because right up leading to the reformation, you say, well, hang on a minute, the priest who was the only one who could say these things are only one of understood Latins. They sound like they're very much in the center. So again, there is an irony here, but for a good chunk of church history, the goal was for the Lord's table to be front and center in the worship practices and our songs and prayers. And even the preaching of the word was meant to sort of surround that and flow in. And out of that, we began to realize that look, during the sung portion of the musical portion, the band may get it right, or they might get it wrong as we will talk about today, and the preacher might get it right or wrong. But when you get to the Lord's table, that's the moment where we kind of step out of the way and say, behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

So this liturgical shape and has really influenced us at new life, in all of our services where we all do weekly communion now. And we it's changed the way that we preach so that we preach toward the table where Christ is the hero, as opposed to now go and, you know, do try harder this week. It becomes real Gospel centered preaching. So liturgy changing the liturgical shape can actually change the way that you preach. It can change the Gospel center of the church. It can make it more Gospel centered. And those are the things that we've experienced it in your life over the last 10 or 12 years.

Dr. Don Payne: Oh, that's exciting to hear. And, you know, you remind me of the fact that historically, well, let me say it differently in a lot of contemporary conversations, when we talk about a worship leader, we're talking about a musician, correct?

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Yes.

Dr. Don Payne: At least in a lot of settings, you're talking about a musician. When we talk about worship, we're talking about the song portion, but historically, if somebody talked about the worship leader, they were talking about the pastor. The pastor was the one who led the people of God in worship. And there were sung portions. There were prayerful portions, there were preaching portions, but it was all worshiped in the pastor led worship. So these designated and specialized roles are really a fairly, fairly modern phenomenon. Is that correct?

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Oh, that's absolutely right. I mean, that's absolutely. And Lester Ruth at Duke Divinity, he's done some great historical work on kind of tracking the roots of this movement. I mean, one stream that gets a lot of attention is sort of the Jesus movement stuff that, you know, where contemporary music comes out of, but actually Lester argues that there's this latter rain Pentecostal movement that is a stronger tributary, if you will, that kind of contributes to our, our

modern worship stream. But yes, you're right. We now use the term worship leader synonymously with the music leader or the song leader.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. So what led you to do this research and write this book originally?

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Well, as you will know, dumb when people are doing doctoral work and you're trying to make an original contribution to the field, they always say, pick a field, you know, well, cause you're going to be immersed in it, you know, and I thought, well, I've spent many years leading worship writing songs, and you know, doing that sort of thing. So I know that world, but I also know that you can't just evaluate worship generically, like you can't say is modern worship theologically good or bad? Is it malforming us? Or you have to be more specific than that. And so I decided that the angle of theology or the aspect of theology that I had begun to recognize had a greater importance than I had given in the past was eschatology the aspect of Christian hope. And I personally, in my own pastoral work began to recognize how the vision of new creation and of resurrection is such a compelling vision, that it actually helps to work backwards and make more sense of say the churches mission, or even the way we talk about salvation or the theology of the kingdom. And it goes actually all the way back to our theology of creation.

So there's a sense in which the end informs the beginning and everything in the middle, right. So I started to think about how I could maybe query worship and hope. How does worship form our hope? How are we singing about hope in our worship? And so in order to do this and the kind of work that they taught us to do at Durham was to sort of you're blending sociological or qualitative research with theological reflection, right? And that to me was something that's not done enough with worship studies. A lot of times what worship studies ends up doing is saying, Hey, this is what historical theology says Christian worship is, or this is what biblical theology says biblical worship is. And then now we just got to apply it. So it's basically applied theology. Instead, what I was trying to do, and what we were encouraged to do is to say study what's actually going on when the people of God come together in worship and look at this sort of theology in action, if you will. And parse out from there, what's good, what's bad. What's missing in that. So, you still have a standard, you got to have a standard. And in my work, I use Helen Cameron's four voices of theology, where there's a normative voice and a formal voice.

And then you have the operant and the espoused. I mean, those are technical terms, but the idea is what do people say they believe about hope? What should they say that they believe about hope by formal theological voices or even the creeds? But then what actually is the underlying theology of hope that's at work in the songs that they're singing and in the way that they come to worship? So I designed the research to analyze songs on the one hand and then services on the other hand. So there were songs that I asked worship leaders and I had access to 25,000 worship leaders on a distribution list from integrity music. And I got a thousand responses out of that. And there was lots of different questions, but one of the questions was name, a song that brings you

hope and the name of song that brings your church hope? And I would cross-reference those two answers and came up with a top, you know, eight or nine songs. And then I began to analyze those songs. What imagery do they use? What pronouns and nouns do they use?

What's the verb tense? Are we singing about the past, the present, the future? So then after analyzing the songs, then I went and spent time with two local churches, one in Denver and one in Dallas. Two large churches, and had observed their services, interviewed the pastors did a number of focus group meetings with people at those churches to talk about how people experience hope. So I'll just pause there. That's kind of the setup for the book, it was, it was driven by trying to get under this question a bit more of his worship forming us and in what way?

Dr. Don Payne: Wow. Where my mind was going when you were describing that was generations ago. So I'm thinking about autobiographically. Okay. So I grew up in a, kind of an independent Baptist movement in West Texas. And so the old gospel hymns, and I can remember though, I didn't have a language for it at the time. I can remember that many of the songs we sang were very eschatological in the sweet by and by when we meet on that beautiful shore, you know, we're always looking forward. And a lot of those songs probably came out of some, some degree of just hardship in people's lives, where they're always looking forward, but then even more intensely, you think about the hymnity of enslaved peoples that's deeply, I think, deeply eschatological.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Absolutely. And I go into that in the book, because what I discovered about these songs that worship leaders today said were songs of hope is that they were not. So again, this is where getting a specific theological question really helps. They were not bad songs, theologically in a general sense, but when, as songs of hope, they were really lacking some things. And in my analysis of them, they were overly focused on the present tense. It was about the here and now. They were overly focused on what's happening close to me, the proximate space. And they had a disproportionate, like 90% of the pronouns were singular personal pronouns. I am, me's and my's. And when I think about that, again, that's not automatically bad, but put com compare it to some other things.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah, you look at the patterns, in a sense.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: That's right, that's right. And I compare it to the slave spirituals and many of the slave spirituals. And there's this deep longing for something in the future. Something that is yet to come and just contrast that with our preoccupation, with the present you're here now, you're speaking. Now you're doing this now. So one of the things I say in the book is the gift of the charismatic movement is the expectation of encounter. That's a good thing, but the trick, the trap, the trap with that is that you can be so preoccupied with the present that you forget that the fullness of what God is going to do is yet to come. There's a, not yetness to the kingdom, and this, the painful sort of question I raised, and I can't answer this conclusively, but the question I raise, is singing about the present

tense, the luxury of privileged people, you know, people who are not in pain, people are not suffering.

Dr. Don Payne: I was just going to ask you about that. How do you, I don't have a really great way of asking this, I'm thinking on the fly here, but how does hymnity of hope mean anything or actually shape the life of well-resourced if not affluent people? I mean, who I'm not thinking, I'm not wondering whether I'm going to have a meal tonight.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: That's right. It's interesting because, you know, even the specific imagery of the red sea parting, there's a well-known contemporary song that places that imagery either in the past tense or present tense, you split the sea. So I can walk right in and there's nothing wrong with it. I love that song. It's a powerful song. I've had moments with God through that song, but purely through this lens that we're, we're talking about here, when the slave spirituals talk about crossing the Red Sea, it's yet to come. It's something that, because we're not on the other side of this, you know, we're still in Egypt. And I think for us, we have to be mindful that so many of our songs, like so much of our theology is shaped by our context and our context of affluence.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah, yeah. And which makes, perhaps this makes eschatology or, for those who don't use that word a lot, the theology of things to come, how God is going to resolve and reconcile all things in the future that can make that into either just a theological curiosity for people who kind of had happened to have that kind of curiosity or a bucket of abstractions.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: There is no urgency to it. Yeah. Yeah. And so, okay. So we've been talking about time, but there's also this dimension of space. So when is the hope that Christians have been promised, but also where is this hope that Christians have been promised? And while the songs that were about the future have there's something good about it. They're at least pointing us forward. The difficulty with those songs is they point upward to sort of another place, like wherever God's action is going to be, it's not here, it's there. And so I've got to be lifted in the air to go meet him or I'll fly away or that sort of thing. Yeah. And, and in the book I have to do, I had to construct different models of hope. So there's a cognitive purely sort of, you know, from a human perspective cognition, what is hope from an emotional perspective, what is hope? But when I get to constructing a theological model of hope, the early Christians, there's obviously some disagreement on the details, but the overwhelming consensus was what we're hoping for is bodily, resurrection and new creation. And of course, that's there in the New Testament itself. And that's the stuff that is just a glaring gap in our songs. We're not singing or the songs that come to mind for these worship leaders. I'm not saying these songs don't exist. I think there's great artists who are doing that work. Unfortunately it hasn't infiltrated the mainstream of Christian worship music. So that these worship leaders, when they're naming songs of hope, they're not naming songs that speak about resurrection or new creation.

Dr. Don Payne: Interesting. Yeah. Heaven, or what many would think of as the disembodied state seems often to appear as that focal point of the hope. Yes. But biblically it's the resurrection, it's not the interim state. It's the resurrection.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Yes. Now, so here's the fascinating thing about the research so that the songs is one piece. When I started spending time with people who are going to church and worshiping, and I couldn't ask them questions, like, do you experience hope in church? That's objection, your honor. Leading the witness, you know, I had to get at it a little bit sideways and say, have you ever gone to church feeling one way and leaving feeling a different way of experiencing something different. And every overwhelmingly people describe that. And as I spent more and more time with this focus group where we had three or four different meetings, they would, they would describe painful situations in their marriage. Difficult medical diagnosis is strange relationships with their adult children. I mean, all kinds of painful things. And they said, but every time I came to church, something happened, God met me. I began to believe that that he was sovereign or, you know, so one church that I spent time with the Presbyterian church, they talked about elements like the silence or the candles or the prayer time, or even the fellowship time.

And the sovereignty of God, the other church was loud you know, charismatic. And they would talk about the energy in the room and the visual of seeing other people worshiping. And they said that really lifted me up. And then I would ask them, well, what happened on Monday? You know, what happens on Tuesday? And inevitably they all said, oh yeah, yeah, it does fade. And I said, well, what do you do in those moments? I just start praying again? Right. I pick up the phone and call a friend, or I turn on the music again. So some of those elements call a friend. Well, that's the saints. That's why we gather with one another. I began to pray, well, that's why we pray at church. I began to listen to music again. Well, that's why we have music. And I began to read the Bible. That's why there's preaching in church.

Dr. Don Payne: You're kind of rehearsing the same elements that they have in gathered worship is that?

Dr. Glenn Packiam: That's exactly it, the gathered worship has all of those elements, those elements, arguably that are there in Acts 242 or Ephesians 5: 18 through 21, you know, all of those, but they're rehearsing it again personally. And what it's doing is it's, it's reigniting that hope again.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. Okay. Let's explore a little bit further this connection between worship and hope, because when I think about the connections that might be out there most forefront in people's minds between worship and some theological theme, some doctrine I'm guessing here, but, you know, worship, joy, worship, faithfulness worship will be. But the connection between worship and hope, which you've been already exploring, that's probably not a connection that is right on the tip of most Christians tongues. I don't think.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: No, you're right. You're absolutely right, Don. And it's strange that it isn't because it would have been for the early Christians. Right. You know, so they made their day of worship the day of resurrection. Why? Because they needed to remember resurrection. They sang in prison cells at midnight. How, because they believe that was not the end of the story, you know, so, so hope is in. And then I think about the phrase that liturgically gets incorporated into Christian worship very early on, Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again. This Memorial acclamation has a future dimension to it. And if even the Lord's table is kind of meant to be the centerpiece of Christian worship, even that is part remembrance, past tense part and counter present tense by the spirit and part anticipation, this future sense of hope. So I think if the Lord's table itself becomes a paradigm for Christian worship, we would say, wait a minute, we need remembrance and counter and hope anticipation in our worship.

Dr. Don Payne: Which means you're not merely talking about songs. So when we talk about worship, you're not only talking about what we sing and how we sing. You're talking about the entire experience of worship.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Exactly. Right. And in fact, it puts too great of a burden on songwriters. And I don't want to let songwriters off the hook and I speak to them as my own brothers and sisters. We can and should write better songs, but I could say we can and should preach better sermons, but even so I don't want to put the burden solely on the songwriter or solely on the preacher. Because you're absolutely right on the whole service must be designed in such a way that we are rehearsing these Gospel movements that contain remembrance and counter and anticipation. And I will often encourage young worship leaders or even pastors, as they think about their service. You don't have to use the language of the liturgy. I'm less concerned if you take the prayer book and pray that prayer. But I would encourage you to learn from the logic of the liturgy. There's a shape to this thing that is meant to influence our worship planning. And too often in the evangelical church, we're planning a service like we're planning a variety show, which is what elements will work here, as opposed to saying what is going to help people go on this journey and remember that Christ has died. Christ has risen and Christ will come again?

Dr. Don Payne: And I appreciate you saying that because you can say that where I can't as easily. I mean, they will expect, you know, kind of snarky comments like that from, from an academic. Okay. But you're a pastor. So you can say that, you know, that we plan it, like we're planning a variety show. Yeah. Well that kind of raises another question. You are ordained in a liturgical tradition and you have clearly drawn a lot drawn, very thoughtfully drawn, very heavily upon the theology of the liturgical traditions. Liturgical worship tends to have an overtly theological shape and overtly theological contours to it, where many less formal non liturgical styles. I mean, there's always a liturgy, but it's more implicit. It's more, it's not as overt. What would be, or what is your vision for genuinely theologically driven worship, even in non liturgical settings?

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Yeah, I think, I mean, some of the, in addition to some of the stuff I've mentioned, I think one of the things we have to be mindful of is we subconsciously are operating out of a paradigm for why we worship together. And in the book, it's a bit of table setting, but I explore historically what has shaped our understanding of why, what we're trying to accomplish in the gathering. And you kind of have the one paradigm, that's the mission paradigm, where we're gathering together so that we can reach more people and tell more people about Jesus. Well, that really comes from the kind of second grade awakening sort of stuff in America. Anyway, you know, where we, the liturgical church, a shape of churches changed after the second great awakening, Melanie Ross at Yale has done work on this, where there was this fourfold shape of the gathering, the word, the table, descending that's the liturgical shape. Well at these revivals Finney's new methods were song, sermon, alter call, you know, or decision mode. And I'm not, I'm not, you know, saying that that's a bad thing.

It was very effective, but churches began to adopt the sort of tent meetings that became the norm that became the tent. The tent meeting liturgy became our norm. And the trick with that is it is built on this underlying premise that the church serves is about reaching the lost or about culminating toward a decision moment. And I think that's insufficient. You can't just operate out of the mission paradigm, the other paradigm, and maybe liturgical churches operate under this one is its formation. That every time we gather we're supposed to be formed, this is James K. Smith Desiring the Kingdom, or you are what you love. So the liturgies are all about forming us. Well, the trouble with that is we all know you can have perfect liturgies and poorly disciplined Christians, you know, so that's not quite a one-to-one. And then the other, you know, the charismatic kind of stream contributed this idea that well, we just gathered together to meet with God. And when I worked with Barna, actually in this new research about why people come to church the number one reason is oh, to meet with God. So that's a good thing, but on its own, it's not enough.

So what I suggest to people is all three paradigms are biblical, but they have to be held in a kind of generative tension with each other. And so there's some discernment work to do as a pastor to say, is our service being influenced by mission formation and encounter? And when do we need to lean toward one more than the other, maybe in certain seasons, maybe in the life of a church? For us as our church, we realized we'd come out of mission and encounter for decades, but we didn't have formation. So for us incorporating some of these liturgical elements, weekly communion, that was a way of, hey, when we call people to worship together, it's not simply to, so that people can get saved and not simply so we can have an experience or an encounter with God, but also so that we can be properly formed. So let's think a bit more carefully about the shape, but for other churches, they might say we got the shape down, but we've forgotten that like Annie Dealer said, they should hand out crash helmets and seat belts at a church service, because we're about to meet the living God.

Dr. Don Payne: Yeah. So if people listening to this are thinking, especially maybe worship leaders, pastors are thinking, yeah, I'd love to begin to orient or reorient our

worship more along these lines. But you know, we're not going to throw a hand grenade in there and just blow everything up and start over. We're not going to do a scrape and rebuild. What are maybe a couple of things you'd suggest as first steps for people to move in the directions that you've been?

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Well, I recognize the listener will be at a different place in terms of organizational influence, how much power they have to change something. So if you're a worship leader, songwriter, you know, maybe you could start to think about, do an audit of the songs that you're choosing for the people. I have a friend Aaron Keys, he leads a school of worship called 10,000 fathers and mothers based out of our church in Colorado Springs. And he encourages worship leaders to do a massive spreadsheet audit of your worship songs and look at the lyrics and ask how many of these are about God? How many of these are about us? How many of these, about the future? How many of you know I did some of that audit type work with the verbs, a worship leader could do that, and tilt the catalog that you're pulling from. Tilt that a little bit more to say, gosh, we are all about the present tense. We don't have anything about the resurrection or new creation. We'll work on that same thing for a preacher.

If you're a preacher listening to this, think about how often you refer to the end of the story. Does the end of the story ever inform our ethics or our mission or our life in God today? So there are ways Eugene Peterson used to call it the invisible structure. There's an invisible structure to this salvation history, and we are often preaching at one point in it. And that's perfectly fine. You can't cover the whole drama in one sermon, but how often do you sort of point people, you know, one day, one day, one day, and then I would say, think about one or two elements you could test out in there, maybe on a particular Sunday, you have people stand and say the Nicene creed. We've adopted that as our statement of faith, even though we're a nondenominational church, we don't have a unique statement of faith. We have the Nicene creed and it is painted all over the walls and our building. And we say it in worship probably once a month or so. And you get to that last line, we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come like, oh, hello. There it is.

Dr. Don Payne: There you are. Yeah. Thanks for that. Okay. So this is kind of backward, but because I normally would ask this early on in a conversation, but just a little bit about your own story, your own journey. And how do you set this work in the context of your own journey as a person, as a Christian, as a pastor?

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Yeah, Thanks, Don. I'm from Malaysia. I grew up in Malaysia, my parents you know, they met at the University of Singapore. My mom was a third generation Anglican. I think my dad was Hindu. He converted before marrying my mom, but I, my sister and I grew up in a Christian home and specifically an Anglican home. We went to an Anglican church in Malaysia. And then my, so this is what's great about Anglican church. They started getting invited to a Bible study, mid-week led by a Baptist pastor, and then they got introduced to Amen. And then they got introduced to the gifts of the spirit at some revival meeting. And they eventually left that Anglican church and went to you know, different sort of

Pentecostal sort of church. But I've been shaped by all of those streams. Each of those streams, the sacramental, the biblical and the you know, Pentecostal, if you will. And so it plays a big part of my story. We moved to the states once when I was 10, my parents went to Bible college in Portland, Oregon.

We lived there for three years, went back to Malaysia. I came back on my own. I went to a charismatic university. I went to Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. So I know the power of God in worship when Christians gathered together in worship. And one of the things I was really happy about with this research is, you know, in my, some of my earlier work discover the mystery of faith, especially I was really emphasizing to you to my own tribe. Hey, resource from the church tradition here, pull this liturgical shape. But when I started doing this research, what I realized was even though our songs were less than a hope filled, or they were not robust in their eschatology yet God was kind enough to meet with people in worship, from a sociological perspective, the text of a ritual is not the same thing as the performance of a ritual. Those are two different things. Right. And in Christian worship, how much more is that true because of the Holy Spirit? So the Holy Spirit always makes worship more than the sum of its parts.

Dr. Don Payne: yeah, if God only met us when we got it all right. We'd all be out in the woods. Right. I mean, yeah, it's over.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: So, I'm so grateful. And so I felt like even in doing this work, this book has yes. That journey of, okay, we need to be more robust, robust in our theology of hope. And it tracks my own discovery of a richer theology of hope. But at the end, the final piece of the book is the holy spirit is the wildcard here. The psychologist, Charles Snyder describes hope as the intersection of agency and pathway, when humans feel like they can, and they have a path to do it in their, willpower and way power is what he calls it. Well, what happens in worship? We transfer agency upward to God, and we say, Lord, great, are you Lord, you are the mighty fortress. You are the one who can do. And then he says, yeah. And by my spirit, you can go out into the world and live. This was so we're not transferring agency upward. And then becoming passive, we get agency returned to us by the holy spirit. And then we, we entrust the path to the Lord. So there's a real reason why Christians experience hope in worship. And that real reason is the active power of the spirit of God among the church.

Dr. Don Payne: Gosh, I love this. I'm having a moment here. Partly Glenn, because I love it when people can talk about the realities of life in the body of Christ life in the church, life on the street, so to speak but from a deeply and thoughtfully theological perspective. And I really appreciate that. Thanks for all your gosh. Thanks for all your work on this. We could keep going on this conversation for a while, but I think I'm, we're going to have to land the plane here. So Glenn, thanks, Dr. Glenn Packiam. And hopefully we can have another conversation about all this.

Dr. Glenn Packiam: Thank you so much. What a delight, what an honor to talk to you.

Dr. Don Payne:

This has been a treat. So friends, again, this is Engage 360, and as always want to give a deep thanks to our communications staff, Andrea Weyand and Rochelle Smith for all they do to make this happen. Let me remind you if you would be so kind to get on your favorite platform and leave us a rating or a review that would genuinely help us. And if you've got questions or comments, you can email us podcast at podcast@denverseminary.edu, check out our website. You can get all of our past episodes and you can also access full text transcripts of every episode from the Denver Seminary website, that's Denverseminary.edu. And you'll also find there in addition to many other resources about our degree programs and other things, you'll find a mention of some good webinars we have coming up. Dr. Packiam is going to be on one of them, not emotional intelligence. Please check out those things because we want these resources to benefit you. Please pray for us here at Denver Seminary. And if you've got people looking for a great theological education send them our way, please. So till next time, take care. Thanks.