

Season 4 Episode 4: Amy Sherman on Shalom

Speaker 1 [00:00:00] Yes, we need to proclaim the best of the kingdom. We also need to demonstrate it and we need to find ways to proclaim a new vocabulary, including the vocabulary of design and architecture.

Speaker 2 [00:00:17] Welcome to the Embedded Church podcast, where we share stories about reweaving the connections between place, the built environment and the mission of God.

Speaker 3 [00:00:27] Season four of the Embedded Church podcast is produced in partnership with the Ormond Center at Duke Divinity School. The mission of Ormond Center is to foster the imagination, will and ability of congregations and communities to be agents of thriving.

Speaker 2 [00:00:40] I'm Eric Jacobsen.

Speaker 3 [00:00:42] And I'm Sarah for and will be your host on today's episode of the Embedded Church podcast. Hey, we're moving into part two of season four, this is the part where Eric and I take to the streets and we interview people who are researching and doing creative things in their communities in regards to Shalom place and placemaking. We had a lot of fun with our friends at the Ormond Center, setting up those three key terms and the first few episodes with Josh and Chris Elisara. But now we're bringing in some other voices. So this first episode and this section is with Amy Sherman. She has done a lot of research and writing with churches who are very active in this sphere of thinking about human flourishing and how they're seeking that in their communities.

Speaker 2 [00:01:36] We are really excited, especially to have Amy Sherman as our kickoff guest for part two, because we are both Amy Sherman fans. We've read a lot of her stuff and influenced by her work. But I think she does a really good job of what we're trying to do with this second part in taking some of these more abstract concepts like Chillum and making them really concrete and practical for us. I really like how she has done a ton of research on churches and other ministries who are seeking the welfare of their communities. And she really documents those stories and places them in particular contexts, in particular cities. And I think that this is a really helpful tool for those of us that are trying to take that command to seek the welfare of our cities, to take that seriously and apply it in our own contexts.

Speaker 3 [00:02:26] Definitely, and I think highlighting the fact that she names particular cities just reiterates what we've been talking about with Wendell Berry and it and that analogy of how a bucket collects local materials to really cultivate a soil that is reflective of the local environment and how that soil is really what is foundational for thriving for the local community. So just needed to make sure that we bring Wendell Berry back onto this, though. Very much. I love him, too.

Speaker 2 [00:03:01] Right. Awesome.

Speaker 3 [00:03:03] Well, all right. Well, let's dig in with Amy Sherman. So here we are with Amy Sherman on our podcast today, we're excited to have her be a part of this, the welcome Amy. Great to be with you guys. Amy, I would just love to start out with you telling our listeners a little bit about your background, where you based. What do you do?

And how did you start on this pathway of researching and writing about this intersection of faith and economics and how that takes shape in various church contexts?

Speaker 1 [00:03:43] So I'm talking to you guys from Charlottesville, Virginia. I've been here since nineteen eighty nine when I came to the University of Virginia to do my graduate work. I grew up on a small town outside of Buffalo, New York. When people ask me about my vocational journey, one of the things I often will point back to is growing up in a United Methodist church, I was part of the youth group and we would go each summer and do service in a poor community in Appalachia, in rural West Virginia. And I really have a sense that from that young age, God was calling my life to be about the church and about the poor and sort of how did those things go together and how should the church address poverty? That was just a real passion. And it has never left me in the past many years. Probably the past twenty five years I've been somewhat of a minister to ministries. And really at the heart of my work is to come alongside of churches and faith based nonprofit organizations that are trying to address issues of poverty and injustice and help them do that work better, do a lot of writing and teaching and training. I like to shine the spotlight on good examples of what churches are doing. I work for a think tank called the Sagamore Institute and we talk about putting ideas into action.

Speaker 2 [00:05:34] Your work deals with flourishing. I see a lot of references to flourishing. How did everything kind of coalesce to that word

Speaker 1 [00:05:42] that really has its roots really in the word shalom? I think I was using the term Shalom a lot longer than I've been using the word flourishing. But I've been very captured, of course, as have many believers, by this notion that God creates this world of shalom, this world of peace with God, peace with self peace with others, and peace with the created order. And that the biblical story is about the tragic loss of that peace and then the mission of God in the world to restore that shalom in all of its fullness and the invitation to us as the followers of Jesus to play a little role in that grand project of restoration. So wishing, I guess it was a way of taking a churchy sounding word shalom, which required a lot of articulation and explanation and flourishing. Requires less and is. Maybe more accessible.

Speaker 3 [00:07:02] Yeah, I love it, definitely. So you actually have a new book coming out on this topic, and I'd love for you to share with our listeners the title of that book and when that is actually hitting the public market, I'm not sure it's the

Speaker 1 [00:07:17] way the book is called Agents of Flourishing. There's that word again. And the subtitle is Pursuing Chillum in every corner of Society, and it will be outlawed willing early next year.

Speaker 2 [00:07:35] OK, maybe Christmas, Christmas presents for loved ones.

Speaker 3 [00:07:39] Like is there a preorder list or have been signed up for. I'm going to sell a bunch right now and

Speaker 1 [00:07:45] I'm excited to see it. And you know, it's organized by the great work of Josh Gates and the good folks at the Thriving Communities Initiative in their whole paradigm of thinking about how communities flourish and how there are these six sort of realms of life that they call the community endowments, and how in order for a society to really flourish, each of those needs to be strong and healthy and each are contributing. And in this very dynamic relationship with one another and those six realms of life are the

good, the true, the beautiful, the just in well ordered the prosperous and the sustainable. And those things kind of map on to institutions and activities that we would all be very familiar with in any particular community that we inhabit. So the book really tries to encourage churches to pursue Shalom in their communities and to take that up by exploring these six different dimensions of life in the community and what flourishing from a biblical perspective for each of those realms of life looks like and how the fall has corrupted those things and what are the ways that we can be contributing to the repair and the restoration of wholeness and flourishing in those different realms of society?

Speaker 2 [00:09:34] That's awesome. So maybe you write from the perspective of the church being in exile. So tell us a little bit about your that way of framing the conversation.

Speaker 1 [00:09:45] Yeah, well, again, I can't take credit for the insight. I mean, obviously, exile is a huge biblical theme and certainly a theme in the New Testament. Peter specifically talking about his writing to the exiles. But folks smarter than myself have, I think, very helpfully identified ways in which the church in the West, at least in terms of its social location, is, in a sense in exile. So this notion of the church in exile really has at least two layers to it. The most fundamental layer is the general principle of biblical truth, that all of the followers of Jesus, we are exiles because we are members of this heavenly city, members of this Kingdom of God, which is not yet here, and all of its fullness. And so as we sojourn in the earthly city, we are exiles and strangers. But then in terms of the last decades in the West, the recognition by theologians and sociologists and other commentators that the church of it once had a more central position within the culture and within society is now more marginalized. And in that sense. There are commentators who liken the present moment to the situation of the exiles in Babylon when the Israelites were taken into captivity and recognizing that, strangely enough, the Lord's instruction to those exiles, though, was actually to seek the peace and prosperity of those strange neighbors, even though they themselves were foreigners in this land.

Speaker 2 [00:11:47] Yeah, and you're offering maybe a third option to those who feel the need to attack and retreat. Does that population of folks wanting that third way exist or are you trying to persuade people to give up on those other two strategies that maybe aren't as helpful?

Speaker 1 [00:12:03] From my very limited vantage point, I am encouraged by the growth of the Third Way folks, if we could call them that. I don't necessarily have a full picture of what's going on in all the different arenas of the church from my limited vantage point. I am encouraged that I sensed a growing enthusiasm for that perspective, a growing desire for the church to take a humble posture of service and being for the community, even while we are still faithful to retain our unique kind of ethical distinctiveness. And my book is really more written to those who desire to live in that posture of seeking the shallowness of their community, but who are looking for some practical handles on how to do that, as well as some handles for how to think deeply about it and how to articulate that vision in a compelling way to folks around them who may or may not be as inclined towards that towards that posture.

Speaker 3 [00:13:26] The endowments that Amy lays out are somewhat similar to social determinants, a term we've discussed previously on the podcast Social Determinants is the term that sociologists use to capture the idea that a person's physical flourishing is linked to a variety of factors, such as social connections and access to green space. Amy's endowments draw a deeper biblical understanding of the holistic order created by God to bring ultimate flourishing to humankind.

Speaker 2 [00:13:53] As a pastor, I'm intrigued with what you're saying, and I agree. Can you maybe help us tease out some idea of how to be a church in exile without completely capitulating to a progressive agenda? How do we be in exile without giving in like holding on to our distinctives as a Christian community?

Speaker 1 [00:14:12] Part of it is simply a continual rehashing of the human and the nature of the human. So to argue for inherent human dignity, to argue for life. To argue for. Creature limits and the reality of our limits as human beings, I mean, it just strikes me that the Christian position is always so interestingly neither this nor that, but something else. And if you if you are Tim Keller fan, that's a common way. He'll say, well, you know, the West thinks this and the East thinks this, but Christianity says this is the right things this and the left thinks this. But here is something sort of different, I think, to the progressives. Christianity is able to say, hey, great, that you recognize the wonderful diversity and the dignity, all of these different cultures and the need to celebrate all the races and the need to absolutely defend the quality and the dignity of all people. And Christianity is right there behind you. But you also fail to recognize with appropriate humility the position of the human in the rest of the cosmos, and that there is a greater intelligence, there is a God, and that there are absolute moral truths that that we need to hold on to in order to to guard that human dignity. So trying to make arguments centered in concepts that progressives embrace about flourishing and human dignity. But while also. Trying to say, if we live out some of the extreme philosophical positions of liberal thought, we will actually lose these very precious things that you want to hold on to about community and about relationships. Part of it is finding ways to engage in the conversation with folks on the left that embrace some of the shared goals and yet raise warning flags about the dangers. And then, of course, there's just the simple reality of what we've got to leave it right. I mean, we mean what's what's been so. Lousy, what we've done so poorly in general is actually living out all of our convictions, right? And so we have not, as believers, adequately shown what it is to embrace and protect and celebrate human dignity, we haven't defended the vulnerable. We haven't stood up for the UN included, we haven't had the humility to admit our failings to live in this sort of third way. We have to think very carefully about the prevailing cultural ideas and winds and trying to excavate those and raise the warning flags where that is necessary, but then also just model the way of the beautiful right and actually show actually marriage can be really, really beautiful. And I still love the time. And the relationships between people of different colors can actually be really beautiful and mutual and serving one another and. But we've got to embody it and model it and demonstrate it.

Speaker 3 [00:18:19] I'd be curious to hear from you if you have some examples of churches who have really pressed into that and that you could share with us to give us an idea of where you've seen that light and that flourishing really take place in the community, in the church.

Speaker 1 [00:18:38] Yeah, the funnest part of writing the book was trying to identify congregations that really have kind of taken up a piece of the task of contributing to the flourishing in each of those six different realms of life where these community endowments that I mentioned earlier. So for each of those six spheres of life, I tell stories about particular congregations. So, for example, in the chapter about the just and well ordered, I talk about a church in the Grand Rapids area that it has really taken up in a very robust way, the mantle of the biblical idea of restorative justice. So there's an educational piece to that. So there's a great deal of just helping folks in the church and in the community to understand the criminal justice system and understand some of its deficiencies and reveal the beauty of the restorative justice paradigm from scriptures. There's an advocacy piece

whereby folks are encouraged to actually be involved in very practical ways in lobbying state governments to make various reforms. And then there's a real direct ministry whereby they have helped prisoners behind the walls who know Christ to launch their own church behind the walls and support that and come in and and worship with those brothers behind bars as well as reentry work. So helping folks who have come out of prison to find employment and find housing and get connected to supportive relationships,

Speaker 3 [00:20:40] that seems like a more holistic approach to that. Right. Kind of every step of that process being involved and understanding how that works.

Speaker 1 [00:20:48] Absolutely, and then I think about a church that far from where I live in Richmond, Virginia, there's a church called Eastend Fellowship and they're actually also in that just and well-ordered chapter. But what they have really done is focus on racial justice and racial healing. They've been really faithful in the very long, very hard road of continually pressing in to this work of reconciliation. And it is a painful work and they have been very faithful in that. But I have other stories and other chapters. There's a whole story about a group of churches that kind of collected together to really try to decrease the divorce rate in their county through all kinds of marriage strengthening initiative. That's kind of the main story I tell in the in the chapter on the good. The funnest part of the book was finding and learning stories.

Speaker 3 [00:22:01] So Eric and I, as you know, are kind of geeks about the built environment for urban nerds.

Speaker 2 [00:22:10] Yes, we're out measuring the sidewalks all the time and if they're wide enough,

Speaker 1 [00:22:16] so, of course,

Speaker 3 [00:22:17] we're very curious if you have some property specific examples that you could share as well in terms of actual property development that a church has done for the good of their neighborhood.

Speaker 1 [00:22:31] Well, I have learned so much from both of you and in the section of the book on the community endowment of the Sustainable, I actually talk about the New Urbanism and talk about some examples from the past. Have we as Christians have been involved in that? Probably the one I go into the most detail about is a church called Grace Chapel, which is located outside of Cincinnati. And they have an amazing campus they bought many years ago what was at the time a real eyesore in their local community. It was an old shuttered manufacturing plant that I believe was a tool and die facility, and it had a very prominent location on one of the main streets. And so the city leaders were really quite excited when you wanted to take it on and engage in this very lengthy process of applying a massive amount of elbow grease to revitalizing that property. But from the beginning, that was the vision of the church founders to have this entire campus be very alive to the community. They wanted it to be a campus where there would be kind of a twenty four seven presence. It was a vision that wanted to see the various buildings be utilized in ways that would benefit their neighbors. So one of the larger buildings, for example, for many years, they transformed that into a thrift store that also housed a nonprofit food ministry. And it was a really well thought through food pantry, because rather than being the kind of traditional, you go in and you're kind of embarrassed that somebody gives you a box of food or a bag of food, they set it up more like a little grocery store. Yeah, actually, carts and people could just kind of go through and shop for the

things that they needed that was called the new to use thrift store. And it was one of several businesses that they have placed on that property. And they benefited the community not only by providing affordably priced goods, but but also they were interested in providing jobs for folks that needed sort of second chance type jobs. They have a very impressive sort of indoor sports arena that they make available to all kinds of community groups that come in to do indoor soccer. And now some are soccer leagues. More recently, they have created a beautiful coworking space called the Orka Center, and it provides a place for folks without their own offices to come in and work. And that's been a real community thing. So there's an example, I think, of really thinking through, OK, we have this property, we have these buildings. How can we turn these buildings into buildings that offer people real opportunities? That's a church that is thought through, I think, very well. I also talk in the chapter about beauty, about a really neat church in Kansas City, Christ Community Church downtown. They also have been very wise and generous in the use of their building. They deliberately are located in one of the arts districts in downtown Kansas City, and they basically co-located an art gallery in the same space with the church. So they have a really wonderful art gallery called the Fourth Chapter. And it's a place for emerging artists to be able to showcase their work and and talk about their work and a place for people in the congregation to learn to be arts patrons. Yeah, I think in all of these ways, what these churches are doing, they're allowing their space to talk, right? They're allowing their space to say certain things about them. We love welcome. We are hospitable. We are for if and celebration. We are for beauty. We are for creativity. We are for the creation of new wealth. We are for opportunity. They're saying all these things with their own physical space. Yeah. And going back to what we said before. Demonstration, yes, we need to proclaim the Bastille of the kingdom. We also need to demonstrate it and we need to find ways to proclaim a new vocabulary, including the vocabulary of design and architecture.

Speaker 3 [00:27:43] Right? Yeah. And then I always tonsure just what message does your property send to your community? And I also often say it might be well kept and clean, but it could be really boring. And so sometimes that well-kept property actually conveys there's not life happening here unintentionally. But what if you had some more art or gardens or things that conveyed more? There's life and there's beauty happening here.

Speaker 1 [00:28:12] Yeah, I love looking at your website. So Joy and just seeing the stories that you have found, particularly of how churches have used some of their outside space to create places for contemplation. And yeah, this is foreplay, right? Yeah. And and just that green space that often in an urban setting is is really precious, right?

Speaker 3 [00:28:36] Yeah. And I think play is so important and I think we've forgotten how to play as a society, even I think about C.S. Lewis and his writings about merriment and play and how important that is and how important it is to be done, but the true understanding of human dignity and how much substance that gives to that play. And so the church can model that. I think that that is so compelling for our culture.

Speaker 2 [00:29:04] We're doing our community ping pong tournament here on Friday, so

Speaker 1 [00:29:09] I think that one of the things I realize, too, is that sometimes I think people will say, what about the sort of the sacred sort of sense of, well, gosh, if everything's just multipurpose use and you know. Yeah, we see the pragmatic value of that. That always isn't nice, that the food bank can be, like, located right there. But there's a sort of concern about are we losing something? I think about a church, for example, in

Indianapolis that, like the one in Kansas City, share space with an arts ministry. And so there are art gallery spaces in that church and there are studios for artists down in the basement of the church. And yet there's also a really, really beautiful sanctuary that has embraced its historic style. And there's beautiful stained glass. Sacred space can also be community serving space. Right, because we all have a need and a hunger for the sacred and particularly in our overly hyper. Fast, overwhelmingly visual. Busy, busy, busy culture. It's not only believers that can find solace in what we would call sacred space, but the availability of sacred space to those who do not know God and yet hunger for quiet and hunger for reflection and hunger for stillness. And there, I think, the challenges for churches to share that sacred space. Right. To go ahead and protect it and say, well, that we don't actually want to take this quote unquote sacred space and make it an anything goes multipurpose space. We want to keep it for these sort of special purposes, but then to share that so that others can also find those places of solace.

Speaker 3 [00:31:10] Yeah, I agree. That's beautiful.

Speaker 2 [00:31:14] When Amy refers to surgery's work, she's talking about proximity project and in particular a resource that surgery Joy developed called Redemptive Placemaking Toolkit, which is really helpful tool that churches can use to help figure out how to better engage their neighbor. I recommend it. And if any of our listeners are interested in finding out about it, they can find information about it on our website.

Speaker 3 [00:31:40] One of the things that I've heard you say from time to time, Amy, and every time I hear it, I'm like three cheers is you encourage churches to be risk takers. And I love that. So talk to us about being a risk taker. How do you manage that conversation with churches? Because that's so quickly becomes one of the default hurdles to these types of things.

Speaker 1 [00:32:04] You know, I just think you cannot get away from Jesus's own commendation of risk taking. It strikes me that there is a boldness about Christ in taking risks that he took himself. The fact that he sent his disciples out and said, don't take a person staff with you, that had to have been a little bit intimidating, even in a very hospitable culture. And then, of course, the stories of the parables, what is held up by the folks that had 10 talents and five talents, and they risk them and they invested them and they made more. What are we warned against, Will? Hoarding and the protection of everything. And of course, there's the very challenging scriptural principle that without faith, that it's possible to please God and his folks be that faith inherently requires risk taking. How else do you really. Prove yourself to be trusting in another, if there's not some level at which you're taking risks, and I find it risky, even say some of those things, because I thought, oh, goodness gracious, tonight is I'm having my evening prayer time. The Lord's going to be like, and where are you trusting me? I got it. I got to preach this message to myself. But it strikes me that it's just simply inescapable all through the scriptural narrative. And I think Jesus, in his wonderful gentleness, allows us to start small. I think there is a mandate. This is not optional. You must take risks. You must step out. And yet it is coupled with this wonderful gentleness of you can start small, you can put your toe in the water. I will be there. This is part of the maturation process. We grow to trust more and then we risk more. And God shows up with his great faithfulness and we trust more and we risk more. And God shows up in his great faithfulness or he appears not to show up. And we are disappointed and astounded and flummoxed. And yet over time. He turns it around for good and eventually we get to that part where we are able to say, even in this, he was faithful. And some kind of risk taking muscle on the inside of us has been strengthened, in a sense even even further by the spirit

Speaker 2 [00:34:56] gets, Gary Haugen from International Justice Mission said something along the lines of like he knows of no other pathway of discipleship than taking risks. The church is so bored trying to be safe and it's stagnating because of it. And you've got to follow up to that. One of the goals for our fourth season is we want to help pastors ask better questions. We feel like the questions they ask in their assumptions about what success looks like are sometimes not fully biblical. And how do I grow my church? How do I make budget? How do I keep our people happy? Those are the typical questions. What questions do you wish pastors would ask?

Speaker 1 [00:35:32] Most of the kinds of questions and encouraging them to ask have to do with what is doing in this community. Where is he at work? Who is part of that? How could you be involved? I also think it's very important for churches to ask the question, what has God placed in our hands? God has given each congregation manifold gifts and. Tells us to steward those gifts well, and yet we don't always take the kind of intentional, careful, comprehensive inventory of what those gifts and assets really are. So I like to ask churches, what is God placed in your hands? Do you even know? And what do you know about the gifts of your people, your most important asset? Are all these wonderful people sitting here and who are they and what are their passions and what are their experiences and what are their fields of expertise and their skill sets? And how can these things be deployed? I like to challenge churches to ask the question sort of programmatically, what are we currently doing that essentially just benefits us? But that with some creativity, we could reframe in some ways so that it not only benefits us, but also benefits others. I also think that churches can encourage folks by facilitating the development of guilds, so helping people who all are working, for example, in the health care industry, maybe having a special event for those folks over the course of a weekend where they can gather together and iron will sharpen iron as they talk about how do they live into their calling as a nurse, as a radiologist, as a physical therapist, as a public health official. How do they reclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God in and through their daily work? And how can they encourage one another as as they labor and in a similar feel in some churches have, I think, taken this even further. I mean, they have started a little mini grant programs where folks that have a particular idea of how to be an agent of flourishing in and through their sphere. And they have a project they want to do and providing encouragement in the form of some financial support for that, helping people recognize, hey, you're your spiritual life is a seven day a week thing and God cares about your work. And in fact, your work is a school of spiritual formation. And in fact, your work is an avenue for your participation in the mission of God in the world. In fact, what you're out there doing on Tuesday afternoon at two o'clock as an architect, as an artist is also the church on mission and be intentional about the.

Speaker 3 [00:39:00] Yeah. That is great. We have a lot of resources, I think, that we can point people towards and your books being some of those, and I'd love to hear from you if there are a few specific ones that you would like to share with our listeners that you feel have been very helpful to you and your own journey of exploring these topics.

Speaker 1 [00:39:21] Well, I'm a big fan of Andy Crouch, and the culture making was a particularly important book in shaping my thinking. I'm also a big empty right fan and have found his books to be. Just so theologically robust and certainly have helped me develop a kingdom sized gospel, also a fan of the Chalmers Center and Brian Stickered and his most recent book, Becoming Whole, is a really terrific reflection about Shalom and about how the church can be involved in enhancing Shalom at home and abroad.

Speaker 3 [00:40:12] Awesome. Eric, any last questions on your end?

Speaker 2 [00:40:15] I was just thinking, if a church is just kind of getting their eyes open to this idea of contributing to a community flourishing, what would you recommend to some first steps to kind of get started?

Speaker 1 [00:40:26] I try to talk about that in the very last chapter of the book, and I'm really the first to step aside, talk about one of the which I've already mentioned, which is this notion of asset mapping your own congregations, helping churches to again, in a very deliberate, comprehensive way to think about their physical assets, their monetary assets, the vocational power and assets of their people, their relational assets and networks that they're part of in the community and really think hard and well about what are all these gifts that God has placed into their hands and to literally kind of help them and then really think through that question, well, which of these assets are we deploying only for our own benefit? And how could we create them to be more externally facing? And how could these various assets serve our community more? That's the first step. And the second step is quite similar in that it involves really trying to do the same kind of asset mapping or taking an inventory of the assets of their local community. That might be a neighborhood that the church is particularly interested in serving. It might be of a population group, whether it's the residents of a particular geographic community or whether it's the people within a particular people group, God has placed things into their hands as well. And so to find out what are their assets, what are their talents, what is God already doing among them, who are the leaders and beginning to have conversations about, well, how might the gifts and assets of the church be brought alongside the gifts and assets of those that the church desires to minister among? And how together all those assets be brought to accomplish something that that neither community could have done on its own for the flourishing of all. Thank you.

Speaker 3 [00:42:40] Well, this has been delightful. You've given us a lot to chew on. You have done some great research and have some great examples that you've cultivated over the years. So we appreciate you being willing to spend some time with us and distill some of that for our listeners.

Speaker 2 [00:42:55] Yeah, I've got agents of flourishing on my Christmas list already.

Speaker 3 [00:42:58] So take our

Speaker 1 [00:43:00] order for your work and for being interested in that. I appreciate it.

Speaker 2 [00:43:06] And it's been great.

Speaker 4 [00:43:15] For this episode, Ormond. I have two thoughts. One is about Dr. Sherman herself. As I listened, I heard a humble, thoughtful and inspiring agent of God. Shalom. There is a third way of Christian cultural engagement besides attack or retreat, to quote Eric, Amy epitomizes the Christian character and winsome boldness of a growing community of Third Way Christians animated by the truth expressed in Jeremiah twenty nine. I can't wait to read Amy's book with that wonderful title, Agents of Flourishing Pursuing Shalom in every corner of Society. Why and how can we be agents of flourishing, because by God's grace, we are also recipients of and participants in the Shalom, we are called to be the very agents off in every corner of society that such an energizing biblical truth, which Amy leads us into in this episode. The other thought I have pertains to the shout out she gives Josh Yates, the director of the Ormond Center. Amy shone a spotlight

on the human ecology framework he developed, which we at Ormond Center used to help us to understand and envision cities, towns and places. It's Amy mentioned the human ecology of a city contain and depend upon an array of different but fundamental endowments. The true, the good, the beautiful, the prosperous, the just and well-ordered and the sustainable. To dig deeper into these endowments for a healthy community, go to Ormond centers Steidl for placemaking. You'll find a bunch of resources, case studies and videos that will be well worth your time exploring. Thanks for listening.

Speaker 3 [00:45:10] Thanks for tuning in to another episode of the embedded church podcast. Be sure to check out the episode show notes for links to resources and other helpful information related to this episode. If you'd like to connect with us to share comments or ideas about the work we're doing. We'd love to hear from you. You can send us an email at info@embeddedchurch.com or leave a voice message on our feedback line by dialing seven six zero five to seven three to six zero followers on Instagram and bet a church podcast or visit our website www.thatembeddedchurch.com. Finally, thank you to our partners at Ormond Center and to all of our faithful listeners and supporters who have helped us make it to Season four, we are honored and encouraged until next time. Be well.