



Season 2, Episode 8 Dorena Williamson's Vision of the Church as a Celebration Place

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, books, authors, children, world, god, hear, church, writing, opportunity, wonderful, feeling, story, share, color, moment, imposter syndrome, helen, write, celebration

SPEAKERS

Promo, Helen Lee, Ed Gilbreath, Maila Kim, Dorena Williamson

Maila Kim 00:01

Welcome to The Every Voice Now Podcast where we bring voices of color into the spotlight. I'm Maila Kim,

Ed Gilbreath 00:07

And I'm Ed Gilbreath. In every episode, you'll hear from authors of color about the making of their books, as well as the challenges they had to overcome along the way.

Helen Lee 00:24

Hi, everyone, it's Helen Lee, the producer of The Every Voice Now Podcast. And I am delighted to be able to introduce you to our next episode, which features a conversation with Dorena Williamson, author of *The Celebration Place*. This book is part of our new IVP Kids line, which features faith-filled, formative, and fun books for young readers. And it also features a number of authors of color of which Dorena is one. She is someone who has written for children before and has this wonderful, delightful narrative voice, but also thoughtful, and certainly Spirit-filled. So I think you're going to really enjoy learning about her journey into children's writing, to find out a little bit about how that even came to be. And then you'll also get to hear her read from her book, which I found utterly moving and stirring. And so you'll have that opportunity as well in this episode. So I hope you enjoy this time listening to our conversation with Dorena Williamson.



Maila Kim 01:37

We are so excited to welcome Dorena Williamson to The Every Voice Now Podcast today. So welcome Dorena!

Dorena Williamson 01:45

I am so thrilled to be here with you wonderful ladies today.

Maila Kim 01:51

We're so thrilled to have you. Well, we always kick off every podcast with the author sharing with our listeners a little bit about yourself. So where did you grow up? Where do you live now? And how do you respond to the question when people ask you, what do you do for a living?

Dorena Williamson 02:08

Well, I live in Franklin, Tennessee, which is just south of Nashville. And I spend my time doing lots of ministry roles; I wear several hats as the first lady of Strong Tower Bible Church, the diverse, multiethnic church that my husband I planted going on 26 years ago, which is pretty amazing. To God be the glory for letting us be a part of his good work here in middle Tennessee. And then I also work as a stylist for a national brand called Evereve. And so I get to deliver joy to women one outfit at a time. And that's a really fun hat to wear, literally, to empower women of all ages. And then, you know, I love this, what I call my midlife adventure of writing children's books that adults need too. And so along with the writing comes opportunities for podcasting like this during COVID before and after, hopefully additional travel and all of those fun things that come along with the opportunities to share and plant wonderful literary seeds for kiddos and for the adults in their life as well.

Maila Kim 03:22

That's awesome. Well, we also want to talk a little bit about your ethnic identity journey. And so can you tell us a little bit about your ethnicity, and some of those key moments of your journey



that stand out to you whether it was positive or negative? We'd love to hear a little bit about that.

Dorena Williamson 03:37

Sure. Well, I identify as African American, and the African side of that wonderful duo, we just discovered over the last year that our roots are Nigerian, which is really, it was really special to find that out. And that was actually courtesy of a white couple in our church, through many conversations we had had about families who knew their their ethnic stories and their families of origin and from generations past and, you know, as so many African Americans that did not have those specific answers. And, and it's, you know, there's been pain in that and not knowing, you know, where your origin is, aside from well, my parents roots are in South Carolina. And so to be able to add that piece to my story, and to have that come through a family that thought, you know, would this be something that would be a blessing, and I thought it sure would be a blessing to know that. So, so that's been a wonderful thing to just sort of continue to add those layers and it underscores the importance overall of knowing who I am, you know, as a believer, but also that belonging, of where, where does my my story land in the scheme of God's big story, and to be able to have that piece added has been very precious. And hopefully I'll get to, to visit there. But in the meantime, I get to enjoy all the wonderful friends and people that God has put in my life to, you know, help fill in those those sweet places.

Maila Kim 05:14

Well, thank you for sharing that with us. That's so special. I want to talk a little bit about your writing journey. Now, do you remember the first time? When was it that you first wanted to write a book? How did you know? Were you young? Was it later in your life? I mean, you wear so many hats. So where in that process were you like, I'm going to write children's books one day?

Dorena Williamson 05:35

So it was about five or six years ago that I really started feeling burden to contribute to conversations that were happening in culture at large. And on one hand, I saw things like Mattel and American Girl responding to the need for more representation and toys. And so there were expanded doll lines coming out, and having raised three daughters who were, you know, aged out of dolls, but still, I rejoiced because I thought, Wow, this generation of parents and children



will, will have an easier access to things that reinforce their beauty and the confidence for their kids. And then on the other hand, I've seen in our faith community, you know, people who still talk about, you know, I teach my children not to see color, I teach my children to be colorblind. And, and those things started merging. And I started feeling aggravated and agitated, that so many people approached the conversation about race and about skin color with this idea of colorblindness. And so, in praying about how I could respond, God started answering that prayer with these small seeds of thought, and I collected them in my journal, I'd always been a journal writer. And so my journal was really the place that the writing began forming. And, and then, you know, as I sort of begin to move through that imposter syndrome of, "Am I a writer, what does that look like? What does it mean to be a writer?", accepting that this was something that God was calling me gently, but confidently into it, I needed to walk it out. And God used people like Helen Lee, who, you know, was just an encourager fanning the flame. There were many along the way, who just said, "Hey, keep going, God's gonna direct your path." And as a mature woman, who'd had other careers and done other things, and yet God was calling me to a new opportunity, I had to find that that confidence and that assurance that although it was not easy to knock on doors and get disappointed over and over and hear people say, "That's a really nice story. But those books won't sell well, because there's not really a market for stories that center race." And I'm like, Are you kidding me?"

Maila Kim 07:51

Yeah, what?

Dorena Williamson 07:53

Who are you talking to, and what kind of market do you think there is, because I have led a diverse church for many years, and spent time with many families who are families of different ethnicities, families who are adopting children of other races, families who are welcoming children through mixed-race marriages, and they want books like this for their children. And so being a part of this new season as publishing is responding slowly, but surely, thank God opened up doors and leading me so faithfully through them. And it's, it's been a fun journey. It's been an adventure, full of ups and downs, but I wouldn't trade it for the world.

Helen Lee 08:37



Well, Dorena, I don't remember encouraging you, I remember admiring you and feeling so inspired by the work you were doing, because I felt like you were writing the kind of Christian children's books that were so absent at the time, and I was so excited to see your work. And so it was easy to cheer you on because I just felt like, you go Dorena, we need more like the ones you're writing. But there is so much you said in that last segment that I'd like to go back to and, and go go deeper in. I love that you call this your midlife adventure of writing children's books, because I take a lot of inspiration from that, I am this secretly aspiring children's novelist, writer. I haven't done a single thing in that genre. But I'd love to. So it really is encouraging for me to hear you share your story. But you also mentioned this phrase imposter syndrome. And I want you to go back to that and talk a little bit more, if you don't mind, about what what was going on there that you felt that sense of imposter syndrome. And then how did you, how did the Lord get you through that and get you to a place of believing that you had what it took to write children's books and books in general?

Dorena Williamson 09:47

When I was writing, you know, these little seeds of thought and started realizing, literally before me, this is forming, and I think this could be a great children's book, but it was like, "Wait a minute, I'm not an author." So I had to sort of take that time and go, well, what what does that mean to be an author, you know, literally how, who gives you the opportunity to define yourself as an author. And, and most importantly, as a believer, you know, to own that this story came from the heart of God. And so I really feel like I am flowing in something that he has given to me. And it also keeps me humble, because when you want to go, "oh, well, look what I've written," it's like, hold on, you are not the source. And so, you know, to remind myself, and it's not a one stop shop, you know, it's an ongoing thing, because you sell one book, then you look at other people's sales, and then you go, "Oh, my goodness, I need to do more." And you have to resist comparing, and, and just flow in who you are and what God has called you to do. So it's resting in that confidence, as you walk out the purpose that God spoke before you. And especially as you mentioned, you know, Helen, it was something that was not being done. People love to cheer you on after, and they love to go, "Look at that, that's great." But someone has to trailblaze, someone has to help navigate and go down new paths that are uncharted. And not that I was doing something that had never been done, but certainly in Christianity by a black woman, and books that speak directly to celebrating the color that God has created us with, was newer, there weren't a lot of works like that

Helen Lee 12:17



So you were talking a lot about kind of the internal struggle, right, of trying to deal with some of those own moments of doubt. But you also mentioned, some of these external struggles where you are hearing people tell you there's no market for the kinds of books you want to write. And I, I want you to go back to that a little bit, if you don't mind and share more about that and how you were able to push through and convince someone, someone was convinced, finally, but I want to hear first more about that those barriers that you had to encounter, where people were saying there's a market for this, which I think Maila and I would both agree is just tragic that anyone would say that. But then how you made it through, because you did get a chance to publish those books.

Dorena Williamson 12:59

Yes. And you know, in my case, because I was not coming as a celebrity, or someone who, you know, had done something that had my name known around the world. You know, there was just the reality of how do you build a platform, and how do you show the merit of your story and your work, and that, that someone can can invest in you because that's what what publish is, investing in, in a story knowing that, that there'll be a return of this being able to impact many lives. And so I would just encourage someone who's seeking specifically a home for for their work, seeking to publish, whether it's traditionally or self publishing, to pray that God will open up the right doors and connect them to the right partnerships, and not to be discouraged by the closed doors because those keep you going. Right? You know, if the first door I knocked on said, "Here you go, come on in!" that wouldn't have been much effort on my end, and that I would have thought that was great. But the closed doors kept me knocking. And they also kept me writing. And just praying that God will open up the right doors and connect you to the right partnerships. And that's certainly what I found with IVP. And what an honor to be a part of this family for this season.

Helen Lee 13:17

The honor is all ours. I want to go back to another thing you just brought up which which was the question of platform, which is always one of those things that authors talk about and try to figure out. But it's it sounded like from the way you were describing it that you felt like there was an even extra challenge as an author of color, if I'm understanding you correctly. So let's talk about that a little bit. Because I think that's a really important topic to hit, which is, do we think that it is harder for authors of color to develop the kind of platform that attracts kind of



mainstream Christian publishing? And what do we want to say about that? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Dorena Williamson 15:20

Oh, boy. I do think in general, I mean, it's well documented that, you know, people of color have been underrepresented in publishing in all genres. And I'm grateful that that is slowly changing, you know, the subject of platform is one that I was unaware of until I did start this journey and realizing that, you know, platform is just having a megaphone to be able to share the message in a broader way. And so, there are those important things like social media numbers, and all the things that people can again, learn through many worthy pursuits, and writers, conferences, and many, many more things that are out there now than there even were six years ago, which have benefited and helped me learn how to how to grow. But I think that it's really looking for those unique voices and looking for someone whose numbers may not, "merit" what people say, but there's a really special message and, and I think, you know, people who have vision for that. I think it also speaks to having people of color at the seat, in the editorial roles, and the marketing roles, and the publicity roles, all of those other roles so that they are looking for those unique voices, right? Because if you're looking for people who cater to what you like, but what you like, is already biased. And that's already another barrier, right? So I think that's the prayer is that, you know, publishing houses will seek to, to grow in all of those areas that allow the access to get to those unique voices that have wonderful stories waiting, to be heard, to be polished, and to go out in the world and impact and power.

Helen Lee 17:35

Amen. Amen to all of that.

Maila Kim 17:39

Thank you for being a trailblazer, because there are markets for the books that you're writing, and the children that need books that you've already published. So thank you so much for that. But we can be talking about this forever, but I'm going to force us to take a quick break. But when we return, Dorena will do a reading for us and then we'll talk more about her book writing process. So stay tuned, and thanks for listening to The Every Voice Now Podcast.



Promo 18:04

Helen Lee 19:09

Welcome back to The Every Voice Now Podcast. I'm Helen Lee. And it is time for our Behind the Words segment where you will hear our reading from today's guest, actually readings plural today, which is very exciting. And then we're going to find out a little bit more about went on behind the scenes of writing those portions. So Dorena, what are you going to be reading for us today?

Dorena Williamson 19:31

Well, first I'm going to read an excerpt from my children's book, Thoughtfull, and Thoughtfull was inspired by my nephew Josiah who has that bonus chromosome. And so he has Down Syndrome and I wanted to create a story where the child with a disability like Josiah was the hero of the story. And so in this book, it's set in a school and a little boy named Ahanu has Down syndrome. He's Native American and his friend Joshua loves him so much. And Joshua hears some boys say something that's not very nice about Ahanu, and Joshua is really disheartened. And when he goes home, his dad has a talk with them about that. And this is what his dad encourages him with. Billions of people live in the world, and each one of us has value. If we only spend time around people who are like us, we miss out on discovering the unique things about people who are different from us. The truth is, we're all gifted by God's design. And I love that excerpt because when I read it in school settings, I get to see the looks on the children's faces as they're drawn into the story. And as they, I pray, are growing to understand that we all share human value. If we only spent time with people who are like us, then we don't get to appreciate people who are not like us, and the value that they have as well. And so I think in a day where kids are going to school and struggling with mask mandates, you know, in the fall here of 2021, that's what's currently going on in our world. But we also continue to see so much division. And we see people flocking to their same groups and pointing their finger at people who are from different groups, and little ears are hearing and little eyes are seeing these things. I just think it's so important to put those messages in the world that remind children of God's truth that we all share human value, we're all made in the image of God. And whether they share our Christian faith or not, it's an important moment to just stamp that affirmation that every child needs, especially those children who might get overlooked, and to say to all children, we all show value, we all share value. We all have gifts



that God has designed for us. And we should have those opportunities, take this opportunity to explore this gifts and celebrate them.

Helen Lee 22:08

Dorena, as I'm hearing you talk, it's interesting, this segment has, I think, provoked the most emotional responses from, from our hosts of any segment in the show. And I think it's never expected, like I am finding myself tearing up as I hear you talk. And I think that's because adults don't even always understand this truth that you're communicating, right? We see evidence of that, left and right, unfortunately, right? The brokenness of our world, the brokenness, even in our own nation, and it just makes me so encouraged that the work you're doing is building into children this value that still needs to be learned. And you're getting to communicate that at an age where it will, hopefully resonate in them and grow in them, and help change the world, literally help change the world, through changing these children and reaching them when they're so open, right? And so malleable. And so I'm so grateful for you and these words and your heart to communicate this biblical truth that needs to be communicated to the world.

Dorena Williamson 23:18

Oh, well, thank you, Helen, for that, and thank you for that, that tender, tender heart. And, and I love that you said, you know, adults need this too. And that's actually very intentional, as I write. You know, my tagline is that I write children's books that adults need too, because the truth is, we still have, and I say that owning it myself, we have so much still to learn, and to lean and do lament about how we don't value. And as believers, you know, shame on us, because we know, we're the ones who are supposed to know this, this is God's truth from the first book of the Bible, that we were created an image of God. And so I'm grateful for that affirmation, and, and I pray every time I read it in a school setting, I pray that those words go into those hearts and that those children go home talking about that. And maybe that creates an opportunity for a parent to sort of check themselves and go, "Okay, wait, my kid is trying to understand human value, maybe I need to enter into that truth."

Helen Lee 24:18

I love that that moment in the Gospels, when Jesus is saying you have to be like a little child, and the kingdom belongs to those who are like little children, because I do think they have that



openness that we somehow lose as we get older and maybe more hard-hearted or more inflexible. I don't know what it is. But in any case, I'm I'm very grateful for for your words, and I'd love to hear you read some more. So I think you're going to bring us another passage.

Dorena Williamson 24:45

I am this time I'm going to read an excerpt from The Celebration Place. As I am reading it, I'm reading my author copy, digital copy, and by the time this is released, I will be heading my own actual copy, which is so exciting, and I'm so looking forward to that moment. But I'm going to just read one stanza from this upcoming forthcoming book. And it says: Today, God's heart and Dr. King's dream have come together in a flowing stream. No longer is church, a divided space. Now, it's a celebration place!

Helen Lee 25:32

Mmm. Mmm. Oh, my gosh. I am feeling chills! I don't know, I think I think writing in rhyme is not at all easy. So I don't know, tell us a little bit about what it took, you know, to to write what you just read.

Dorena Williamson 25:50

Well, this was the first manuscript that I ever wrote in rhyme, and you are Elena's? No, you're right in rhyme. But it's a wonderful challenge. And, you know, this story was absolutely sourced from the now 26 years that I have done life with the beautiful family of Strong Tower Bible Church, you know, the multiethnic church that my husband had planted. And I think it's important for children to be reminded that church is a people, that when God's idea of the church was birthed in Acts 2, it was a gathering of people who were from many different places around the world, who spoke many different languages and, and yet the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. And that's what brought them together, not that they were colorblind, not that they said, well, our differences don't matter. They had language differences, they were coming from other parts of the world. But the Holy Spirit's power brought them together, and they ate together, and they prayed together, and they fellowshiped together. So this book says, that was God's heart when he authored this beautiful idea of his called the church. And now we've had many different, wonderful variations. And so, you know, my church context right now is a multiethnic church where we have, you know, diversity of culture, and diversity of ideas and



worship styles. And those are reflected in the book. But I also grew up in the Black church, and I honor and love the heritage of, you know, my tradition that was formed in the fire of our experiences in this country where we were forced to find a way to celebrate who we were in God, by forming worship places where we were safe, and where we do our identity in Christ. And I celebrate churches that come together around their shared language and their shared traditions. And again, people know who they are in Christ and get that affirmation in church. And so The Celebration Places is a celebrative, expansive view of all of that, that we are, are gathered to worship God and to celebrate one another, and that we're one body with many different parts, and we should see those parts, we should recognize that we are interconnected, and that we are beautiful when when we see that together, not just in heaven, one day in glory, but right now on Earth, on earth as it is in heaven.

Helen Lee 29:18

I told you earlier how that even that short, little passage had so much impact on me, and I'd love to hear what kind of feedback you've gotten, what kind of stories you have of people who have encountered your books, either children or big children, adults, how have people responded to these, these books that you've written? What are some stories you can tell the feedback you've gotten?

Dorena Williamson 29:44

So many wonderful responses. You know, you never underestimate the power of telling someone how they've encouraged to, you know, there there would be times where I would question, I wonder if they're having impact Lord, I had such a heart to bless and to shape people and to change hearts, and is that really happening? And into those doubts would come a message through Instagram or a message, you know, through my website that someone would say, you know, I just got your books in this part of the world. Thank you so much. I've had adoptive parents who've said, I was not raised talking about race, I didn't even know that was something I should do. But now I have adopted children of color. And I realized that I need to be more intentional, I need to bring up subjects to them to help shape their identity and, and your books are helping me because I didn't have the tools growing up. And your books give me resources and language to be able to use with my children. And that is, that means the world you know, so just a reminder to everyone who's listening, let those authors know how their words have shaped you, challenged you, encouraged you, helped you in your journey, because these are people, authors, people you know, there's so much effort and heart, you know, sweat



and tears that go into, you know, crafting these words. And I have been so blessed to hear, you know, those responses from people, even sometimes to get to see people reading the books. And so that's, that's all you can ask for, is that you just have opportunity to get those seeds out into the world. And, you know, you do it in faith, whether you ever get feedback or not, we work unto the Lord, and we do it to his glory. But every once in a while God is very kind to give you those moments of encouragement. And those are like seeds to my heart in return that gets to flourish and keep me going.

Helen Lee 31:48

Well, we need to take a quick break because I need to grab a tissue. So let me go do that. Because this is all just, yeah, it's incredible, these stories you're sharing Dorena, they're really heartwarming and beautiful. So let's do that. Let's take a quick break. But when we return, we will continue our conversation with Dorena and go into our writing habits and quirks section, so you don't want to miss that. And you'll also find out how to get a special discount on Dorena's book *The Celebration Place* which you just heard a little portion of, so stay tuned. And thanks for listening to The Every Voice now Podcast.

Maila Kim 33:29

You're listening to The Every Voice Now Podcast. And I'm Maila Kim. Today, we've been talking with Dorena Williamson, author of the book *The Celebration Place*, which releases on November 9. And so keep listening to find out how you can get a special 40% off discount of Dorena's book at ivpress.com. But first, let's find out a little bit more about your writing habits and quirks, Dorena. And so, can you recall a time when it was really difficult for you to write something for some reason and you encountered writer's block? How did you get through it? What did you do to get over writer's block?

Dorena Williamson 34:08

Oh, my goodness, writer's block is so real. And it is something you just don't understand until you're actively in a project. And then you're like, "Oh, I'm stuck." And so you know, the first thing I try to do, as cliché as it might sound, but I see writer's block as an opportunity to just step back and take a deep breath and say, "Lord, this is your work." And if it's you know, just recognizing if it's because I'm juggling too much or something I can't take off my plate. Is it just,



I'm frustrated because, you know, the word count? I'm feeling restricted, or you know, the rhyme is not coming together or, you know, my editor is suggesting some things that I know will make it better but I'm just you know, struggling to match all of that together, whatever, whatever it's from and just stepping back and sometimes saying you know, if it's like a strict deadline then just taking a moment of pause, and I can get so tense and then that stress makes it even worse. So those active, you know, self-care moments, it may be just asking one of my kids or my husband, for some perspective, even just saying, "Hey, this is where I'm at. Do you have any suggestions for me?" I'm not too proud to beg. I'm not too humble, Ask for input. And I live with, you know, great minds. And so giving myself grace, and just recognizing it as an opportunity to just be more dependent, and ask the Lord to just show me his ways and show me if there's a new direction that I have to take. And I can honestly say that God has been faithful to do that. And my editors can say that I've eventually turned it in, and we've moved things along.

Maila Kim 35:48

That's so good. Well, to our listeners, prayer and giving yourself grace. That is great advice. I think everyone needs that a little bit. So another question, any quirky habits that you have that help you to stay creative? Do you have any rituals that nobody knows about? We had somebody say they love to eat cake before they write. So what about you?

Dorena Williamson 36:09

I do love to light a candle when I'm writing, I just love you know, allowing the space that I'm in to just be full of a great scent. It also could be because the primary space that I do my writing is in my upstairs bonus room, which depending on the season, we are taking out suitcases or pulling out fall things or now the we're headed towards a wedding where we're moving things out and moving things. And so it sort of helps me carve this magical thing, because I write children's books. So I'm trying to create a little mini world for myself. And so I have found that having a wonderful scent, and I vary the scent, it just helps my senses as I as I really get myself focused in on what I'm doing. So again, that's just me kind of try to create my own little magical world, imaginary world, if you if you will, but but a candle scent helps so much, it really does.

Helen Lee 37:08



I've got to try that, that's a great idea. When as you were writing *The Celebration Place*, was there any kind of particular, memorable incident or occasion or something that just sticks in your mind about the process of writing this book that you'll never forget?

Dorena Williamson 37:27

There's one spread that features majestic, indigenous dance, and that is inspired by a beautiful indigenous family in my church who have done their dance, they have celebrated before the Lord with their indigenous dance and so they are beautiful, you know, eagles' feathers, and beautiful costuming that you just want to stand and stand and look at and admire and reverently gaze at for an hour, but they, they play their their music, and they dance before the Lord. And for many people in our church, that's their first experience of hearing indigenous music and seeing them dancing, worship labor for God. And it's an honoring opportunity for them because there's been such a painful history of their culture being taken away, or even feeling like to be Christian meant to assimilate to majority culture. And so it's so affirming, to to worship, to their music and to to dance with the beauty of their culture. And so I wanted that reflected very, very specifically on this certain page. And so that was probably the spread that I was the most specific about. Some of the other church expressions, I would say to the illustrator, have your creative license. But on that one, I was very, very specific. And I have to say that I am thrilled to how it turned out. And I did ask my friends for their input on that spread, because I wanted to make sure that it was honoring to them and felt like it accurately reflected them, and they both were excited. And it gave their blessing, which meant so much. So that's probably one of my most favorite memories of writing this book. And just being very specific and feeling like my vision got fleshed out in a powerful way.

Helen Lee 39:16

I cannot wait to see that spread. That's amazing. Oh, my goodness. As you think about the next generation of authors of color writing for children, what advice might you have for those authors who are desiring to follow in your footsteps and who will take inspiration from from you?

Dorena Williamson 42:13

Well, I would say to those authors, if I could just grab their hand and squeeze it, I would say that your words matter. So own that your words matter. And that there are so many wonderful tools



that will help guide you on your way. I didn't know about some of those tools that I started. But now that I do, I'm always happy to share them. So go join the Society of Children's Bookwriters and Illustrators, there are local chapters all over the country. You know, there are wonderful writers conferences, there are virtual opportunities that are free, that are low cost, Publishing in Color, many other avenues that are specifically designed to encourage authors of color. So I would, I would say to them, you know, take advantage of the tools that are before you, lean on the wisdom of people who have it generously to give, and invest, you know, make those financial and time investments to grow. What you believe is a precious story can become even better in the hands of skilled people. So you know, be willing to be humble and allow others to come alongside and help you but know that your words matter. And whether they sell a million copies, or whether they impact a few people through blogs, God has a path for you. And just be thankful to walk in it.

Helen Lee 43:31

Good advice, and we will definitely link to those resources in the show notes for anyone who wants some direction on how to find those. So thank you Dorena, we have come to the end of our time together. But before we go, we want to give you a chance to share about anything you have coming up or any special projects you are working on that you want to make sure our audience knows about at all, and how can people reach you?

Dorena Williamson 43:56

Yes, yes. Well, as has already been mentioned, I'm so excited about The Celebration Place, this beautiful, expansive view of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. So please grab those aunties and uncles grab them for your your kid, the kids in your life, they're great Christmas gifts for church leaders, kids, ministry leaders and parents as well. And I would love for people to connect through my website DorenaWilliamson.com And also I'm on all the socials, I'm most active on Instagram and Facebook and Twitter. So reach out let me know how the books have blessed you and how I can serve you.

Helen Lee 44:31

Wonderful, thank you Dorena, so much for being on our show today. It's been such a blessing.



Dorena Williamson 44:37

Thank you for having me, what a joy and an honor, Helen.

Helen Lee 44:40

And now we want to share with our audience that you can find Dorena's book *The Celebration Place* at ivpress.com. And if you use the code EVN40, you can get 40% off and free US shipping. So visit our site to get a great deal on during this book which will release on November 9, and if you order before November 9, you will be one of the very few people who get an early-bird look at during this book. So don't delay and take advantage of this great deal. I think it'll be great Christmas shopping for people in advance of the holidays, so I highly suggest you do that. Thanks again Dorena.

Ed Gilbreath 45:21

Thanks, everyone for listening to The Every Voice Now Podcast brought to you by IVP. Our producer is Helen Lee. And our sound engineer is Jonathan Clauson. If you are enjoying our show, please share about it with your friends. We'd be grateful for your reviews and recommendations on Apple, Spotify or wherever you listen to your podcasts.

Maila Kim 45:40

And we'd love to hear from you directly anytime. You can find us on Instagram and Twitter @everyvoicenow. Or you can email us with your comments, questions, or suggestions at evn@ivpress.com. And join us next time for another inspiring episode of Every Voice Now.

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