



Belonging to THE BODY OF CHRIST

Sunday, September 10th, 2023

granthamchurch.org/sermons

[Popular](#)[Latest](#)[Newsletters](#)

The Atlantic

[Sign In](#)[Subscribe](#)

IDEAS

HOW AMERICA GOT MEAN

In a culture devoid of moral education, generations are growing up in a morally inarticulate, self-referential world.

By David Brooks

Illustrations by Ricardo Tomás

AUGUST 14, 2023

SHARE ▼

SAVED STORIES ↗

SAVE 

A background image showing Jesus, with a beard and wearing a white robe, sitting on a grassy shore and gesturing while speaking to a group of people. The people are seen from behind, wearing various robes and head coverings. They are gathered on a grassy bank overlooking a large body of water, with a range of mountains visible in the distance under a clear sky.

Jesus said, “*I will build my church...*” Matt 16:18

ekklēsia – “called out” ones

- Is used 114 times in the New Testament
- In the Greco-Roman world it was a formal assembly in a religio-political context that made decisions for the city
- In the LXX & NT: the assembly or gathering of God’s people; the Lord’s chosen vessel for embodying his gospel mission



Paul, Ephesians 3:10-11 (VOICE)

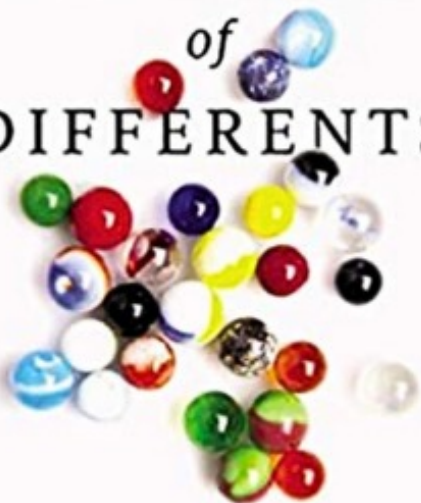
¹⁰ *Here's His objective:* through the church, He intends now to make known His infinite and boundless wisdom to all rulers and authorities in heavenly realms. ¹¹ This has been His plan from the beginning, one that He has now accomplished through the Anointed One, Jesus our Lord.

Portrait of an Early House Church in Rome

- Met in larger house (a dozen or so people - 30 max)
- Men and women
- Roman citizens and non-citizens
- Single, married, divorced, and widows
- Jews and Gentiles (different political, religious and moral backgrounds – views ranging from strange to offensive)
- Various ethnicities with different customs and traditions
- Freed slaves and slaves who had *no* legal rights
- Folks from elite classes down to the poor and the homeless

SHOWING *the* WORLD
GOD'S DESIGN *for* LIFE TOGETHER

A
FELLOWSHIP
of
DIFFERENTS

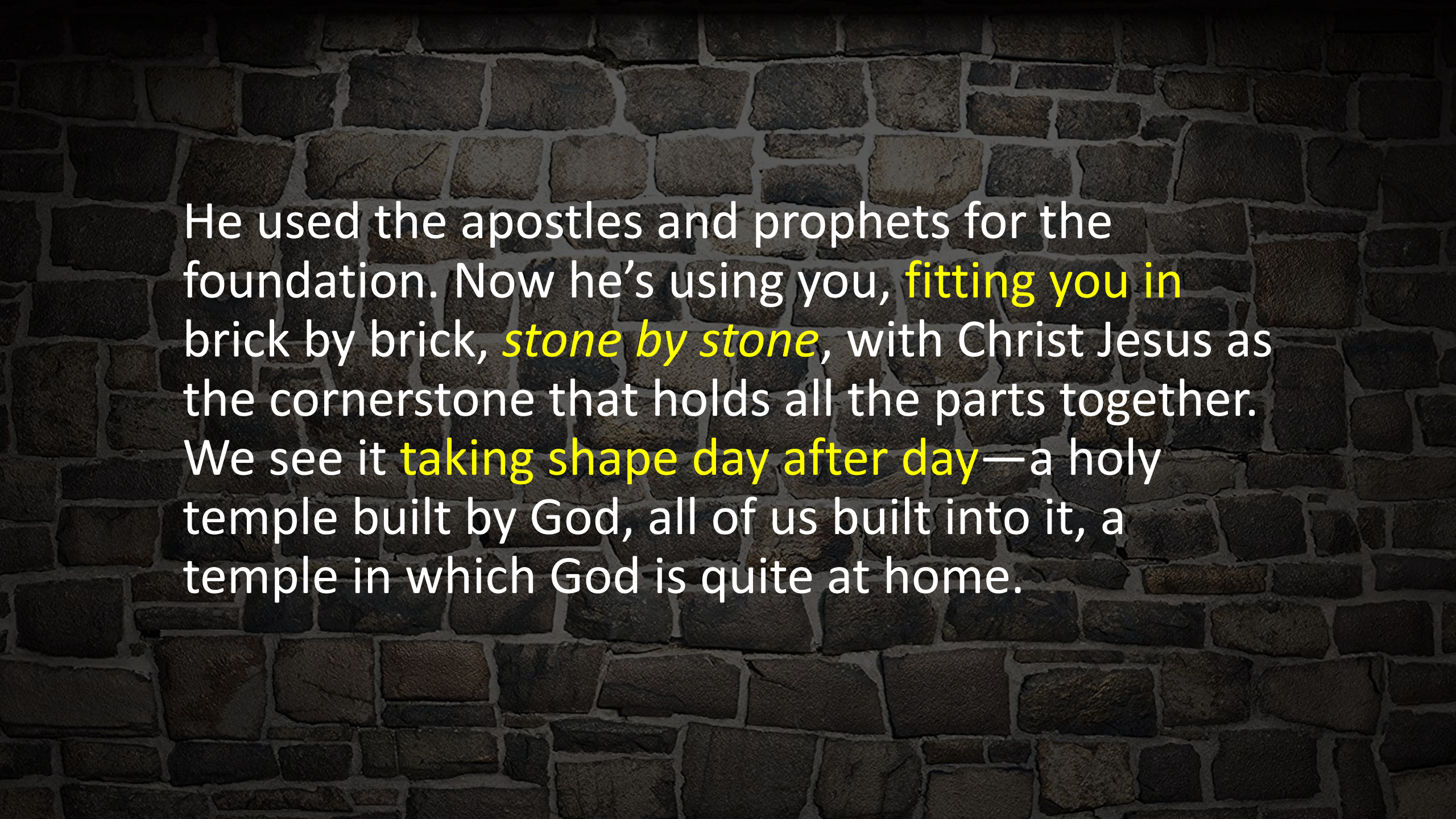


SCOT MCKNIGHT

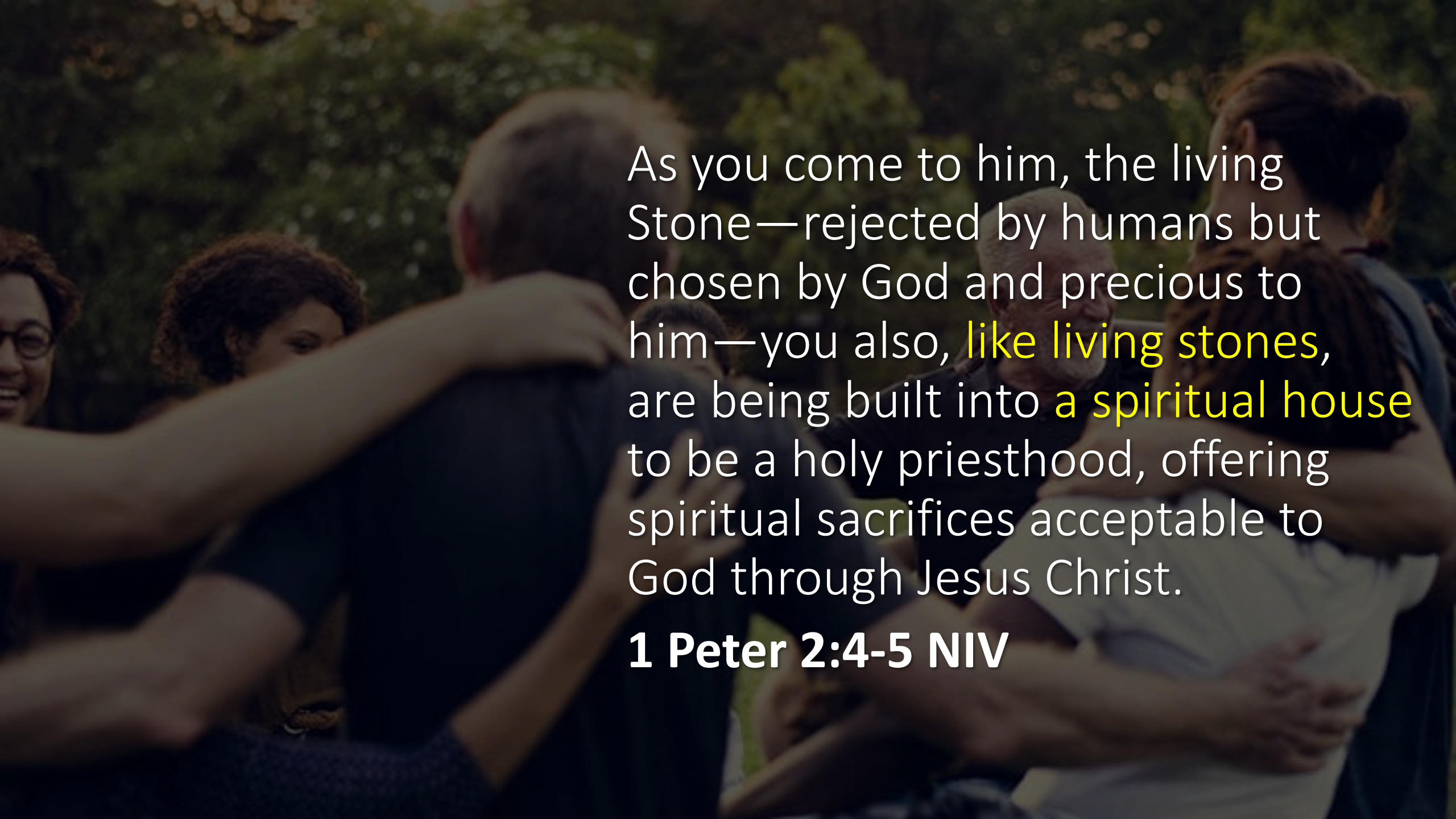
“Getting the church right is so important. The church is God’s world-changing social experiment of bringing unlikes and differences to the table to share life with one another as a new kind of family. When this happens, we show the world what love, justice, peace, reconciliation, and life together are designed by God to be. The church is God’s show-and-tell for the world to see how God wants us to live as a family.” (pg. 16)

Paul, Ephesians 2:19-22 MSG

You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. *You belong here*, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. *God is building a home*. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building.

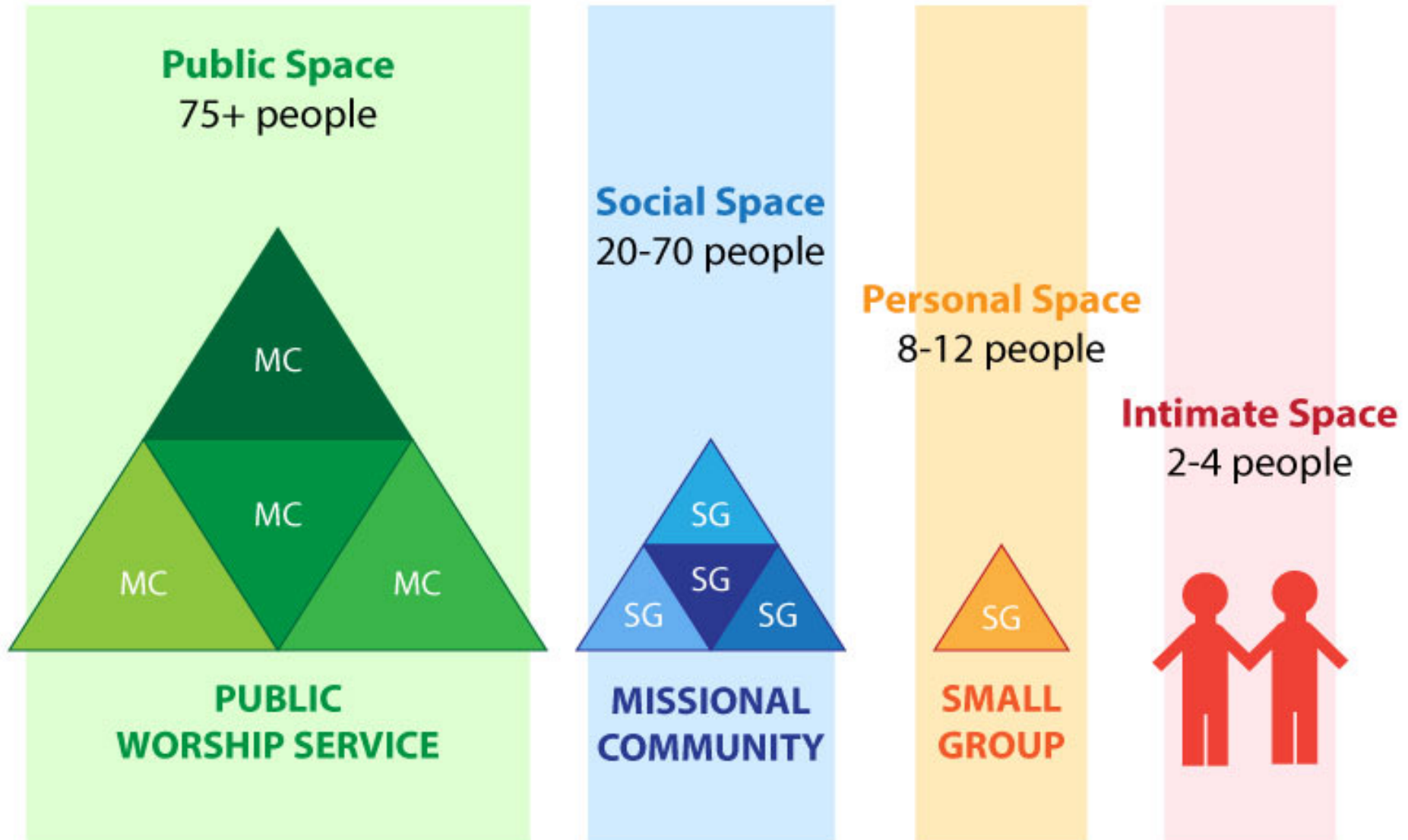


He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, **fitting you in** brick by brick, **stone by stone**, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it **taking shape day after day**—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home.

A background image showing a group of people of various ages and ethnicities embracing each other in a warm, joyful manner outdoors. The scene is slightly blurred, emphasizing the emotional connection between the individuals. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, **like living stones**, are being built into **a spiritual house** to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:4-5 NIV



www.granthamchurch.org/ministries

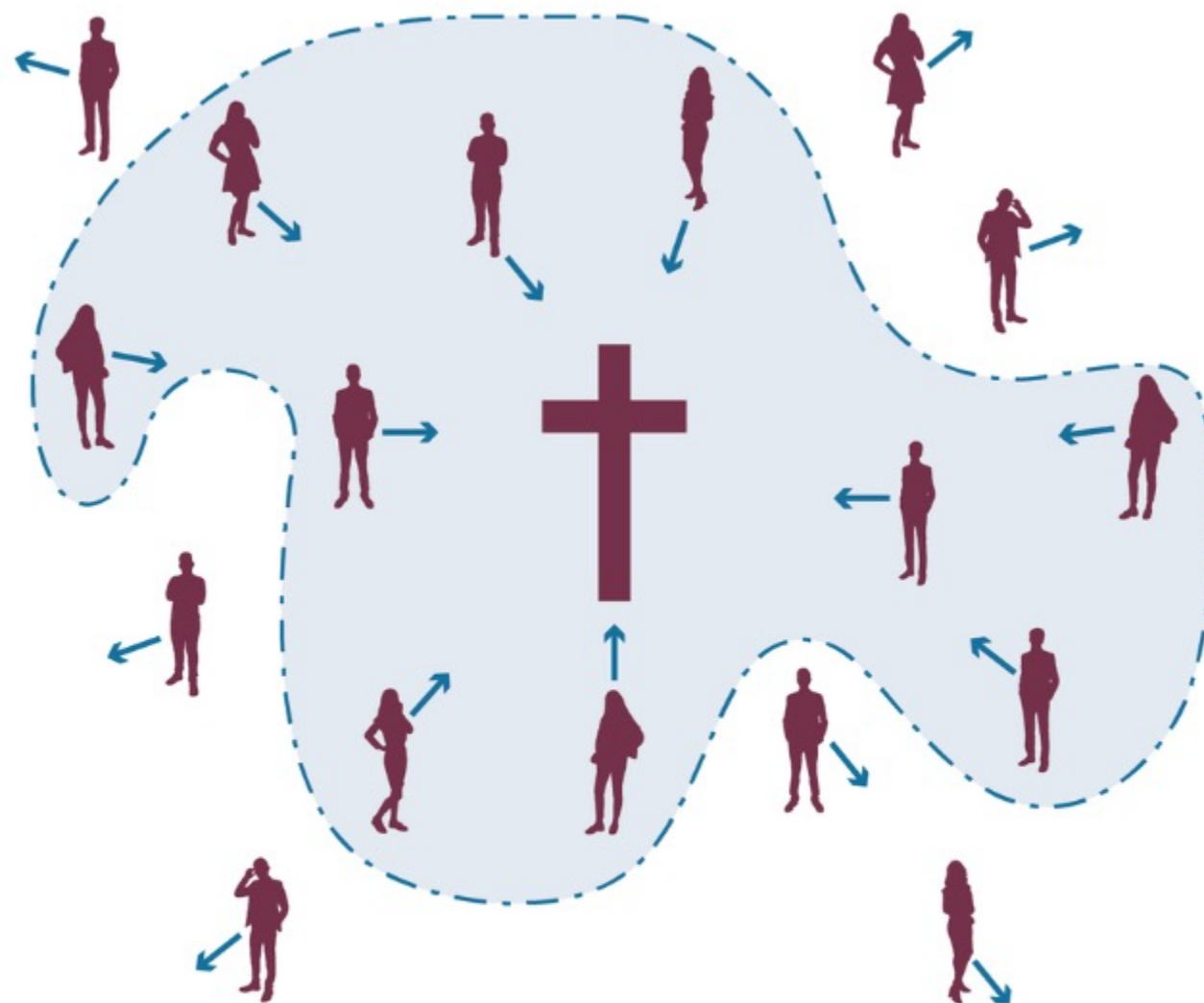
A silhouette of a person with their arms outstretched, set against a vibrant sunset or sunrise background. The person is centered, and their arms are spread wide to the sides. The background features a gradient of warm colors, from deep orange and yellow near the horizon to lighter, hazy tones above. A dark, semi-transparent horizontal band across the middle of the image serves as a backdrop for the text.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27

According to 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Important points from this passage and others in the NT:

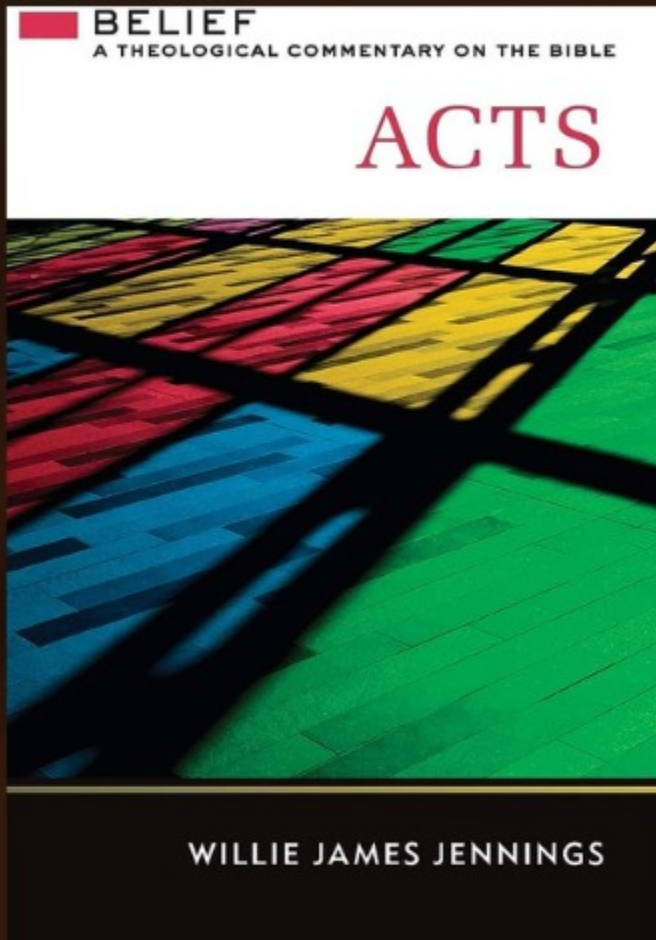
1. We are baptized by one Spirit to form one body (church).
2. Like the parts of our body, we're all different, but we need each other to know Christ, grow as disciples, and be on mission.
3. We're all functioning together, not being idle.
4. Everything we say and do ought to come from love (1 Cor. 13).
5. We're committed and *covenanted* to one another.



Self-Inclusion in the Centered Church

A silhouette of a person with their arms outstretched, set against a vibrant sunset background. The person is centered, and their arms are spread wide to the sides. The background features a gradient of warm colors, from deep orange and red near the horizon to lighter, hazy tones above. A dark, semi-transparent horizontal band across the middle of the image serves as a backdrop for the text.

ACTS 2:42-47



“ The space of this common was where life stories, life projects, plans, and purposes were being intercepted by a new orientation. This common is created by the Spirit. How could the things they held dear not be drawn toward the common, this new gathering, this *ekklesia*? Time, talent, and treasures, the trinity of possessions we know so well, would feel the pull of this holy vortex.” (Jennings, *Acts*, pg.39)

The purpose of the *gathered* church is for worship, community, and discipleship. We gather together so that we might be equipped, inspired, and empowered to be the *missional* (sent) church in the world.

Hebrews 10:23-25 (VOICE)

²³ Let us hold strong to the confession of our hope, never wavering, since the One [Jesus] who promised it to us is faithful. ²⁴ Let us consider **how to inspire each other** to greater love and to righteous deeds, ²⁵ **not forgetting to gather as a community**, as some have forgotten, but encouraging each other, especially as the day *of His return* approaches.

Belonging to THE BODY OF CHRIST

Questions for reflection and response:



**Grantham
Church**
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Belonging to THE BODY OF CHRIST



Grantham
Church
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Questions for reflection and response:

1. Can you see how the Body of Christ (the Church) is used by God to change us and bless the world?

Belonging to THE BODY OF CHRIST



Grantham
Church
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Questions for reflection and response:

1. Can you see how the Body of Christ (the Church) is used by God to change us and bless the world?
2. Will you (re)commit to “working the spaces” and “pursuing the center” with our congregation?

Belonging to THE BODY OF CHRIST



Questions for reflection and response:

1. Can you see how the Body of Christ (the Church) is used by God to change us and bless the world?
2. Will you (re)commit to “working the spaces” and “pursuing the center” with our congregation?
3. How is the Spirit inviting you to *belong* this fall? (e.g., learning, participating, giving, serving, etc.)

Belonging to THE BODY OF CHRIST



Listen to the Grantham Church Podcast



Grantham
Church
BRETHREN IN CHRIST