

A Series in Ephesians

Welcome To The Building Of Life

03/03/2024 – EPHESIANS 2:11-22

EMMANUEL CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Welcome To Night To Shine!

- ▶ Night to Shine is a complimentary event for people with special needs hosted by local churches around the world. The event is open to anyone living with disabilities, ages 14 and older. Although each event is a little bit different, some activities included are a red carpet entrance, limousine rides, dancing, karaoke, gifts, a catered dinner, a Respite Room for parents and caregivers, a crowning ceremony where every honored guest will receive a crown or tiara, and more – Night to Shine is a celebration of God’s love for YOU, our Kings and Queens!
- ▶ <https://timtebowfoundation.org/night-to-shine/>

A Gentile Reminder



- ▶ Christ brought Gentiles who were far away from God near to him
- ▶ He achieved this by being a peacemaker
- ▶ The purpose is for all of us to be one community living together with God

Ephesians 2:11-16



11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

Ephesians 2:17-22



17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

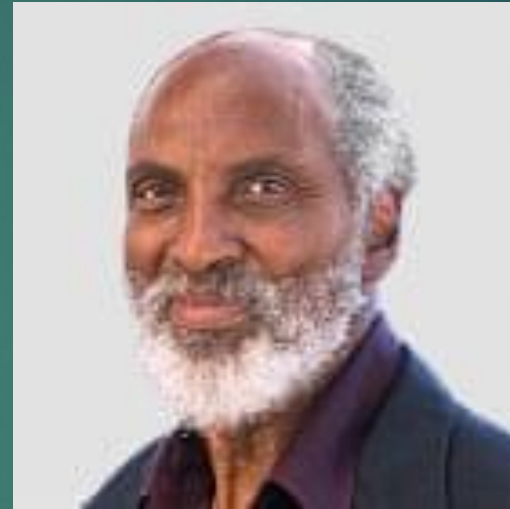


Christ Brought Gentiles Who
Were Far Away From God
Near To Him

Othering

When societies experience big and rapid change, a frequent response is for people to narrowly define who qualifies as a full member of society – a process I call “Othering”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/nov/08/us-vs-them-the-sinister-techniques-of-othering-and-how-to-avoid-them>



John A Powell is the director of the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of California, Berkeley.

Gentile Othering

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

- ▶ Paul gives a reminder of a **physical othering** that the Gentiles experienced through the circumcision that signified the Mosaic Law
- ▶ Paul gives a reminder of a **social othering** by highlighting the ethnic differences of the Gentiles from the nation of Israel which contains historical baggage
- ▶ Paul gives a reminder of a **spiritual othering** regarding the Gentiles’ distant/lack of a relationship with God which meant no hope or promise

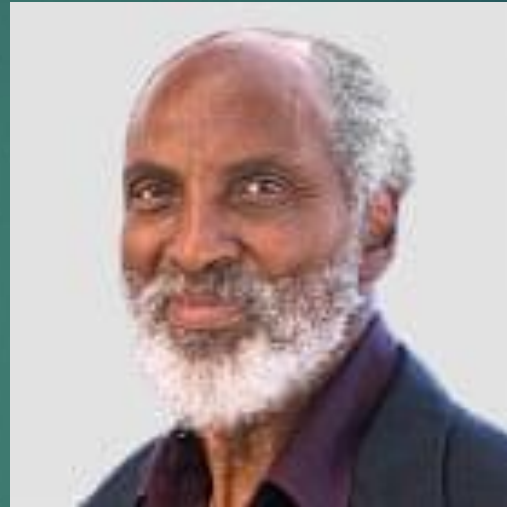
Impact Of Us Vs Them In The Church

- ▶ Self-centered mentality
- ▶ Political agendas
- ▶ False narratives
- ▶ Conflict
- ▶ Subversion of the Gospel message
- ▶ Hurt or disillusioned people leaving the church

Bridging

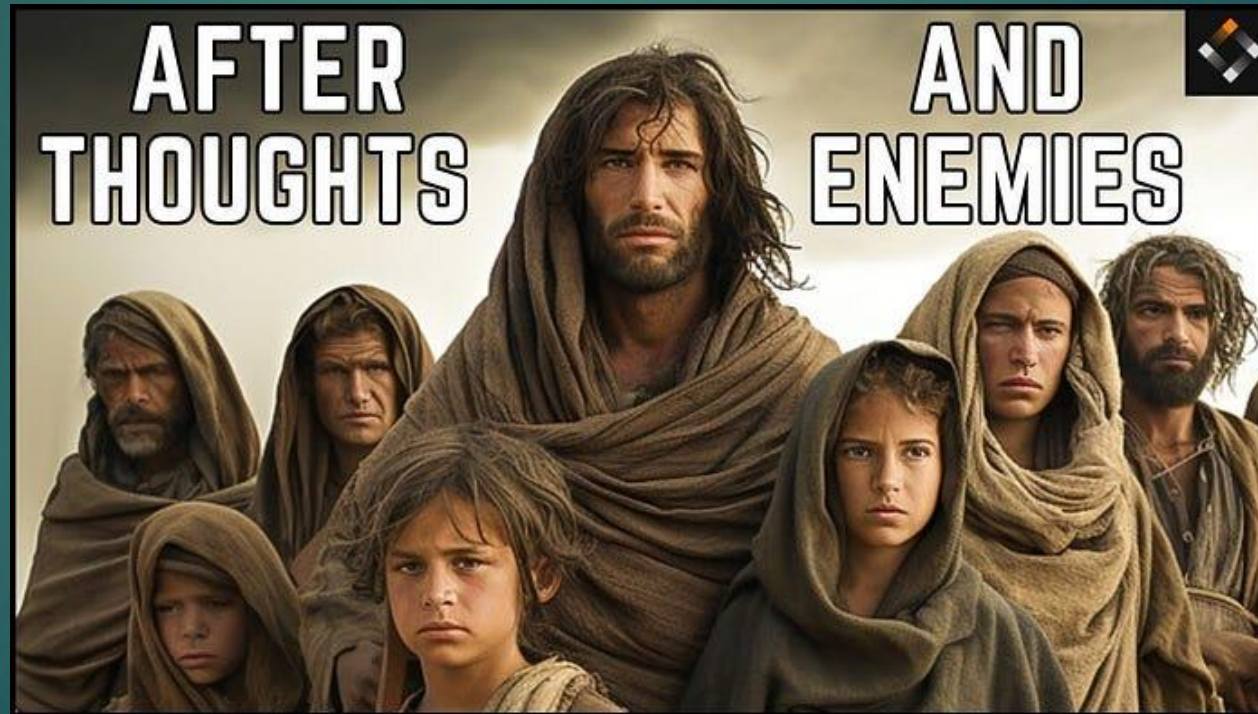
An alternative response is seeing the change in demographics as positive, and regarding the apparent other as enhancing our life and who we are. This is what I refer to as “belonging and bridging”.

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Christ Brought Gentiles Who Were Far Away From God Near To Him



<https://medium.com/@rosanarch/does-god-hate-the-gentiles-a-response-to-mindshiftskeptic-88d137fd2fb6>



He Achieved This By Being A
Peacemaker

Peace Formation

14 For he himself is our **peace**, who has made us **both one** and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of **hostility** 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself **one** new man in place of the two, so making **peace**, 16 and might reconcile us **both** to God in **one** body through the cross, thereby killing the **hostility**. 17 And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near. 18 For through him we **both** have access in **one** Spirit to the Father.

- ▶ Jesus made peace by preaching it to both parties
- ▶ These words of peace comes from the Gospel message which entails the shift from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant
- ▶ Jesus made peace by also following up his message with action
- ▶ This action entails his death on the cross which was supposed to put an end to all the hostility through reconciliation
- ▶ The vertical and horizontal relationships go hand in hand

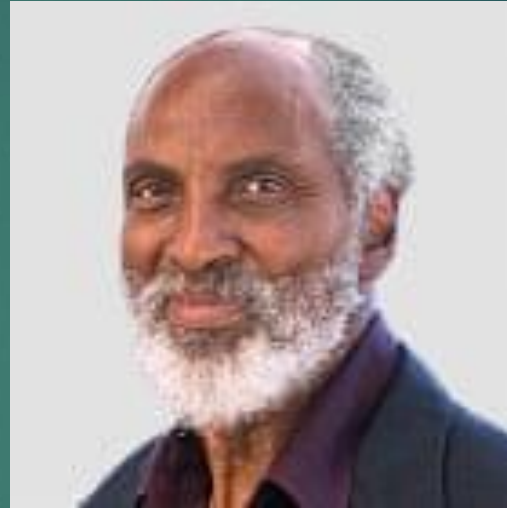
Peace In Our Relationships Today

- ▶ Peace with God in light of the Gospel
- ▶ Peace with each other in light of the Gospel
- ▶ Peace with ourselves in light of the Gospel

Belonging

*For when we bridge, we not only open up to others, we also open up to change in ourselves – and actively participate in co-creating a society to which we can all **belong**.*

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The Purpose Is For All Of Us To
Be One Community Living
Together With God

What Are We Building?

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you are** fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being ***built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.***

- ▶ **Kingdom** – a place where we serve
- ▶ **Family** – a place where we love
- ▶ **Temple** – a place where we worship
- ▶ Dwelling place for God – a place where we belong

Conclusion



Welcome to the *building* of life ...
when you are being built together into
God's dwelling place which is where
you find life ... you are also being
invited to build a life together with
God